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# MULTI-AGENCY CRIME PREVENTION IN BRITAIN: THE PROBLEM OF COMBINING SITUATIONAL AND SOCIAL STRATEGIES

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by

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**Abstract:** *The origins and development of crime prevention as a policy in its own right in the U.K. between the 1950s and 1990s are described. Particular reference is made to: the U.K. Home Office's promotional role in publicity campaigns; the establishment of crime prevention infrastructures, ranging from Crime Prevention Departments and Panels through to the Five Towns Initiative and the Safer Cities Program; and the construction of a problem-oriented methodology together with the successful testing of a number of situational methods. The implications of recent attempts to combine social and situational approaches are noted. Drawing on the results of qualitative research into the Klrkholt Project, a celebrated example of British crime preventive success, a number of difficulties suggest that the social approach is Incompatible with the problem-oriented methodology on which crime preventive success has been built. The Implications of this Incompatibility for future crime prevention policy are assessed.*

## **AN OVERVIEW OF BRITISH CRIME PREVENTION POLICY**

A review of historical accounts of the emergence of the modern criminal justice system from the late-eighteenth century reveals the striking number of times that innovations or rationalizations have been justified in the

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name of crime prevention. The "preventive principle" was an essential legitimating element in the arrival of permanent policing from 1829 (Reiner, 1902), as it was in: the codification of the criminal law; the extension of imprisonment as a penal sanction in its own right; the introduction of special measures for juvenile offenders; and the emergence of the probation service (May, 1991), to cite a few examples. The wide usage of the term bears testimony to its definitional elasticity, and its legitimating function in persuading governments to invest scarce resources in new criminal justice policies, professions and practices. Accordingly, there now exist what may be described as a variety of crime prevention discourses: different agencies mean different things by the use of the term, with such differences rooted in a range of classical, neo-classical and positivist criminological theories (Gilling, 1993). This point will be returned to in a later part of this paper.

The emergence of a crime prevention policy in the contemporary sense of the term—what will be called here a "functional" crime prevention policy—is a much more recent phenomenon, which began in Britain in the 1950s. Before charting the development of such a policy, however, it is worth dwelling for a moment on what might have been, as this raises a point of some relevance to the subsequent discussion.

Back in the mid-nineteenth century, Edwin Chadwick had a very clear vision of crime prevention equivalent to the modern notion of opportunity reduction. As Reith says, quoting Chadwick, "the function of preventive police was 'placing difficulties in the way of objects of temptation.'" (1956:200). Chadwick, however, did not believe that the police alone were responsible for reducing criminal opportunities. In the Report of Constabulary Force Commissioners, he argued the need for "the honest portion of the community" to be "convinced of the necessity of taking effective measures for the abatement of the evil [property crime 1" (Lefebvre et al., 1839:55). This point, lost in the wider debate about the need for permanent policing outside London, was picked up some time later by Palmerston, the then Home Secretary, who commissioned Chadwick to carry out the following research:

Viscount Palmerston is especially desirous that you should investigate and distinguish in your report as closely as the evidence will permit—

1. What offences admit of prevention by the action of a police alone.
2. What by a police in concert with the public.

3. What offences must be prevented, if at all, by the care taken by the public themselves [Reith, 1056:260].

Unfortunately, it appears that the research was never carried out. Had it been, it may well have heralded in a functional crime prevention policy some 100 years before it finally did take shape. The long wait points in part to the political weakness of approaches to crime control that are not supported by any professional constituency. In the mid-nineteenth century, the police, for example, were far more interested in developing the detection function.

Returning to more recent times, one begins to see the emergence of a specific crime prevention policy in Britain from 1950 when, according to the Greater London Council (GLC) (1986), the Home Office approached the insurance industry and in concert with them produced the first national publicity campaign, focused mainly on the security of business premises. Publicity campaigns have continued to be a major feature of crime prevention policy ever since, including the "lock it or lose it" and "watch out, there's a thief about" campaigns of the 1970s, and the magpie and "crime, together we'll crack it" launches of the 1980s. By themselves, however, despite a significant allocation of resources, these campaigns tended to be limited in their effectiveness (Weatheritt, 1987). But the growth of the private security products industry does suggest that sections of the public are overcoming their unwillingness to invest in opportunity reduction.

