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CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

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INTRODUCTION

Crime prevention and community safety as a field of scholarly interest and practical advances has expanded over recent years into a sub-discipline in its own right. It has its own theories, intellectual perspectives, policy debates, and moral entrepreneurs, as well as a host of practitioner and student texts, ‘handbooks’ (e.g. Tilley 2005; Farrington and Welsh 2012), journals, practitioner toolkits, guides, and websites resources.¹ It is not the purpose of this chapter to provide an overview of this rich tapestry, nor to offer some definitive compendium of ‘what works’ in crime prevention practice (see Sherman *et al.* 2002), but rather to assess the nature and shape of developments and shifts over time and to reflect upon the journey travelled thus far and possible future directions. The chapter draws as its focus developments in the UK, and where appropriate situates these in a broader international context.

We begin by tracing the historic emergence of the modern ‘preventive turn’ and its institutionalization. The following sections trace significant developments in crime prevention policy and practices from the 1980s to the current day. Our consideration of each substantive theme suggests three broad periods that structure the voyage taken. The first period, the 1980s to 1990s, marks the moment at which prevention gained national significance and the focus of concern was opened up to social and political considerations, providing considerable innovation and development. The second period from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s represents the point during which prevention was incorporated as a key strategy of governance. During these first two phases the parameters of crime prevention opened up to incorporate community safety, anti-social behaviour, and perceptions of insecurity fostered through inter-organizational partnerships. We then go on to argue that crime prevention has entered a third period represented as the austerity decade within which an intensification of social problems and an ideological shift away from the public provision of services has necessitated a

¹ See for instance: <http://thecrimepreventionwebsite.com/> and <https://www.police.uk/crime-prevention-advice/>, accessed 9 January 2017.

further change in policy direction. This has seen a degree of retrenchment, refocusing, redrawing of boundaries, and reframing of inter-agency relations. Since we are currently embroiled in this particular moment our concluding remarks will be more tentative but point to the direction which we believe that practice and policy may follow into the future and on the significant part which crime prevention policy to date has played in sustaining this particular shift. In so doing, we consider the extent to which the ‘preventive turn’ has lived up to earlier expectations and review progress in particular fields of: situational crime prevention; community safety; social/developmental crime prevention; and the partnership approach. In relation to each we review the journey taken and the emergent issues to which they give rise. We conclude with some thoughts on emerging fault-lines and possible future directions.

THE PREVENTIVE TURN

The history of crime prevention now stretches back for over 200 years and its founding principles are still those which, to a large extent, govern our preventive behaviours as individuals and as institutional actors today. It has become commonplace to understand the problem of crime as it was set out by the classical liberal philosophers in the eighteenth century. Their understanding of society rested on a view of humanity where *homo prudens*, or the rational man prevailed. Society was characterized as driven by a multitude of rational actors who would make decisions on utilitarian principles, aiming to maximize any pleasure that might be gained by any particular life-choice and to minimize any pain which might also result (Garland 2000). The prevention of crime therefore took on two key, related elements. First, it was important to ensure that crime did not pay and that the consequences of committing crime far outweighed the advantages which accrued to the law-breaker. This necessitated the building of a state infrastructure of policing, courts, and prisons which would ensure that the breaking of the law did not go undetected and that convicted law-breakers would face a certain punishment. Secondly, each citizen was expected to adopt behaviours which would ensure that they would protect themselves from the pains associated with becoming a victim of crime—this involved a rational calculation on behalf of the individual as to how to best counter the threat of criminality. The state and the individual thereby worked together in a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship to create the conditions through which crime became both more risky and difficult to commit and the safety of society was thereby ensured. This relationship was further cemented with the creation of uniformed and state-funded police forces which became a blueprint for tackling crime in other countries across the globe (Zedner 2006).

It is only in the last 40 years or so that the philosophy and practices of crime prevention have come under any real scrutiny. Without any critical attention to the concept, crime prevention was absorbed into the work of the police. Under their direction it became a highly specialized and technical activity which was nevertheless considered as marginal to the real ‘task’ of policing; the detection, arrest, and prosecution of

the criminal. As Weatheritt observed of the police: ‘the crime prevention job remains an activity performed on the sidelines while the main action takes place elsewhere’ (1986: 49). It is unsurprising that in these circumstances the subject ossified with research in the field limited to the development of more effective technological fixes. A growing consumer industry developed to supply crime prevention hardware to individual consumers and the state’s role was limited to policies that encouraged individuals to adopt self-protection strategies. Little attention was paid to the social environment in which crime took place and crime prevention remained ‘situational’, focused on the protection of property via what became known as ‘target hardening’—the (re)design and manipulation of the physical environment to reduce the opportunities in which crime might be committed.

Rising crime rates in the 1960s and 1970s forced a change in orientation towards crime and its prevention. A new-found pessimism upset and replaced the erstwhile ‘rehabilitative ideal’, most starkly evoked in Martinson’s (1974) infamous phrase ‘nothing works’. As faith in the traditional criminal justice establishment began to ebb and wane, practitioners and policy-makers looked elsewhere (Home Office 1977: 9–10). At this point the prevention of crime became a concern of the political classes which came under increasing pressure to intervene to reverse the upward trend. It was no longer sufficient to rely on the old, police-led methods. Instead, existing and aspiring politicians sought to present a social narrative through which they could explain the rise in crime and persuade the voting populace that they could put in place the social and political policies which could start to make a difference. Research into crime and its prevention took on a new significance as a consequence, adding social crime prevention policies concerned with measures aimed at tackling the root causes of crime to the crime prevention mix (Graham and Bennett 1995). The incorporation of crime prevention as a tool in the political repertoire has transformed the subject in many ways.

In reflecting on the ‘path taken’ and in assessing the impact and implications of the ‘preventive turn’ in crime control heralded by many scholars (O’Malley 1992; Crawford 1997; 1998; Gilling 1997; Hughes 1998; 2007a; Tilley 2009; Evans 2011), it is useful to consider the ‘futures past’ (Koselleck 2004): more precisely, the past possibilities and prospects, past conceptions, and expectations of the future. Over two decades ago, David Garland boldly stated that the ‘preventive turn’ in crime control policy (in the UK in particular) was intimately tied to a ‘new mode of governing crime’ which he characterized as ‘a *responsibilisation strategy*’ (1996: 452). He described it thus:

This involves the central government seeking to act upon crime not in a direct fashion through state agencies (police, courts, prisons, social work, etc.) but instead by acting indirectly, seeking to activate action on the part of non-state agencies and organisations. This is the essence of the new crime prevention approach . . . Its key phrases are terms such as ‘partnership’, ‘inter-agency cooperation’, ‘the multi-agency approach’, ‘activating communities’, creating ‘active citizens’, ‘help for self-help’.

Garland was no doubt correct in aligning the renewed focus on ‘prevention’ with the ambitions of a major restructuring of responsibilities for crime control and, as such, a re-articulation of relations between the state, market, and civil society. If prevention had become the new goal, the means to achieve it was to be through partnerships bringing diverse actors and agencies together in a common approach to pool expertise,

information capabilities, and resources. As Garland (2001: 126) subsequently elaborated, ‘preventive partnerships’ were to conjoin the goals of crime prevention with a de-differentiated and pluralist approach that sought to mobilize and harness non-state organizations challenging a core assumption of penal modernism that crime control is ‘a specialist task best concentrated within differentiated state institutions.’ This was the essential message set out in the inter-departmental circular on ‘crime prevention’ 8/1984 emerging out of the inter-departmental working group on crime reduction established by Margaret Thatcher which declared that:

since some of the factors affecting crime lie outside the control or direct influence of the police, crime prevention cannot be left to them alone. Every individual citizen and all those agencies whose policies and practices can influence the extent of crime should make their contribution. Preventing crime is a task for the whole community. (Home Office 1984)

The flurry of government-initiated activities that followed over the ensuing years—including the Five Towns Initiative and the Safer Cities Projects—led Bottoms (1990: 5) to conclude that: ‘The 1980s, we can safely assert, has put crime prevention firmly on the map.’ The influential Morgan Report (1991)—albeit at the time dismissed as ideologically inconvenient by the then Conservative government—advocated a ‘partnership approach’ to community safety, a *joint* statutory duty upon the police and local authorities to establish local partnership arrangements which was later introduced by the new Labour government as a key element in its flagship Crime and Disorder Act 1998. By the turn of the millennium, the infrastructure to deliver on Garland’s vision of a ‘de-differentiated’ response that is not compartmentalized but affords a generalized, non-specialist activity built into the routines and consciousness of all citizens and organizations, had arrived.

