

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 begins a long-over due recognition that the levers and causes of crime lie far from the traditional reach of the criminal justice system. The new statutory duty on local authorities

policy which turns away from the 'punitive populism' of recent years could begin to establish itself and flourish.

Inter-agency conflict

However, such optimism must be tempered by a heavy dose of realism. No additional funds are attached to the new duty. Despite the government's Comprehensive Spending Review commitments, there lacks a significant redistribution of resources by government away from punitive responses and into poorer communities. Hence, inter-agency conflicts over resources will bedevil and stymie many partnerships, exacerbated by the absence of joint investment plans or pooled community safety budgets. Moreover, partnerships will have to operate in an environment of growing social fragmentation and polarisation, in which crime and victimisation are increasingly concentrated both socially and spatially. Given the commodification of security and the growth of an 'anxiety market', 'security differentials' are becoming significant characteristics of wealth and status (Crawford 1997). Partnerships will also have to contend with the powerful exclusionary dynamics which pervade much community safety practice, whereby communities solidify around 'defended exclusivity'. This is particularly notable in strategies which involve the use of CCTV cameras, neighbourhood watch, private patrols, regulated entry/access technology and other preventive initiatives which conform to 'defensible space' or 'broken windows' approaches. In this context, crime may not be the best vehicle around which to foster open and tolerant communities as the mainstay of civil society, given its tendency to bifurcate 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' people or behaviour and the strong emotions that it arouses. These concerns have largely been ignored by the government's unwillingness to address the issue of social exclusion in community safety with clear and unambiguous advice and direction. In its 'Guidance on Statutory Crime and Disorder Partnerships' (published soon after the Act received Royal Assent) the government preferred to leave local partnerships to decide the content of strategies. It declared that 'within reason, nothing is ruled out

and nothing is ruled in' (para. 1.43).

Moreover, the ability of government and local partnerships to realise some of the good intentions which underlie the legislative proposals will be called into question by fundamental tensions between the logic of managerialism and the notion of genuine 'partnerships'. The proposals for the community safety partnerships, in keeping with recent policy reforms, are infused with a managerialist philosophy which is both output-fixated and driven by performance measurement. Partnerships are required to produce a joint crime audit and publish a 'community safety strategy'. Initial strategies need to be in place by April 1999. Considerable emphasis is placed upon the audit process, measuring performance by results set against clear targets and pre-specified indicators. This connects with wider managerialist reforms which have sought to: render bureaucracies subject to market disciplines; disaggregate separable functions into quasi-contractual forms (through purchaser/provider distinctions); emphasise cost control and financial transparency; and enable managers to control employees by subjecting performance throughout an organisation to measurement, and hence, accessible to management. The extent and impact of these managerialist reforms across diverse areas of public policy are both uneven and subject to considerable debate. Nevertheless, this policy environment is likely to have some often ignored negative implications for community safety partnerships and their evaluation.

Managerialism

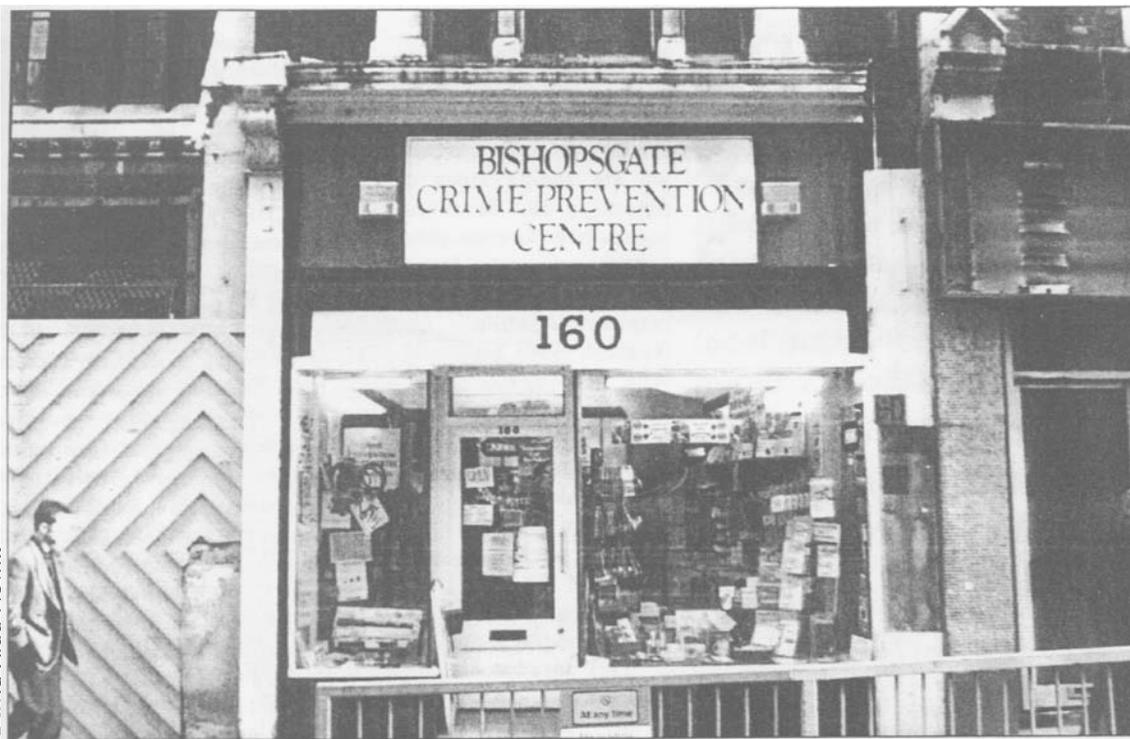
First, managerialism heralds the construction and institutionalisation of 'auditable performance', whereby complex tasks are reduced to easily comparable numeric codes of 'administrative objectivity'. This can produce a quest for the 'Holy Grail' of 'key performance indicators'. Undue concentration can be given to narrowly defined and measured activity at the expense of broader objectives. This flies in the face of a central appeal of a partnership approach, its holistic premise. Moreover, as Ditton *et al.* (1998) have shown, measures such as 'fear of crime'