The significance of this first publicity campaign lies partly in its acknowledgement that the police require the active cooperation of the public if crime is to be prevented. But, equally, the Home Office required the cooperation of the police to get the message across to the public. Although practical crime prevention advice could be disseminated by the police, according to the GLC (1986) few forces established crime prevention departments in the 1950s and early 1960s. Consequently, in 1963 the Home Office set up the National Crime Prevention Centre at Stafford as a national police training unit, while in 1965 the Cornish Report recommended that each police division or subdivision should have its own crime prevention department. The report also suggested the creation of a specialist Standing Committee on Crime Prevention at the Home Office—a body duly formed in 1966 comprising representatives of the Confederation of British Industry, the Trade Union Congress, local chambers of commerce, insurance companies and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

These developments were more significant than the early publicity campaigns because they established a national infrastructure allowing crime prevention to be effected as a serious crime control strategy. Early successes included the winning over of the motor car industry to the idea of fitting steering locks on all new cars, and the adoption of a security standard for new-house building by the construction industry. However, with the exception of the new police crime prevention departments—which in the 1960s lacked credibility because their organizations sought crime control solutions in the new technologies of the period (Heal, 1987)—there remained a lack of agencies to take the message forward at the local level. This seems the main reason why Crime Prevention Panels were established following a Home Office Circular of 1968, since they brought in representatives from public and private sector agencies as well as the local community. The number of these panels, set up in many major towns and cities, was 58 by the end of 1969, reaching 134 by 1976. While the numerical increase suggests that the idea was popular, their overall impact appears limited, although little if any research has ever been conducted into them.

Despite the expansion of the functional crime prevention infrastructure in the 1960s, it remained of only marginal importance in the totality of criminal justice policy. Then, as now, the only agency with a statutory responsibility for preventing crime was the police; but the police tended to see their preventive role somewhat differently (Heal, 1987:9): "It was the period of fast developing technology and information systems and, for many people, these wonders seemed to be the answer to rising crime."

Only by the beginning of the 1980s, when the police experienced a crisis of legitimacy (Reiner, 1992). did they become seriously willing to countenance alternative preventive roles and practices, such as the community policing of John Alderson (1983) or the multi-agency policing of Sir Kenneth Newman (1984). Similarly, the end of the 1960s represented the high point of welfarism and the rehabilitative ideal, marked most notably by the passing—if not the subsequent full implementation—of the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act. Put simply, functional crime prevention had no base of support from policymakers or professionals, who preferred different and more dominant preventive discourses.

Although it took until the 1980s for their full impact to be felt, there were a number of key developments in the 1970s that began to turn the tide in favor of functional crime prevention. First was the emergence of a new criminological discourse of crime as opportunity. Harking back to the

classical criminological focus on offense rather than offender, this followed the pioneering vision of Edwin Chadwick and the observations of those such as Leslie Wilkins, who in 1964 posited a link between rising affluence **and** criminal opportunities (Hall Williams, 1981). The new discourse also picked up on contemporaneous theoretical developments in urban planning and design, where influential contributions from Jane Jacobs and Oscar Newman promoted the central importance of the concept of natural surveillance (Davidson, 1981). The launching pad in Britain was the publication in 1976 of *Crime as Opportunity* (Mayhew et al., 1976), although its initial impact on a skeptical audience was limited.

Second came a slow change of policy, informed as ever in the postwar period by the twin pressures of rising crime and bulging prisons, as well as by research which began to question the efficacy of the treatment paradigm (Brody, 1976). A Home Office-instituted Review of Criminal Justice Policy boldly stated in 1976 that

In view of the limitations in the capacity of the agencies of the criminal justice system to reduce the incidence of crime, the scope for reducing crime through policies which go beyond the boundaries of the criminal justice system merit particular attention... Work on the broader aspects of crime prevention should be pressed forward as speedily as possible [U.K. Home Office, 1977:9-10].

While it might not have been fully recognized at the time, there was clearly a strong elective affinity between such a position and the emerging notion of crime as opportunity.