This new approach recognized that the levers and causes of crime lie far from the traditional reach of the criminal justice system. It acknowledged that there is no single agency solution to crime, which is multi-faceted in both its causes and effects. Furthermore, it recognized the need for social responses to crime which reflect the nature of the phenomenon itself and its multiple aetiology; allowing for an holistic approach to crime, community safety, and associated issues which were to be ‘problem-focused’ rather than ‘bureaucracy-premised’; and afforded the potential coordination and pooling of expertise, information, and resources. As we will describe the local community safety partnerships which were to be spawned challenged many bureaucratic assumptions about professional expertise, specialization, and disciplinary boundaries.

SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

The prevailing view of crime prevention in the Britain—in England and Wales in particular—since the 1980s has been that it has been dominated by situational approaches at the expense of more socially oriented ones (King 1989; Hope 2009). Linked to theories of routine activities (Cohen and Felson 1979), rational choice

(Clarke and Cornish 1985), and opportunities (Felson and Clarke 1998), situational crime prevention (SCP) offers a variety of practical and pragmatic approaches to problem-solving (Clarke 1995) focused on the ‘management, design or manipulation of the immediate physical environment’ so as to reduce the opportunities for specific crimes (Hough *et al.* 1980: 1). As such, they challenged the conventional dispositional bias of much criminology which sought to explain the criminality of behaviour rather than the situational context (and opportunities) that surround or inform the act and fostered a remarkable growth in scholarly activity concerned with opportunity-reduction and SCP. Under Gloria Laycock’s leadership, the Crime Prevention Unit in the Home Office and subsequently the Police Research Group published some 150 research reports, testing and developing diverse aspects of situational and environmental crime prevention (see Clarke 2012: 5).

What Garland (1996) referred to as ‘the criminologies of everyday life’ offered positive and up-beat—albeit often small-scale and targeted—forms of preventive adaptations in a response to the wider ‘crisis of penal modernism’. It was also deemed to constitute a powerful vehicle for putting a Thatcherite ideological vision into practice (King 1989). There were close echoes here with O’Malley’s (1992: 265) forceful portrayal of SCP as reflecting a neoliberal understanding of human behaviour, in which ‘not only is the knowledge of the criminal disarticulated from a critique of society, but in turn, both may be disarticulated from the reaction to the offender’. For O’Malley (1992: 263), the triumph of situational, over social, crime prevention, in Anglophone countries signified ‘the displacement of socialised risk management with privatised prudentialism’. Furthermore, for him this needed to be understood as being connected to, and an extension of, the neoliberal political programmes with which it was aligned in those jurisdictions—most notably in the UK but also in Australia (O’Malley 2001).

In the UK, SCP projects began as locally based and designed to solve very specific problems. In the 1970s and 1980s the government’s focus was on ‘high-crime’ neighbourhoods and SCP was considered as an ideal fit. Then as political focus turned to economic decline and the impacts of deindustrialization, situational approaches were introduced as key aspects of government-led regeneration strategies. At this point, SCP presented a problem-solving adaptation to crime that defied wider concerns with structural or social issues. By the mid-1990s, however, situational measures which were more wide-reaching in their targets and impact began to be adopted. This reached its zenith in the wide-ranging Crime Reduction Programme, launched in 1999 (Maguire 2004).² The most noticeable such development was the growth of CCTV surveillance systems which, although originally developed to protect individual commercial premises began to appear on city streets, surveilling public areas and utilized as a primary form of monitoring and prevention for many different types of crime as well as antisocial behaviour. While their effectiveness as a crime reduction tool was questioned and research in this area produced mixed results (Painter and Tilley 1999; Gill and Spriggs

² Initially intended to run for 10 years, the programme was unique in British history in its scale and scope, the extent of the funding, and its commitment to evaluation. With a particular focus on reductions in vehicle crime and burglary, the aim was to use research-based knowledge and accumulate new knowledge about the effectiveness of a wide range of interventions for dissemination. To this end, some 10 per cent of the initial £250 million budget was to be allocated to evaluation. In the event, however, the programme only ran from 1999 to 2002 and few projects were fully implemented (Maguire 2004).

2005), they were heralded as an important reassurance tool, serving as constant, silent watchers, more effective than the traditional ‘bobbies on the beat’. In 2013, it was estimated by the British Security Industry Authority (BSIA) that there were up to 5.9 million closed-circuit television cameras in Britain, including some 750,000 in ‘sensitive locations’ such as schools, hospitals, and care homes (Barrett 2013). The survey’s maximum estimate works out at one for every 11 people in the UK, although the BSIA calculated the most likely figure as 4.9 million cameras in total, or one for every 14 people.

Over the decades situational approaches have moved on from an initial concern with target-hardening and ‘bars, bolts and barriers’ (Pease 2002: 952) to encompass protective and total surveillance systems. Technological advances have meant that it is now possible that every phone call, text and post on social media can be recorded, monitored, and scrutinized by national authorities. A lingering objection to SCP has long been that it can be highly intrusive and threatens civil liberties (Crawford 1998: 100; Tilley 2009: 134). Ironically, in the UK there appears to be a relative lack of popular concern regarding the use of such invasive surveillance measures, perhaps betraying the extent to which adaptive, preventive practice has been normalized and absorbed into the fabric of everyday life. Ironically, whilst the British were keen to defend their interests against the spectre of the intrusive surveillance state in the nineteenth century in contrast to their French rivals, today the situation appears to have reversed as legal restrictions and public sentiments are more sensitive to the intrusions of surveillance cameras in France! A marked fall in the costs of technology has seen technological solutions increasingly adopted by private citizens, installing CCTV in their homes, adding motion-sensor and infrared lighting equipment around private spaces, and even adding monitoring devices to cars, sometimes initiated by insurance companies. In these ways, risk-management has been dispersed and individuals have to some extent taken responsibility for their own crime protection, which is considered an example of common-sense and risk-averse behaviour which should be adopted by all (O’Malley 1992).

Undoubtedly, situational approaches occupy a prominent place in UK policy, as outlined in *The Government’s Approach to Crime Prevention* (Home Affairs Committee, 2010).³ More broadly, the role of ‘architecture’ in influencing the flow of events and shaping human interactions—including criminal behaviour—has been increasingly recognized (Thaler and Sunstein 2008), and now constitutes another pervasive development in prevention. Stimulated by ‘defensible space’ theory (Newman 1972), an array of design practices clustered under the heading of ‘crime prevention through environmental design’ (CPTED) (Jeffrey 1971; Schneider and Kitchen 2007) seek to embed control features through the creation of a physical and social fabric that fosters informal policing and removes opportunities for deviancy. This includes ‘designing out’ crime and disorder features of the physical environment and capitalizing upon civilian or ‘natural’ surveillance. As elsewhere in the field of security and crime prevention, the commercial sector has often been at the forefront of innovations.

³ Interestingly, rather than celebrating its wide-scale implementation and reception, the doyen of SCP, Ron Clarke (2012: 6) has lamented the lack of take up, notably in the US: ‘To date, however, situational prevention has made relatively little impression on American criminology, perhaps because American criminology is focused even more strongly on dispositional theory than the criminology of other countries.’