Community safety partnerships

Adam Crawford considers the tensions and threats within the new arrangements for tackling crime.

and the police to establish and promote community safety partnerships and to put in place crime and disorder strategies, represents an acknowledgement of the need for social responses to crime which reflect the nature of the phenomenon itself and its multiple aetiology. Rightly, many commentators have recognised this as the single most important aspect of the legislation. The partnerships which will be spawned and reconfigured by the new duty potentially allow a fundamental shift in the way we govern crime and its prevention. Youth offending teams and other proposals such as the joint local approaches to truancy (s.16 of the Act) embody a similarly laudable 'partnership' logic. These new community safety partnerships, in particular, afford the potential to encourage a stronger and more participatory civil society and challenge many of the modernist assumptions about professional expertise, specialisation, state paternalism and monopoly. They also offer a fertile soil in which a more progressive criminal justice

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are likely to be of little value. Setting meaningful targets and determining performance indicators for dealing with disorder are also inherently problematic. There is no clear or consistent definition of disorder or community safety. Different audiences define the same behaviour differently. Furthermore, many of the neighbourhoods with high levels of crime and incivilities are inscribed by a general lack of consensus about such issues.

Second, this concentration upon output measurement can encourage 'tunnel vision' amongst managers which neglects the unquantifiable aspects of a service. Moreover, it is likely to encourage a short-term, ends-orientation to practice which may marginalise long-term thinking, crucial to social crime prevention and community safety.

Negotiation

Third, managerialist reforms encourage an *intra*-organisational focus that pays little attention to the more complex task of managing *inter*-organisational relations. There has been little attention within managerialist reforms given to negotiating shared purposes, particularly, where there is no hierarchy of control. *Intra*-organisational priorities can undermine, or run counter to, the needs of *inter*-organisational partnerships. The *intra*-organisational focus on 'out-

puts' can make agencies concentrate their energies upon their core tasks and activities at the expense of peripheral ones. Community safety, by its very nature, is precisely one such peripheral function of diverse agencies. One extreme but vivid example of the kind of undesirable consequences produced by an emphasis upon narrowly defined internal performance measurement has been the growing use of exclusions from schools. While such strategies enable individual schools to meet their own organisational objectives this may have adverse implications for others, both within and outside that sector.

Measure fixation

Fourth, managerialist reforms place a considerable emphasis upon the measurement of organisationally defined *outputs* as distinct from *outcomes*. 'Outputs' are service activities whereas 'outcomes' are the consequences (intended or unintended) of these outputs on the wider community and environment. For example, organising 6 neighbourhood watch meetings or installing 9 new CCTV cameras are both outputs which may be successfully met by a partnership in accordance with its pre-specified strategy, but they tell us nothing about their impact or effect. Output measurement and outcome evaluation are not the same thing. Given the control that organisations can assert over de-

fining their own outputs there are questions to be asked about the validity of output measurement as a central aspect in monitoring community safety. There is a danger that 'outputs' may take precedence over 'outcomes', such that social goals are eclipsed by organisational ones. This can express itself as 'measure fixation' whereby greater concentration is given to the measure, rather than the service which the measure is intended to signify.

Auditing

Finally, there are concerns that the managerialist emphasis upon defining and institutionalising 'auditable performance' may serve to reduce evaluation to auditing. Auditing emphasises compliance: the correspondence between an operation or activity and standards to which it should conform. Evaluation, by contrast, focuses upon cause and effect relationships in the social world. Auditing marginalises complexity, ambiguity and qualification, inherent in social scientific evaluation. Herein lies the attraction of audit: it replaces ambiguity and qualifications with 'rituals of verification' (Power 1997). However, it tells us little about cause and effect or the social outcomes of particular programmes. The danger is that exercises in financial accounting and audit may be seen as a replacement for, rather than a supplement to, *genuine evaluation research*. There

is some evidence that in recent years the Home Office has moved away from the evaluation of criminal justice policy towards the process of audit. Despite the present government's claim to evidence-based policy and the role of evaluation research therein, this trend is likely to continue.

Collaboration

This is not to suggest that we abandon the need for community safety partnerships to have clear and consistent aims nor that we

should dispense with the informational openness which managerialist reforms have undoubtedly heralded. Rather, there is a need to recognise the immense difficulties and pitfalls associated with realising genuine partnerships. Achieving successful partnerships is neither a straight-forward nor unproblematic task. The effective management of inter-organisational partnerships requires appropriate conditions in which joint and collaborative action can be sustained. This requires policies which foster reciprocity and interdependence between organisations, not insularity and competition. The challenge for government is to cultivate the conditions in which partnerships can flourish and to nurture new forms of co-operation, rooted in mutual acceptance of difference and inter-organisational trust.

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