Part of this work on the "broader aspects of crime prevention" entailed the setting up of a Home Office Working Group which, infused with the logic of systems theory and corporate management, reconstructed policy along problem- rather than practice-oriented lines, and in so doing arrived at the "situational" model of crime prevention. As described by Gladstone (1980), this model entails a rational managerial process whereby the situation of a specific offense is researched as fully as possible, preventive measures are identified and assessed, and the most effective of these measures are selected. Subsequent writers have added the further stages of monitoring and evaluation (Laycock and Pease, 1985). Clearly there is nothing in this process which suggests it should be the exclusive preserve of criminal justice agencies, but it does imply their close collaboration given the importance of basing preventive methods on sound information about crime.

The situational model was tested on a school vandalism project in Manchester, and, although not an unmitigated success—due largely to implementational difficulties (Hope and Murphy, 1983)—it offered sufficient promise. But the overall direction of policy cannot be changed overnight, not least because of established interests supporting various approaches for political reasons regardless of their crime preventive merits. Examples include the constituency built up within the Home Office in support of liberal measures of crime control, and the populist law-and-order lobby which was so important in bringing the first Thatcher Government to power in 1979 (Brake and Hale, 1992). The subsequent heavy investment in policing and a new prison-building program kept the focus from away situational crime prevention, which effectively waited in the wings—but not for long.

The twin influences of politics and practice brought the situational approach to the fore. On the practical side, evidence from the Home Office Research Unit demonstrated the potential of the situational approach (Clarke and Mayhew, 1980), while simultaneously casting serious doubts on the broader effectiveness of policing (Clarke and Hough, 1980) beyond the basic "scarecrow function" (Reiner, 1992). On the political side, the aftermath of the 1981 urban riots prompted a bid for re-legitimacy from some quarters of the police, evidenced most notably perhaps in Kenneth Newman's notion of multi-agency policing, where

The assumption is that through better understanding of all the facets of any type of anti-social behaviour, the community, including the police, should be able to produce constructive, co-operative ventures to prevent or reduce the phenomenon, so avoiding costly reactive policing [Newman, 1984:8].

At the same time, the government, in part conscious of its failure to stem the alarming rise in crime despite its populist policies, brought crime prevention into the mainstream. In March 1982, Home Secretary William Whitelaw announced the setting up of an inter-departmental working group on crime reduction, which reported in 1983 and emphasized the importance of the so-called co-ordinated approach to crime prevention—effectively another name for the situational approach. Acknowledging the need for a change in attitudes and procedures (Home Office, 1983), the working group's report was backed up by a reorganization of Home Office research resources giving crime prevention a higher profile in the conception of the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit (HOCPU). The report was also bolstered by the issuing of Circular 8/84 to police forces, probation.

education and social services, and the chief executives of local authorities. This circular promoted the coordinated approach among agencies at the local level, albeit with the message that no extra resources would be forthcoming but that change could be achieved by "bending" existing programs and priorities and by working together. The circular was given fresh impetus by the revelations of the first British Crime Survey (1983), which demonstrated that with most crime either being unreported or not cleared up, most offenses lay beyond the reach of the criminal justice system, and only crime prevention could hope to make a significant impression on these.

Much had changed since the 1960s, when the aim had been to get the public to take a greater responsibility for the prevention of crime. The aim now was to foster such a sense of responsibility among public agencies as well. But, as in the 1960s, the problem remained of how to get that message across, and this was the question which vexed the HOCPU, whose responsibility it was to disseminate good practice and encourage local policy developments. An initial answer was perceived to be found in the potential role of Crime Prevention Panels (of which there were 180 by 1984) to act as local pressure groups (Laycock and Smith, 1985). But despite a high-profile national conference, nothing came of this proposal.

The HOCPU faced the additional problem of not knowing with any degree of certainty what crime prevention activity was going on around the country. A hurried nationwide survey of chief constables and chief executives in 1985 identified what was reckoned to be only the tip of the iceberg. More significantly, it revealed that the majority of crime prevention projects were not being monitored or evaluated in any rigorous way (HOCPU, 1985). Clearly, if the HOCPU were to perform its role effectively, it needed to know what was good practice and why.