In assessing these trends, Mike Davis presented a powerful, dystopian vision of the future in which crime prevention aligns with and drives an ‘obsession with physical security systems’ and the ‘architectural policing of social boundaries’. This, he contends, will increasingly come to constitute a ‘master narrative in the emerging built environment movement’ (1990: 223). In what Davis (1998) calls the ‘fortress city’, prevention through exclusion is a dominant factor in dividing urban areas and social groups; here, security becomes a positional good. Similar concerns about visible and symbolic representations of ‘preventive exclusion’ are to be found elsewhere among critical urban scholars and criminologists (von Hirsch and Shearing 2000)—most notably in discussions about ‘gated communities’ (see Blandy 2011). Yet often insufficient attention is accorded to the less visible and ‘softer’ forms of exclusion and social control at play in urban environments. Contrary to Davis’ ‘militarization’ thesis, Flusty argues that ‘interdictory space’ has adapted to become more socially agreeable. He highlights two components through which forms of surveillance and control—crime prevention through environmental design—have become rendered ‘publicly acceptable’. These, he refers to as including, first, a ‘process of naturalisation’, whereby ‘control becomes so deeply embedded in our daily lives that we simply fail to notice it’, and secondly, a dynamic of ‘quaintification’, by which forms of control that are too harsh to fade into the background ‘are symbolically rehabilitated as both unthreatening and even laudatory’ (Flusty 2001: 660). At a more mundane level, alley-gating and the use of grills and bars are also good examples of these features. Flusty concludes that the ‘banality of interdiction’ is becoming a defining feature of urban spaces. A dominant characteristic of this banality has been the embedding of forms of security, crime prevention, and policing into the design, layout, and physical structure of the urban environment.

Under conditions of austerity the individualization of risk-management and protective practices leaves the state to use its much-reduced capacity differently. In this economic environment, the state has been less inclined to fund large-scale capital-intensive projects which rebuild and reshape the physical environment but has endorsed the principle of ‘regulated self-regulation’ such as the use of signage which reminds people of the consequences of rule-breaking. The state has taken on the indirect role of enabler, promoting the ideology of ‘self-help’ with the private sector filling the vacuum left by the withdrawal of public funding. Increasingly, private sector organizations have become the specialists in preventative work, developing solutions to the problem of crime which can be sold to the private consumer, public authorities, and law enforcement bodies alike. Situational approaches cannot be characterized as a top-down governmental perspective (Shapland 2000), as its more widespread adoption has seen its principles and practices embedded in the everyday life of the private citizen, its measures commercialized, and individualized risk management considered once again as a normal assumption for the prudent actor.

THE ‘CRIME DROP’ AND THE SECURITIZATION HYPOTHESIS

For some commentators, SCP measures have been a key driving force behind the historic ‘crime drop’—notably declining property crime—since the early to mid-1990s both in the UK and other countries (Farrell *et al.* 2011; 2014; van Dijk *et al.* 2012). This ‘security-hypothesis’ contends that crime fell because of a reduction in

crime opportunities caused by improvements in the level and quality of security. This includes, most prominently, improved vehicle security, particularly electronic immobilizers and central deadlocking systems, and enhanced household security via burglar alarms and security design standards (given the erstwhile volume of car theft and burglary). There are also suggestions that falling property crime may have reduced violence as an indirect effect of the same processes (Farrell *et al.* 2016). The explanatory link is made via criminal career research, which finds that most criminal careers are dominated by property crime and that property crimes are often the debut crimes that begin a criminal career. Consequently, if security improvements have reduced the volume of property crimes, it is suggested that this may have caused the less prevalent violent crimes also to decline on the basis that much violence would likely be linked with acquisitive crime in some way. At a macro-level these research findings suggest limited displacement effects—which for long had been the Achilles heel of situational approaches. To this end, they appear to reinforce the findings of others (Guerette and Bowers 2009).

Nevertheless, there have been some significant critiques of the ‘security hypothesis’. The most prominent is the displacement to new forms of online, electronic, and cyber-enabled crime (ONS 2016). ‘Cyber-crime’ is rarely taken into consideration largely given difficulties in recording and assessing the volume of crime across time. Yet, the British Retail Consortium (2015) estimates that online credit card fraud accounts for 69 per cent of all retail card fraud. For similar reasons, the focus has been almost exclusively on victimization to households and individuals, largely ignoring patterns of crime in the commercial sector (Hopkins 2016). Whilst reductions in traditional crimes (i.e. shoplifting) in the commercial sector have been reported over recent years (Williams 2016), the real level of online crime remains uncertain. Consequently, the ‘crime drop’ may be as much a product of the established methods of counting crimes (through victimization surveys and police recorded crime) as it is a reflection of a fundamental reduction in the level of criminality. If traditional volume crime—burglary, shoplifting, theft, and vehicle theft—are being displaced by other forms of online crime and fraud, then this raises significant implications for opportunity theories—notably routine activities and rational choice theories—as explanations of spatial and temporal patterns. It also raises questions about the efficacy of online forms of crime prevention, bearing in mind the fears of some working in the sector that: ‘Cyber threats will continue to multiply. The advent of the digital world, and the inherent interconnectivity of people, devices and organisations, opens up a whole new playing field of vulnerabilities’ (Ernst & Young 2014). Nonetheless, even if displacement is occurring on a massive scale then this is reflective, at least to a certain degree, of substantial changes in opportunity structures with significant implications for crime prevention and the prevailing policy choices regarding the ‘placement’ of crime (Barr and Pease 1990). Regardless, the ‘crime drop’ debate exposes the fact that it is citizens, businesses, and other private organizations who are the prime drivers of change—be it a ‘crime drop’ or ‘crime migration’—rather than the criminal justice system or government *per se*. It is harder to attribute these complex shifts in patterns of crime to a ‘top-down’ or state-centred *responsibilization strategy* rather than dynamics at play within the market and civil society.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

As noted earlier, Home Office interdepartmental circular 8/1984 announced a major philosophical shift in crime prevention practice. It took crime prevention out of its police-led silo and declared that ‘preventing crime is a task for the whole community’. The vehicle to deliver this new message was the Safer Cities Programme which together ran from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. By providing limited short-term funding and a coordinator these local projects sought to draw together emergent partnerships and ignite crime prevention activities across the private and public sectors. The intention was to incorporate a wide range of organizations and interests including representatives of businesses, the voluntary sector, and public sector to consider local crime problems and preventive measures. The Morgan Committee, established in 1990 to review developments since circular 8/84, advanced a series of key recommendations (Morgan 1991). The two most important were conceptual and institutional. Conceptually, it suggested that the term ‘community safety’ be preferred to ‘crime prevention’. The latter was seen to be too narrow and too closely associated with police-related responsibilities. Community safety, by contrast, was perceived to be open to wider interpretation which could encourage ‘greater participation from all sections of the community in the fight against crime’ (Morgan 1991: 13). Community safety was also seen as an umbrella term under which situational and social approaches could be combined rather than juxtaposed. Institutionally, the Morgan Report recommended that local authorities should be given ‘statutory responsibility’ for the prevention of crime, working *with* the police, for the development and promotion of community safety.

From its inception and subsequent legitimation in the Morgan Report, the concept of community safety has been associated with neighbourhood-based solutions, partnership working, and participatory frameworks. More than this, however, community safety was imagined as offering a proactive approach to local problems which placed crime and criminality into their wider social context and which required the development and implementation of systems-based, holistic solutions. Perhaps the most notable aspect of the community safety approach was that in its emphasis on community capacity and the search for collective solutions it recognized and affirmed the significance of lay knowledge and expertise and of the presence of systems of local social order which could only be ‘known’ and understood by residents, community organizations, and professionals situated on the ground and dealing with neighbourhood problems on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, the community safety approach necessitated a combination of lay and professional expertise and interventions, networked horizontally, to deliver local solutions to local problems. It took crime prevention out of the narrow confines of formal policing and opened it up to include a far wider layer of social control mechanisms, both formal and informal, working at the neighbourhood level.