It was this need which lay behind the decision, in late-1985, to launch the Five Towns Initiative—a large-scale 18-month demonstration project where, under the close guidance of the HOCPU, crime prevention coordinator posts were established to develop projects in each of the five towns. Simultaneously, considerable resources were made available through the Community Programme, a centrally-administered job creation scheme for the long-term unemployed. By the end of 1986, 5,000 people were employed under the scheme on 200 different projects, including those in the five towns themselves (HOCPU, 1986). Together, the Five Towns Initiative, the spectacular take-off of Neighbourhood Watch since its launch in 1982 (Hussain, 1988), and the setting up by government of a

ministerial group on crime prevention in 1986 under the chairwomanship of the Prime Minister, served to highlight the political importance now credited to crime prevention, and what came increasingly to be known as the multi-agency approach.

The Five Towns Initiative, and a number of other smaller demonstration projects—of which the Kirkholt Project was one—proved to be a success in showing that something could be done within a relatively short period of time. Equally important, the Initiative showed that pump-priming worked, since in each of the five towns the projects stayed in place after the Home Office funding period came to an end (HOCPU, 1088). This success prompted launching of the similar but more ambitious Safer Cities Programme in March 1988, extending to 20 areas, with a further 20 in the pipeline as of 1993.

This model of promoting crime prevention by pump-priming has been complemented by other means of keeping crime prevention in the mainstream of criminal justice policy. First has been the continued use of publicity campaigns. Second, in contrast to the more statist infrastructures of countries such as France (King, 1989), has been the establishment in 1988 of an independent body—Crime Concern—to promote crime prevention especially but not exclusively within the private sector. The idea of putting crime prevention on a more statutory footing was put forward in the Morgan Report's (U.K. Home Office, 1991) recommendation that local authorities should be charged with the lead role, but it was rejected by the government. Third, the promotional aspect of Circular 8/84 has been repeated in the more recent Circular 44/90 (U.K. Home Office, 1990). Finally, while not actually within the central government, and against the current climate of public finance, some local authorities have responded to the call-to-arms by setting in motion so-called "community safety" strategies or departments (Tilley, 1993).

Overall, then, crime prevention has evolved into a central strategy of criminal justice policy, and one which attracts cross-party support in Parliament. The fact that it has obtained such a position would appear to bear testimony to the success of the approach (as many HOCPU publications demonstrate), and of the means by which it has been promoted. Previously skeptical agencies, such as the police and probation services, have apparently shown themselves to be occasional enthusiastic converts. However, against this expansionist backdrop, there remain some fundamental difficulties.



The above story is cast very much at the macro level, and as such cannot begin to penetrate some of the finer details of policy development. In particular, it misses the point that while there has been a gradual growth of crime prevention as a general strategy, there has been an accompanying diversification of the methods employed in its name. When the situational approach first emerged as a credible preventive strategy, its major adherents were clearly those who supported a view of crime as opportunity, informed by rational-choice theory (Cornish and Clarke, 1986). This was the thrust of early policy developments up to and including the Five Towns Initiative. But at this point some sort of paradigmatic shift appeared to occur within the Home Office, and key personnel within the HOCPU evidently expressed a desire to see a combination of situational and so-called social measures in future preventive projects (Heal and Laycock, 1986), so that such projects addressed both opportunities (situational) and motivations (social).

The reasons for such a paradigmatic shift remain obscure and in need of further research. A necessarily speculative explanation might point to a constellation of factors. In crime preventive terms, the mid-1980s represent a time when displacement and fears of a "fortress mentality" held currency as alleged weaknesses of the situational approach among key policymakers and officials within the Home Office. Politically, this period also coincides with the government's efforts to prescribe a clearer role for the probation service, with crime prevention being seen as a net into which the service might be drawn in order to make a more active contribution to crime reduction. More significantly, perhaps, the slightly later Safer Cities Initiative became entwined with the Prime Minister's post-1987 general election victory pledge to tackle inner city problems, which in Britain has always entailed some elements of a social strategy. To coin a phrase, crime prevention could conceivably have been regarded as a means of "killing two birds with one stone."

Consequently, while this line might have been pursued elsewhere anyway, many of the projects sponsored by the HOCPU began to take on this 'social/situational mix, the Kirkholt Project possibly being the first to explicitly test this blueprint. The change in the form and direction of crime prevention was such that a prominent Home Office minister could declare (in a somewhat narrow characterization of the situational approach) that "(t)he language of five years ago about crime prevention, of 'target hardening' or the 'external enemy' now has an archaic ring to it" (Patten, 1989:17).

While welcomed by many, however, this drift towards a combination of the social and situational is not necessarily wholly desirable. The rest of this paper will focus on this issue by drawing on the author's own research on the Kirkholt Project. Pressures of space prohibit a detailed discussion of the project itself, beyond the following brief description.

### **THE KIRKHOLT PROJECT**

Beginning in December 1985 as a Home Office-funded burglary prevention demonstration effort, the Kirkholt Project was established to follow a blueprint model of police-led opportunity reduction, backed up by probation-led social measures to "mop up" the anticipated frustrated motivations of actual and potential burglars. Kirkholt, located in north-west England, was selected for the project because of its unusually high burglary rate (a household victimization rate of 24.6% per annum), and the well-defined boundaries which marked this 2,200-dwelling municipal housing estate off from surrounding areas. It was also assumed that the need for social intervention might be necessary because of a possible link between drug misuse and burglary.

The project team, comprising representatives from police and probation services, and research back-up from a local university, followed the process of the situational model by first researching the situation of the offense through detailed victim, victim's neighbor, and burglar surveys; this process is well documented in Forrester et al. (1988). Because of the time required to both research the problem and formulate preventive solutions—which entailed eliciting inputs from other agencies (notably the gas and electricity utilities and the housing authority)—preventive measures, all of an opportunity-reducing form, were implemented only a few months before the end of the initial 18-month funding period remaining.

However, because of the early signs of success, as well as the delay in probation's devising of social strategies, the Home Office agreed to extend the funding for a further two years, into what became known as Phase Two of the project. Phase Two was intended to be the social side of the project, backed up with the continuance of the situational measures already implemented under Phase One. However, as the second official report reveals (Forrester et al., 1990), the main focus of the evaluation remained on the situational measures, partly because the social measures had only just been put in place by the time the second report was due and because Home Office financial support had run out.

The author's own case study of the project began in January 1988 and continued for 21 months through to September 1989—the formal end of Home Office funding for Phase Two. However, due to unforeseen difficulties, it continued after this time. The qualitative methods of research involved interviewing key participants, analyzing documentary material, observing the plethora of sometimes quite lengthy interagency meetings, and spending six weeks in a more intensive form of participant observation.

On the face of it, Kirkholt was an outstanding success: the monthly average of burglaries fell from 44 in 1986 to 11 in 1990. Because of the range of measures implemented (Neighborhood Watch, the removal of pre-payment fuel meters, and the security upgrading of victimized dwellings), it is difficult to say which was the most effective. But, overall, Kirkholt pointed to a triumph for the situational approach. It was also taken to be evidence of the success of the multi-agency approach in general. However, as this brief account has shown, this is not necessarily the case because, while the situational side of the project worked well, the social side, at least for the period examined, did not. This was partly because very little social crime prevention was actually implemented, and partly because that which was implemented could not be researched to determine its impact on crime levels. Reasons for both points are explored below.

In seeking an answer to the question of why the social side did not work well, one possibility examined was its incongruity with the problem-oriented methodology characteristic of the situational approach. That is to say, attempts to fit social techniques into a tried and tested methodology might fail because they are not the logical product of such a methodology. If one followed the methodology without any preconception about techniques, one would end up with a situational and not a social output. The rest of this paper elaborates on this key point.

The problem-oriented methodology begins with an analysis of the situation of the offense. Such an analysis depends upon the availability of information, which typically comes in the form of official crime data. This provides information about the nature and circumstances of exploited opportunities, and is collated on a geographical basis so that it is possible to identify specific crime "hot spots." Having identified these areas and the specific details of crimes within them, such as time of occurrence, modus operandi and so forth, preventive solutions can be considered. Then, having selected and implemented the most appropriate solution.

preventive impacts can be evaluated in part by pre-/posttest comparative measurements of changes in the crime data first employed at the beginning of the process.