While circular 8/84 emphasized local partnerships, under a series of Conservative administrations, in reality policy was informed by an apparent agenda of ‘responsibilization’. Collective solutions were eschewed in favour of utilizing citizens in a more

personal capacity as ‘the eyes and ears of the police’ as members of Neighbourhood and Street Watch schemes. These measures tended to be ad hoc, piecemeal, poorly coordinated at a national level, and in practice quite unlike the holistic, centrally coordinated solutions proffered by Morgan. Where community safety projects were established under national Conservative governments they were often relatively small in scale and supported by Labour-leaning local authority areas and national charities such as Crime Concern and NACRO. They were funded through pots of local, national, and European monies accessed through competitive process and made available to areas struggling economically and socially and characterized as high crime locales. European funding in particular required evidence that local residents and community organizations were involved in the design and implementation of strategies to improve their neighbourhoods and also that ongoing beneficial impacts on the local community were clearly demonstrated. Consequently, community safety solutions in this period were neighbourhood-based and involved the setting up of collaborative frameworks which included an area’s residents, community organizations, and other stakeholders such as private businesses, schools, and youth services (Crawford and Evans 2012). In many senses, community safety work in this period offered an oppositional framework which reflected an ongoing commitment to public services and welfare provision and which also recognized the presence of social and public harms which were structural rather than individually based but which had long been denied at a national level (Hughes *et al.* 2002).

A fundamental change to this uneasy co-existence of competing perspectives came into being in 1997, with the election of a Labour-led government which appeared to readily embrace the concept of community safety, enshrined it in legislation in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and set about building a national institutional framework within which community safety professionals would be linked, learn their craft, and disseminate their practice. In an apparent convergence of national and local policies, local authorities were given a ‘statutory responsibility’ to work closely with the police to prevent crime, share information, and develop joint strategies alongside a wide range of other agencies from the public, private, voluntary, and community sectors. A network of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships—renamed ‘community safety partnerships’ in 2010—based in local authority areas across England and Wales were set up to deliver the strategy. The 1998 Act also imposed a duty on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any policy changes and to do all that they reasonably could to prevent crime and disorder in the regions under their care (Gilling 2007).

Alongside the crime prevention elements of the Act, the Labour government also turned its attention to what it termed ‘disorder’ and activity which might be perceived as troublesome or as a nuisance but which fell far short of criminality. Their emphasis on tackling antisocial behaviour and ‘youth disorder’ led to the design and implementation of a new set of control mechanisms, from orders applied by the court to foster the curbing of individual behaviour deemed problematic, to the intermittent imposition of youth curfews in particular streets (Crawford 2009). While the actions which these orders and curfews were designed to control were not criminal, in themselves, the breaking of such orders could culminate in a criminal record. The architects of these control orders were most obviously influenced by Kelling and Wilson’s (1982) ‘Broken

Windows' thesis. This postulated that minor misdemeanours, gone unchecked, were likely to lead to further and more serious breaches of order in the future and that they should be tackled to reassure communities that any behaviour which might upset or distress residents would not be tolerated. The new framework was designed to counter what had been considered a breakdown of community and a 'crisis of the social' by the application of coercive interventions which would force a change in behaviour and ultimately attitudes. It was informed by New Labour's commitment to communitarian ideals—fostering an intolerance to poor behaviour would, it was argued, open up the space for the law-abiding and the active citizen to build strong communities which could collectively condemn and confront the troublesome and look towards a more prosocial future. Alongside the establishment of new mechanisms and institutional frameworks designed to establish orderly and law-abiding communities, successive Labour governments expressed a particular concern over 'problem youth', developing a new multi-disciplinary infrastructure of local Youth Offending Teams and Youth Justice Board to work with young people on the ground and to design and implement strategies at a national level (see Lewis *et al.* 2016).

Labour's moral authoritarian approach (Hughes 2007a) further developed over the ensuing 13 years in which they remained in office notably under the antisocial behaviour and respect agendas. During this period the steer from government became more pronounced with 'success' in prevention of crime and maintenance of order measured by the setting of managerialist performance targets. This reached its highpoint in 2009 with the introduction of the (short-lived) Single Confidence Target which tied the performance of community safety partnerships (police and local authorities, in particular) to increases in public perceptions of safety and confidence as measured by the annual Crime Survey for England and Wales (Rix *et al.* 2009).⁴ In part, the close monitoring of organizations involved in the new government structures was a consequence of an initial reluctance on behalf of local authorities to implement the antisocial behaviour and control agenda proposed in the new legislation, demonstrating that the seeming convergence of local and national priorities might have been less solidly in place than the architects of the 1998 Act imagined (Phillips 2002). On the ground the different agencies required to find common purpose and approaches to community safety work found a clash of cultures put obstacles in the way to information-sharing and to the building and sustaining of trust (Crawford and Cunningham 2015). Central government responded with further legislation strengthening control orders and by more actively monitoring the outputs and outcomes of community safety partnerships, co-opting more agencies into the community safety agenda and incentivizing success through the control of access to funding—rewarding those partnerships and projects which hit their targets with further government grant income.

The institutionalization of community safety structures has been accompanied by a continuing fall in crime rates in the UK. Whether the two were linked remains a moot point, especially as the fall in recorded crime has been noted as a more general trend internationally (Young 1999). The coincidence of these trends in the UK, however, has allowed a consensus to develop across the political spectrum with a shared 'dominant discourse' which emphasizes focused work with 'at risk' individuals, increasing

⁴ The Single Confidence Target was abandoned in 2010, when the Coalition government came to power.

regulation of problematic behaviours, the reduction of state involvement in the prevention of crime, and a more prominent role for the private sector and citizen. While the institutional frameworks within which community safety work takes place are still nominally present, the localism of the community safety approach is now taken forward through elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), charged with working closely with community safety partnerships to develop policing strategies and prevention policies. In effect, therefore, the principle of community safety from below has been replaced by more top-down managerial interventions which, while using the language popularized by community safety interventions, are far removed from its incipient ideals.

SOCIAL/DEVELOPMENTAL CRIME PREVENTION

Despite the long-standing association with SCP in the UK, the last two decades have also witnessed the growing importance of social crime prevention measures that seek to affect and target social processes and collective relationships (Crawford and Traynor 2012). They address the dispositions of individuals to offend and seek to tackle the root causes of crime. Thus, social crime prevention incorporates interventions aimed at both reducing individual motivations to offend via their social influences and institutions of socialization; and altering social relationships and/or the social environment, through a collective focus on communities, neighbourhoods, or social networks. Elsewhere in the literature, the former is often referred to as ‘developmental’ (Tremblay and Craig 1995) or ‘risk-focused’ prevention (Farrington 2007) and the latter frequently assumes the moniker of ‘community crime prevention’ or ‘community safety’. The conceptual boundaries between developmental and community crime prevention, however, are porous. Whilst developmental approaches have largely focused on individual level risk factors, including those expressed in the interactions that individuals have with others—be they in families, kinship relationships, peer groups, and school settings—community level factors have also been drawn into these analyses. Some community-based interventions, such as the ‘Communities That Care’ programmes (Crow *et al.* 2004), have adopted a risk-focused approach that largely conceptualizes communities as aggregates of individual risk profiles. Furthermore, other community approaches assume a developmental logic that underpins both the factors that render certain communities high crime areas and those that foster the crime preventive capacities of certain communities. Also influenced heavily by Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) ‘Broken Windows’ thesis, the assumption evident here is that low-level behavioural problems are harbingers of more serious criminality (either at an individual or community level) if not pre-empted, prevented, or—in contemporary policy parlance—‘nipped in the bud’.

Developmental approaches of various kinds have grown in importance. They entail intervention early in personal pathways that may result in criminal behaviours and

other social problems to prevent the development of criminal potential in individuals. Developmental crime prevention is based on the idea that offending is determined by behavioural and attitudinal patterns learned and produced throughout the course of an individual's life. It proceeds from the basis that risk factors exist at different ages and that life events affect the course of development. Consequently, developmental prevention concerns the manipulation of multiple risk and protective factors at crucial transition points across a lifetime. Hence, it focuses largely on childhood development and the opportunities present at critical junctures during the life-course, to prevent the onset of offending in the early years (see McAra and McVie 2012a). These developmental stages offer opportunities to target prevention resources at those most at risk of offending, where long-term benefits might accrue. Within this developmental frame, the most prevalent form of social crime prevention has come to constitute what van Dijk and de Waard (2009: 138–9) term 'secondary offender-oriented crime prevention', namely early intervention programmes targeted at children and young people (and their parents) identified as 'at risk' of offending (Farrington 2007; Farrington and Welsh 2007). Risk assessment and classification and actuarial profiling have become increasingly influential aspects of contemporary criminal (notably youth) justice systems, sometime after Feeley and Simon (1992) highlighted their emergence. They have become aligned to forms of early intervention and up-stream preventive solutions to crime problems.

Whilst often eschewing the language of 'prevention'—preferring the term 'crime reduction' given its measurable outcome-orientation (Gilling 2007)—New Labour pursued an active and aggressive antisocial behaviour agenda, which foregrounded and deployed the emerging discourse of 'pre-emption' and 'early intervention' (Allen 2011). The very term 'antisocial behaviour' is itself a form of what Zedner (2007: 262) aptly terms 'pre-crime', in that it 'shifts the temporal perspective to anticipate and forestall that which has not yet occurred and may never do so. The shift is not only temporal but also sectoral; spreading out from the state to embrace pre-emptive endeavours only remotely related to crime.' This highlights various forms of behaviour or activities which come to be seen as 'troublesome' and hence 'criminalizable' not in and of themselves (i.e. because they are directly harmful to others *per se*) but because of the way in which they are conceived—from a developmental and temporal perspective—as in some way precursors to criminal behaviour. This includes behaviour that is not-yet-criminal but which is deemed to be an indicator of likely or potential future criminal conduct. This same developmental logic is present in the *Prevent* counter-terrorism focus on 'radicalization' as a precursor to possible violent extremism.

FAMILY-FOCUSED PREVENTION

In this vein, in 2006 Tony Blair announced targeting families and screening for risk of future criminality to prevent problems developing when children grow older. He justified this by articulating a classic precautionary approach: 'If we are not prepared to predict and intervene far more early, children are going to grow up in families that we know perfectly well are completely dysfunctional'. Despite Blair's apparent certainty and confidence in the predictive capacity of developmental criminology's risk-focused

prevention in relation to juvenile criminality, a government scientific report a few years earlier had arrived at a very different conclusion:

[A]ny notion that better screening can enable policy makers to identify young children destined to join the 5 per cent of offenders responsible for 50-60 per cent of crime is fanciful. Even if there were no ethical objections to putting 'potential delinquent' labels round the necks of young children, there would continue to be statistical barriers . . . [Research] shows substantial flows *out of* as well as *in to* the pool of children who develop chronic conduct problems. As such [there are] dangers of assuming that antisocial five-year olds are the criminals or drug abusers of tomorrow. (Utting 2004: 99, emphasis in original)

Consequently, many practitioners prefer universal programmes to targeted ones, despite their obvious resource implications.

One of New Labour's most ambitious early intervention programmes was the Sure Start initiative, which aimed to support young children and their families by integrating early education, childcare, healthcare, and family support services in disadvantaged areas. Sure Start was influenced, *inter alia*, by the research evidence that emerged from the High/Scope Perry Pre-School Programme in the US (Berrueta-Clement *et al.* 1984). The Sure Start initiative sought to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty, school failure, social exclusion, and delinquency. However, the national evaluation of Sure Start produced equivocal and rather unimpressive findings with regard to the impact of Children's Centres in the UK (Belsky *et al.* 2007). The Sure Start initiative highlights the porous boundaries between social crime prevention and social policy more generally. Unlike the US Perry Pre-school project, which was conceptualized—at least by government and officials in the late 1980s and 1990s—in large part as a crime prevention programme (see Sherman *et al.* 2002), Sure Start was conceived in terms of wider social, educational, and developmental benefits. However, since 2010 and in the face of widespread funding cuts, Sure Start has been pared back to target 'the neediest families' through early intervention (HM Government 2010: 19).

A similar approach to early intervention with 'at risk' families also informed the Troubled Families programme. With its roots firmly in the approaches born of the antisocial behaviour and respect agendas, the programme was officially launched in the aftermath of the 2011 'riots'. Only implemented in England, the programme was designed to 'turn around' the 120,000 most 'troubled families' in England by May 2015, with £448 million funding from 2012–15. 'Troubled families' were officially defined as those families that met three of the four following criteria: (1) are involved in youth crime or antisocial behaviour; (2) have children who are regularly truanting or not in school; (3) have an adult on out-of-work benefits; or (4) cause high costs to the taxpayer in responding to their problems (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012: 3). The families were to be considered 'turned around' if educational attendance went above 85 per cent, youth crime reduced by 33 per cent and antisocial behaviour reduced by 60 per cent across the family, or a family member moved off out-of-work benefits and into continuous employment for three or six months, depending on the initial benefits. Despite local authority cuts over the ensuing years, a government press release in March 2015 claimed: 'More than 105,000 troubled families turned around saving taxpayers an estimated £1.2 billion' (Department for Communities and Local Government 2015), suggesting a success rate of 98.9 per

cent. As a result of this apparent success, the second phase of the Troubled Families programme was launched in 2015.

The delayed publication of the independent evaluation of the programme left much scepticism about government claims. In large part, this was because the only information relating to the effectiveness of the programme had been collected from local authorities receiving funding for delivering the programme and under pressure to demonstrate compliance with the set timetable. Crossley (2015: 7) concluded that: ‘Few of the claims made, regarding the need for the programme or for its success, stand up to any form of scrutiny’. In October 2016, the long-awaited report from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research was published, drawing on official data from 56 local authorities covering the first 18 months of the programme. It concluded that across a wide range of outcomes covering the key objectives—including unemployment, truancy, and criminality—the Troubled Families programme had no ‘significant or systematic impact’ (Day *et al.* 2016: 49). The vast majority of impact estimates were statistically insignificant, with a very small number of positive or negative results. These results are also consistent with, and complemented by, the findings of impact analysis of administrative data (Bewley *et al.* 2016), survey data (Purdon and Bryson 2016), process evaluation (White and Day 2016), and qualitative research with families (Blades *et al.* 2016). In a reversal of accepted wisdom, the Troubled Families programme appears to have represented an example of *policy-based evidence* rather than *evidence-based policy*.

More generally, however, early intervention schemes also raise crucial normative concerns. Gatti (1998: 120) notes that the right of children and young people not to be classified as future delinquents, whether they go on to become delinquents or not, represents ‘one of the greatest ethical problems raised by early prevention programmes’. This stigmatizing potential was also evident in the Troubled Families initiative. Early intervention risks not only labelling young people as possible offenders of the future and hence drawing them into the ‘net’ of criminalization, but also subjecting those ‘at risk’ to greater surveillance and monitoring which provide opportunities for self-fulfilling feedback loops (Lewis *et al.* 2016). As a result, the risk-based prediction becomes directly or indirectly part of the cause itself on the basis of positive feedback between belief and behaviour. The Edinburgh Study (McAra and McVie 2007) provides ample evidence of the cyclical processes through which official contact with young people at risk can foster more and more serious police contact such that ‘discipline . . . begets further and greater discipline’ (McAra and McVie 2012b: 368).