Overall, the methodology is clear, rational and achievable. Data are usually already available, or relatively easy to obtain. While the practical problems inherent in implementing preventive strategies should not be underestimated, the process is not that difficult. Exploitable opportunities are provided by the visible manifest causes of crime, and blocking them entails a manipulation of (usually) the physical environment, which can generally be achieved by the actions of a single agency (such as the removal of fuel meters by a fuel utility). Therefore, problem and solution are conceptually immediate insofar as the relationship between the latter and the former makes good sense, and can be fitted in to the tight timetables which are characteristic of many crime prevention projects, notably those supported by the HOCPU.

If, however, we attempt to fit social crime prevention into this framework, a number of very significant problems emerge. Firstly, while data about exploited opportunities are readily available, the same cannot be said of data about offender motivations, on which social strategies must be based. Because most offenders are unidentified and beyond the reaches of the criminal justice system, we do not know their motivations. There are certainly problems with official statistics, but they are largely surmountable, whereas we cannot ever escape this simple fact about offenders. Self-report studies might offer a solution, but, like offenders' probation records in such forms as social inquiry reports, they are impressionistic and subjective, not observable, and difficult to verify. In contrast to these epiphenomenal motivations, exploited opportunities are observable and verifiable.

In consequence, it is doubtful that information about criminal motivations can ever provide a sound basis for preventive solutions. To use the terminology of those who considered the probation side's social proposals problematic in the Kirkholt Project, they wanted "hard" data, when all the probation side could offer was "soft" data. Like Mr. Gradgrind in Dickens' *Hard Times*, they wanted facts, not unverifiable impressions.

There are good reasons for wanting facts. Particularly in view of its political weaknesses (keeping in mind that it has no supporting profession fighting its corner), crime prevention needs to prove its effectiveness by demonstrating statistical decreases in rates of criminal victimization. Social strategies cannot so easily anticipate doing this. First, it is difficult

to prove that motivations for committing crime have declined. Second, the causal connection between motivations and criminal acts (for example, unemployment and burglary), is not verifiable. Finally, the links between alleged motivations and criminal acts do not always make good sense given their status as latent rather than manifest causes. Thus decision makers are less likely to support such strategies, which, in the context of current policymaking realities, remain dangerously Utopian.

In addition, while it is possible to use crime data to identify crime hot spots, it is not necessarily the case that these same areas are offender hot spots. It is possible for relatively few offenders to be committing many crimes, or for offenders who are committing the crimes to not live in the areas where the offenses are occurring. This is a difficult problem to resolve for those seeking to reduce motivations: where should they focus their efforts? A solution might be to focus on motivation hot spots, but this is unacceptable because many people might share the motivations imputed to cause criminal behaviour, while relatively few might actually translate these into criminal acts. To make the criminal motivation the central focus of preventive activity is to risk imputing implausibly deterministic and behavioristic causal connections between stimulus and response.

It is, then, the informational and conceptual uncertainty of social crime prevention which makes it incongruous with the disciplined problem-oriented methodology of crime prevention as currently practiced. This also affects the next step of the problem-oriented methodology where alternative preventive strategies are considered. The strong association of situational strategies with manifest rather than latent causes results in their appearing to make better sense than social strategies—something also found to be the case in Hope and Murphy's (1983) research. Moreover, social strategies are frequently vague and contestible, entailing the collaboration of a number of social policy-type agencies, such as education, youth or employment services. These partners sometimes find it difficult to agree on preventive priorities, since no social strategies can as yet lay claim to proven effectiveness. The lack of this clear basis for agreement can result in interagency forums descending into "talking shops," where there is plenty of discussion but little action. If, however, action is forthcoming, it can often entail the collaboration of several agencies, thereby complicating the implementation structure and raising the risk of goal displacement, especially where agencies are far from unequivocal about what their roles should be. Evidently it is less easy to contemplate

changes in the social than the physical environment, where interventions tend to be far less speculative, and can be achieved without complicated implementation structures.