‘PREVENTIVE PARTNERSHIPS’: ASSESSING PROGRESS

With advantages of a further two decades of hindsight, the aspired dawning of a new (local) governance of crime has proved to be something of a ‘false dawn’. Whilst the discourse of partnerships is now accepted wisdom and institutional frameworks exist

(some rooted in statute) in parts of the crime control field to coordinate collective responses and pursue collaborative delivery, nevertheless, progress has been hesitant, uneven and constrained. Moreover, the fear is that some of the early developments may be in the process of being reversed or undermined. The talk of ‘partnerships’ still belies the reality of single agency particularistic responses, whereby state organizations preserve their control over segments of the criminal justice ‘turf’ like fiefdoms. Delivering a ‘joined-up’, ‘networked’ approach to crime prevention has proved more complex and the obstacles much more stubborn than were often assumed (Crawford 2001). To assess with greater specificity the progress made, it is instructive to disaggregate certain distinct dimensions that Garland conflates in his ‘responsibilization’ thesis, namely:

- The degree to which the forces driving prevention and its promotion are primarily located within governmental edicts, laws, and policy initiatives;
- The extent to which the state—via public sector organizations—has combined to realize a less differentiated and segmented but more coordinate, holistic, and problem-oriented approach to prevention through partnerships;
- The vitality and impact of ‘preventive partnerships’ in fostering a preventive logic;
- The nature of the relations between the state, market, and civil society that have been initiated by and through ‘preventive partnerships’; and
- The extent to which responsibilities for crime prevention and control have, in fact, been redistributed.

First, there clearly has been—in Garland’s terms—‘a whole new infrastructure’ assembled in the name of prevention, added to which diverse new laws have been promulgated, policy initiatives launched, and funding streams instigated. Increasingly, new criminal laws and hybrid ‘civil orders’ have been fashioned to prevent or reduce the risk of anticipated future harm (Crawford 2009). These diverse measures constitute forms of ‘preventive justice’ (Ashworth and Zedner 2014), in ways that often challenge existing criminal legal principles. Notions of prevention and the architecture of preventive partnerships have reached into areas of crime control policy often perceived to be the preserve of regalian state forms of coercive penalty. This has been particularly notable with regard to the UK’s counter-terrorism *Prevent* strategy, which explicitly recognizes ‘analogies’ with ‘other forms of crime prevention’ (HM Government 2011: 8, para 3.29).⁵ Interestingly, much of the controversy that surrounded the introduction of *Prevent* related to accusations of covert spying, intrusive surveillance, and disproportionate restrictions on free speech. These were precisely the same kinds of indictments levelled at early forms of nineteenth-century prevention—associated notably with post-Napoleonic French policing’s use of *agent provocateurs*, spies, and covert surveillance—which did much to thwart the adoption of preventive approaches

⁵ The *Prevent* strategy defines prevention as: ‘reducing or eliminating the risk of individuals becoming involved in terrorism. *Prevent* involves the identification and referral of those susceptible to violent extremism into appropriate interventions. These interventions aim to divert the susceptible from embarking down the path to radicalisation.’ (HM Government 2011: 108)

in Britain (Emsley 1991). This would seem to confirm the wide-ranging reception and embrace of the preventive turn.

However, the responsabilization thesis accepts, too readily, the idea that across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the sovereign state came to play a dominant, monopolistic role, albeit perversely it seeks to highlight, in more contemporary times, the increasingly mythical status of state sovereignty. Historical research shows the enduring role that the security industry and prevention played from the nineteenth century onwards (Churchill 2016). While Garland (2001: 126) recognizes the ‘basic sociological truth: that the most important processes producing order and conformity are mainstream social processes, located within the institutions of civil society’, he accords too central a role to governments and state policy-makers. In so doing, he fails to connect sufficiently with wider developments and shifts in informal control, prevention, and regulation outside the narrow field of crime. The responsabilization thesis largely downplays the crucial role that institutions—in civil society and the marketplace—have played and continue to play as agents of social control and prevention in the regulation of both deviant and conformist behaviour. Importantly, Braithwaite (2003) reminds us that there is a very different history of policing and prevention to be derived from the business regulatory field as distinct from the ‘police-prisons’ arena. One of the principal historical lessons drawn from the diverse body of regulatory agencies established in the nineteenth century is the manner in which they prioritized non-punitive modes of enforcement, preferring strategies rooted in persuasion through market-based disciplines and mentalities with a more explicit preventive orientation. As one of us wrote some time ago:

The story of the contemporary genesis and growth of crime prevention is often written as if it was something imposed by governments upon the citizenry through programmes of ‘responsibilisation’—emanating outwards from the centre—and evidenced by key policy initiatives. Yet, much of the credit should properly be attributed to small-scale, local and pragmatic developments within civil society and the business sector. In reality, both criminology and government policy were relative late-comers to a preventive way of thinking. (Crawford 2007: 900-1)

As scholars of private security noted some time ago, the strategies of commercial security tend to differ significantly from those of the traditional police in that they are more instrumental than moral, offering proactive prevention rather than reactive prosecution as an approach to problem-solving (Shearing and Stenning 1981). The private security sector has tended to be more concerned with loss prevention and risk reduction rather than with law enforcement or the detection and conviction of criminals. Security guards are more likely to prioritize the plugging of security breaches in the future, the exclusion of likely offenders, and ensuring that security is not compromised. Shearing (2001) juxtaposes a past-regarding, reactive, morally toned, and punitive mentality of ‘justice’ against a risk-based, instrumental, and future-oriented mentality of ‘security’—the latter with its roots in the private sector and marketplace and the former with its origins firmly in the state apparatuses. Whilst this bifurcation may be becoming less entrenched (Crawford 2011; White and Gill 2013), as commercially oriented strategies that combine dynamics of inclusion and exclusion now increasingly structure public ordering of city centres and street corners, and private

security guards and managers appeal to the public good and have recourse to public powers, nevertheless, the locus of a preventive logic has firm origins and driving forces in the commercial sectors.

Research has also highlighted the role of the insurance industry as ‘agents of prevention’ and its part in helping to spread actuarial logics and technologies of prediction as well as fostering networks with state agencies that have been instrumental in the ascendancy of crime prevention (Ericson *et al.* 2003). It was only following the advent of mass consumerism and the associated growth in interest in securing property combined with the steep rise in crime risks (from the 1960s) that insurance companies sought to narrow their risk pools and foster a preventive mentality on the part of insurers. This goes some way to explaining the relatively late development of prevention in relation to crime risks as contrasted, for example, with the field of fire prevention (O’Malley and Hutchinson 2007). Whilst the insurance industry may have been relatively slow to recognize and use its potential power to influence behaviour with regard to crime risks (Litton 1982), its subsequent sway in stimulating a ‘preventive mentality’ is undoubted. In the ensuing years, the insurance industry has played a significant part in fostering preventive thinking and action simultaneously through networks with the police and government agencies and via diverse forms of insurance cover which have served to promote the spread and use of certain situational measures, notably forms of target-hardening.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that crime prevention inevitably preoccupies businesses. Many businesses prefer not to acknowledge—especially publicly—their crime-related risks. It was only after the Home Office published a Car Theft Index (Houghton 1992) and the Home Secretary invited manufacturers to discuss its implications, that manufacturers actively took notice and subsequently incorporated anti-theft designs into cars. Much crime or fraud is tolerated simply because it costs less than the efforts required to prevent it. The cost of crime may be accepted as an overhead expense which is part of the business calculation. Not all crime prevention initiatives are seen by business managers as inevitably desirable, particularly if they might involve adverse publicity. Prevention unless embedded in an unobtrusive manner can literally get in the way of business. The tension between crime prevention and business goals alerts us to the fact that ultimately crime prevention will often be weighed against other (economic) goals.

Secondly, the community safety partnerships spawned by the Crime and Disorder Act have always been predominantly about public sector relations, with limited (and, sometime, no viable) private or voluntary sector involvement. Engagement with the private sector has often been patchy and the role of the voluntary sector frequently marginalized. From the outset (in the 1980s) the private sector was largely seen as a source of sponsorship and additional resources—to be untapped (as reflected in the establishment of Crime Concern in 1988)—a perception that was invariably shunned by many business leaders who felt that they were already paying for state provision of policing and criminal justice through taxes. The growth of the private security industry over the last three decades or so and the growing involvement of the private sector in crime control and policing has largely been overseen by a parallel, segmented, and very different regulatory architecture (White 2010). In many senses, the developments in the public and private sectors have passed like ships in the night, often evidencing mutual distrust and disinterest (Crawford *et al.* 2005). Where successful preventive

partnerships have been forged—such as within Youth Offending Teams, Safeguarding Boards and Community Safety Partnerships—they have almost exclusively revolved around public sector organizations as the key partners, often supported by dedicated funding streams.

Such has been the political disappointment with community safety partnerships—despite the steady decline of aggregate crime rates since the mid-1990s—that in late 2004, the then Labour government announced a major review of their activities, governance, and accountability, acknowledging that: ‘a significant number of partnerships struggle to maintain a full contribution from key agencies and even successful ones are not sufficiently visible, nor we think accountable, to the public as they should be’ (Home Office 2004: 123). The question then is why have their high hopes been so severely curtailed? And what has happened to derail such aspirations? One response might be that the initial claims of a rupture with the past were exaggerated. Another is that the obstacles—structural, organization and cultural—that stand in the way of realizing a genuine partnership approach are more substantial, entrenched, and engrained than otherwise acknowledged. Furthermore, the absence of genuinely critical debate about the processes involved in delivering multi-agency partnerships may serve to impede practice. The development of good practice conversely requires the recognition and exploration of the many unspoken problems that both practitioners face and are implied by practice.

The main barriers to successful partnerships include a reluctance of some agencies to participate (especially health, education, and social services); the dominance of a policing agenda; unwillingness to share information; conflicting interests, priorities and cultural assumptions on the part of different agencies; local political differences; lack of inter-organisational trust; desire to protect budgets; lack of capacity and expertise; and over-reliance on informal contacts and networks which lapsed if key individuals moved on. The involvement of the private sector has often been patchy and the role of the voluntary sector frequently marginalized. In practice, partnerships experience considerable problems in reaching agreements or protocols about what data they could legitimately share and on what basis. As a result, concerns over confidentiality often hinder partnership working and problematise inter-organizational trust relations.

Consequently, the optimism that accompanied the wave of community safety partnerships and other inter-organizational collaborations in diverse areas of crime prevention and control some two decades ago, has dissipated. The community safety partnership have themselves become a shell of what they portended to be; focused largely on delivering their core statutory responsibilities. Moreover, the central focus on crime reduction potentially constrained the preventive reach of the partnership approach from the outset. Elsewhere preventive partnerships are most robust where they have a legal foundation and formal structure—such as safeguarding, youth offending, multi-agency public protection panels, and local criminal justice boards. Outside of those that derive from statutory responsibilities, local partnerships tend to be more informal and uneven in nature (Crawford and L’Hoiry 2015). But even in relation to statutory responsibilities like safeguarding children—where multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children Boards have statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people (HM Government 2015)—working

across divergent occupational cultures and organizational boundaries remains challenging.⁶

FUTURE PROSPECTS

We have entered into a period dominated by the language of ‘austerity’ and the refrain that the state can no longer provide services of a range and extent which were previously enjoyed. Few areas of state provision have escaped from significant reorganizations and cuts to funding as subsequent governments attempt to rebalance budgets and shrink national debt. This has left ‘thinner’ state services which have had to pare back delivery to their statutory responsibilities which must be provided by law. Formerly, the police and other security services have been largely protected from the withdrawal of state funding, however, under austerity politics this preferred status can no longer be expected to prevail, with spending on police services down year on year together with the subsequent loss of both back office and frontline staff (Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) 2015). This has resulted in unprecedented reductions in budgets and staff numbers. Frontline police officer and PCSO numbers in England and Wales, for example, fell by nearly 16 per cent—over 25,000 officers—between 2010 and 2016 (Hargreaves *et al.* 2016).⁷ At the same time, the police have faced severe criticism from government ministers demanding that police forces respond to a reduction in funds by improving their efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity. Long-running sagas of police malpractice and misconduct, such as the Hillsborough tragedy and the independent review of the Police Federation (Travis 2013), have severely weakened police authority and legitimacy in the eyes of government and public. The police have responded, in turn, by questioning the viability of government proposals to transform policing functions and raising concerns as to whether current funding levels are sustainable or will result in increasing crime and security threats. This open spat between police and government raises questions about the future trajectory of policing under austerity conditions and their place within wider partnership arrangements.

Many preventive partnerships have been brought into being facilitated and sustained by the incentives of accessing resources and new funding streams. Hence, the recent period of austerity in public sector funding, presents critical challenges for the future of preventive partnerships. On the one hand, austerity has added a powerful dynamic to radically rethink the nature of public services, problem-solving, and the

⁶ For example, the independent report into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham (Jay 2014) concluded that whilst Rotherham saw the development of good inter-agency policies and procedures applicable to CSE, the weakness in their approach was that members of the Safeguarding Board rarely checked whether these were being implemented or whether they were working. Nearly three decades on from the *Inquiry into Child Abuse in Cleveland 1987* chaired by Elizabeth Butler-Sloss (1988), it appears that many of the same problems of partnership working persist.

⁷ Overall police workforce numbers (including civilian staff), have declined over the same period by nearly 18 per cent, from 244,497 to 200,922, over 43,500 officers and staff.

relationship between different (public, private, and voluntary) providers. It might provide an incentive to shift to greater emphasis on prevention, in the ultimate quest for cost savings. It might prompt more fundamental questions about purpose, expertise, responsiveness, and effective service delivery. It might encourage collaborative advantages through partnerships as a means of finding longer-term cost efficiencies. Such prompting might also see investments in ‘up-stream’ preventive solutions to crime problems and away from reactive fire-fighting. This would require initial investment in terms of financial and human capital which, in the current context, may not be available. Moreover, as decades of policing research has demonstrated, such far-reaching thinking would necessitate significantly bold shifts in police organizational culture and working practices. The extent to which either, or a combination of both, these scenarios prevail; only time will tell. However, the manner in which police and other public sector leaders respond to austerity will undoubtedly shape the next phase in the development and institutionalization of preventive partnerships.

How the public and voluntary sectors respond to austerity is also uncertain. A number of possible scenarios might be envisaged in the face of sustained fiscal pressures. First, relevant organizations might retreat into their ‘silos’; retracting from inter-organizational collaborations, redrawing their boundaries to focus on core objectives, and seeking to off-load responsibilities to others, wherever possible. Short-term cost savings may arise at the expense of partnership commitments, particularly where key individuals or posts are lost to early retirements or workforce reorganizations. There are signs that recent government reforms have narrowed the police mandate to a focus on crime-fighting—as signalled in the 2010 White Paper declaration that the ‘key priority for the police is to cut crime’ (Home Office 2010: para. 1.22).⁸ This may see the police retract from wider community safer commitments and engagement with local partnerships. A report from the HMIC entitled *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge* suggested that, collaborations between police forces, let alone partnership relations were ‘deeply disappointing’ (HMIC 2013: 18). Despite falling crime rates, demands on the police service remain high and the changing crime mix means that costs of crime for the police have not fallen proportionally (College of Policing 2015). In particular, complex crimes, such as large volumes of historic CSE cases have added to police workloads. Under these conditions, preventative work may simply be abandoned in favour of reducing crime by meeting arrest and detection targets. Consequently, prevention may be reduced to the old tried and trusted theories of deterrence pared back to the rational choice models of criminality developed within classical criminology. Insights which have been more critical of this approach and suggest more nuanced, complex, and sociologically oriented aetiologies of crime may well be abandoned and a narrower understanding of the problem of crime may re-assert itself in the perspective of the police and in the mindset of individual officers.