There is also the point that the focus of social strategies is mostly on long-term change, whereas the changes of situational strategies promise more immediate delivery of benefits. In Kirkholt, it was interesting to note the longer-term perspectives of agencies supporting social methods, in contrast to the greater sense of urgency displayed by the police and the researchers. The difference was not only cultural, but related also to the relative simplicity of the preventive causes they championed.

### CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The results of the research into the Kirkholt Project suggest that social methods of crime prevention, for quite practical reasons, do not fit in well with the situational approach and the problem-oriented methodology of crime prevention projects. Consequently, efforts to combine the two risk the dilution of the clear sense of purpose of these projects. More problematically, they risk the introduction of conflict into multi-agency ventures. Because the inherent incompatibility of the two approaches is not recognized, disagreements are attributed to the politics of social versus situational methods, or, as happened in the case of Kirkholt, the relative managerial skills of the different sides—police and probation. There may be a politics of crime prevention, and management is important, but these are largely secondary issues.

The main issue is that the problem-oriented methodology, the informational resources and the evaluative tools all predispose project decision makers towards the situational approach. Social methods cannot be made to fit because their nature is so different. Attempts to make them fit—as contemporary British crime prevention policy is doing—risk uncertainty, confusion and conflict, and the dilution of the clear sense of purpose of preventive initiatives. In Kirkholt, the social methods could not be reconciled with the problem-oriented methodology. As a result, the final evaluation of them could only be descriptive, and their preventive impact was not assessed (Forrester et al., 1988). If, as suspected, this pattern is repeated elsewhere, then the longer-term risk is similar to that pertaining to mainstream elements of criminal justice policy, where practices are legitimated for reasons other than their preventive impact.

At one level, there is nothing wrong with this. Nobody would deny that social factors contribute to criminal motivations. But it is absurd to construct some aggregate of motivations and to devise some resultant general social strategies for a target population when precise criminal motivations vary from person to person. The strategies would miss more often than they hit the target, and even if they did make contact it is hard to know if there is any impact. This cannot be called crime prevention in the same sense as situational methods. Motivations vary individually, but opportunities are more general. Therefore, the main strategy for tackling motivations must remain at the individual after-the-event level, as it does in traditional probation work. More general social strategies still have a place, but they cannot be justified as crime prevention when they do not fit the methodology and they risk what Sampson et al. (1988) have referred to as "the criminalization of the discourse of social policy." Instead, they must be justified primarily in social policy terms—for equal opportunities, equity, the relief of poverty, citizenship and the like.

There is a strong case, then, for arguing that crime prevention policy should remain untainted by social methods that belong in the social policy domain. At present, many crime prevention initiatives are encouraged to begin with a multi-agency steering group. This forces social and situational prevention together at the outset and breaks the first rule, that initiatives should be problem- and not practice-focused, with other agencies being brought in only when their specific contributions can be determined.

A good example relates to the probation service role. Since 1984, probation has been urged by the government to become involved in crime prevention. But as Lloyd (1986) found out, the probation service was unclear about precisely what it was supposed to do. Not surprisingly, the service brought their own motivation-tackling social preventive discourse to collaborative tables, thereby diluting preventive strategies. It would have been better to adopt the approach implied by Laycock and Pease (1985), wherein probation's contribution would be confined to specific areas of need, such as providing general information about clients' criminal techniques so that opportunity-reducing measures might be found to render them ineffective.

In effect, then, what we have in British crime prevention policy is a quite successful crime preventive infrastructure comprising a problem-oriented methodology that, when followed faithfully, leads to relatively effective situational strategies. If, however, an attempt is made to impose

social strategies upon such an infrastructure and methodology, problems of poor fit and ineffective outcomes result because it is impossible to remain true to the methodology.

This points to the fact that the relationship between crime preventive infrastructure and subsequent preventive strategy is very important, and the former must be designed to facilitate the pursuit only of a problem-oriented methodology. Contemporary British policy is failing to recognize the link between process and outcome, and it devotes attention to each of them in splendid isolation. It may also be that considerations beyond simple crime prevention are behind such policy; the historical account provide in the first part of this paper would certainly lend credence to such a view. Given the proven success of much situational crime prevention, it would be unfortunate if this lack of strategic oversight were to persist.

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