There is some evidence that the police and other public services are finding themselves under continuing pressure to focus on the most vulnerable in society, targeting services which are designed to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults over the rest of the population (APCC 2015: 23–4). With resources committed to

⁸ After more than a decade in which the police role became more pervasive, as their mission widened to include non-crime activities such as antisocial behaviour.

these populations and dealing with issues which are complex and time-consuming the more routine policing and crime prevention functions which have become expected by the general public in previous periods may simply be considered as a luxury which can no longer be afforded. Some chief constables have already suggested that their officers can no longer attend to routine calls for help and that these should be logged through websites which will automatically generate crime reference numbers which can be used for insurance purposes. At the same time, primary crime prevention has taken a significant blow and vital crime reduction initiatives are ‘increasingly at risk’ (APCC 2015: 22). These changes may have significant and long-term consequences for the relationship between police and public, with implications for local relationships of trust that have built up over years. They may also fragment the complex, yet vital, partnership relations that have been build up over many years that support more holistic problem-solving approaches to local crime problems.

In addition to austerity there are other (somewhat tentative and volatile) developments that may influence the shape and fortunes of crime prevention going forward. The first is the growing involvement of the private sector in public service delivery. As argued earlier, commercial businesses have more often been innovators in preventive logics and technologies. For good or for ill, we may see greater cross-fertilization of ideas and practices through greater public–private partnership, the growth of Business Improvement Districts, and private management of city-centres (Crawford 2011), as well as the wholesale privatization of public services (as seen in the fields of prisons and probation). The arrival of novel horizontal or transversal linkages between private sector providers (such as G4S for instance) in different domains of crime control and criminal justice raises new fundamental issues concerning conflicts of interests. More profoundly, it evokes questions about whether crime control and policing (broadly conceived) should be viewed as a single, integrated ‘system’ or as a series of intricate partnership relations in which ‘independent interdependence’ prevails.

Additionally, the recent introduction of PCCs into the governance architecture adds a potentially interesting new dynamic. Championed as ‘the most radical change in policing for half a century’ (Home Office 2010: 10), the introduction of PCCs was intended to constitute ‘a massive transfer of power from the government to the people’, according to the then Home Secretary, Theresa May (2011). Importantly, PCCs’ remit extends beyond the police to encompass responsibilities for crime and community safety. In addition to the Police budget, other funding streams, including Community Safety Partnership funding, Victims Fund, and Home Office special grants, as well as new forms of income generation such as the levy on night-time economy service users have been streamlined into a single PCC funding pot. Significant here is the level of discretion elected PCCs will have over these considerable resources; to set objectives, fix budgets, and commission services (within but also beyond existing public service providers). Much debate has focused on the responsibility that PCCs have over the police, but their function is more extensive including a duty to cooperate with community safety and criminal justice partners.⁹ Consequently, there are evident possibilities (and

⁹ Explicit in the role is the overarching statutory requirement to work in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national levels ‘to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime’ (sections 10 and 88 and Schedule 11 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011).

some might suggest a distinct likelihood) that over time PCCs will become increasingly promiscuous in pushing the boundaries of their role more extensively into the domains of crime prevention and criminal justice.¹⁰ As it becomes clearer to PCCs that policing and crime are subject to the socio-economic and political forces that originate far from the reach of the police organisation, they will likely be drawn into policy realms and social issues beyond the narrowly defined orbit of the police and policing. In theory, at least, the PCCs might herald a revisiting of the initial policing mission ‘that the principal object to be obtained is the prevention of crime’ (as in the Metropolitan Police’s first instruction book published in 1829).

There are, however, real dangers that the introduction of PCCs with a capacious role will reduce and subsume community safety and crime prevention to police-related policy concerns, rather than seeing policing as an element or subset of community safety (Crawford 2016). To do so, would be to retreat back to the myth of public monopoly over policing and police monopoly over crime. Just as Wiles and Pease (2000) argued that the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 inappropriately subsumed community safety under a focus on crime reduction rather than a ‘pan-hazard approach’ to diverse harms, recent reforms—including the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011—may come to construct community safety through a narrow police (or at best ‘policing’) lens. As we have sought to show, much of the recent history of crime prevention and community safety through a partnership approach has been wrapped up with attempts to break free from the narrow constraints of a police focus endemic in much work.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, future directions in crime prevention will be shaped by technological advances and innovations, as yet unknown. The history of crime prevention reminds us that much prevention serves as an attempt to ‘retrofit’ solutions to novel criminal opportunities that are created by new technologies. As Pease noted some time ago (2001: 27): ‘if the cycle of innovation-harvest-retrofit has been for all practical purposes universal . . . it means that in terms of an arms race, we wait to lose a lot of battles before we update our armoury’. As such, there is often an historic lag to preventive efforts; as they respond to problems once these become perceived as ‘problematic’. However, prevention also embodies a palpable future-orientation. Crime prevention seeks to shape the future by intervening into the present. The difficulty for crime prevention, however, is that futures prevented remain unknown and hard to measure or account for.

Nonetheless, prevention fits well with the prevailing concern for ‘governing the future’; to avert potential harms, through foresight, anticipation and pre-emption

¹⁰ The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, for example, extended the responsibilities of PCCs to include commissioning victims’ services.

(Zedner 2009). Yet this raises vexed issues concerning the knowledge and evidence upon which causal assumptions and developmental trajectories are premised and how knowledge generated is subsequently utilized. In the ‘Petabyte Age’ of ‘Big Data’ analytics, the criminological quest for causation—that situational prevention challenged three decades ago—may now be undermined further (Chan and Bennett-Moses 2016). The *volume*, *variety*, and *velocity* of new forms of data enable interventions in the present that shape the future in diverse (and as yet unimaginable) ways that eschew the search for causality (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier 2013), with evident implications for security. Real-time data enable the generation of knowledge and its application in compressed time-horizons and prompts a perspective of emergent causality. It elicits a reflexive approach to knowledge creation and application as both relational and as a state of being, with feedback loops and changes through iterative processes (Chandler 2015). Such Big Data provides possible insights into shifting patterns and changing contexts, potentially enabling real-time reflexive awareness and management of risks and problems as they arise. It presages forms of ‘algorithmic justice’ where the preventive designs are built into the algorithms that determine how information is used. As Amazon and Google seek to predict your taste, so too the algorithms of future services, providers, and utilities may seek to prevent ‘bad risks’ (Harcourt 2015). Nevertheless, what remains constant is the fact that crime prevention strategies—whether initiated or conducted by citizens, civil society organisations, groups, businesses, state institutions, or computerized objects—are always and inevitably informed by assumptions about human behaviour and political choices with distinct ethical and social implications. A clearer grasp of these directions of travel should enable a greater capacity to shape future trajectories.

■ SELECTED FURTHER READING

The literature on crime prevention and community safety is vast and covers many different aspects of this wide-ranging field. Hughes’ (2007b) *The Politics of Crime and Community* and Tilley’s (2009) *Crime Prevention* remain useful in outlining the theory of situational and social crime prevention techniques while situating these within a broader political and theoretical backdrop. For readers wishing to engage with some of the original texts Wilson’s *Thinking About Crime* (1975) and Newman’s *Defensible Space* (1972) represent classic expositions of ideas associated with ‘preventive governance’, which remain influential decades on. More recently, Thaler and Sunstein’s *Nudge* (2008) demonstrates how far the situational approach to behavioural change has been adopted and adapted within wider policy agendas such as health, housing, schooling, and economic decision-making. For critical reflections on the trajectory of crime prevention policy, readers might turn to Burney’s *Making People Behave* (2009) and Squires and Stephen’s *Rougher Justice* (2005), which reveal the dangers inherent in the adoption of punitive, top-down approaches and ‘pre-crime’ policies. Ashworth and Zedner’s *Preventive Justice* (2014) gives a valuable background to and analysis of the ‘architecture of security’ and of the coercive measures that many states now take in the name of ‘prevention’.

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