British Society of Criminology

Responsibility, Rhetoric and Reality: Practitioners' Views on Their Responsibility for Crime and Disorder in the Community Safety Partnerships

Layla Skinns[1]

Abstract

This paper is concerned with some of the contradictions inherent in the community safety partnerships set up as a result of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. The paper draws upon research in one of three case studies, which for the purposes of anonymity, has been called Elmside. The paper focuses on David Garland's concept of 'responsibilisation' and is particularly concerned with the gulf that exists between rhetoric and reality - between who *should* be and *is* responsible for crime and disorder in Elmside. This paper firstly explores the theoretical literature concerning the political context of the partnerships, as well as the methods employed in the research. It then explores a number of tensions concerning the responsibility for crime and disorder: the blurring of boundaries between agencies within the partnership and between the partnership and local people, the balancing or otherwise of priorities emanating from central government, local citizens and practitioners. The paper concludes that central government is likely to take a dominant role in determining the community safety agenda, at the local level, which suggests Garland (2001) is correct about 'responsibilisation', at the level of rhetoric rather than reality.

Introduction

In *The Culture of Control*, David Garland suggests there has been a (re)discovery that the responsibility for crime control must be shared amongst the government, non-state actors and organisations (which he calls 'responsibilisation') and is manifested in the 'preventative partnerships'. He suggests this is one of the most important lessons of the twentieth century.

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act (CDA), and more recently the 2002 Police Reform Act, represent significant attempts by the state to alter the way in which community safety, based upon input from multiple agencies, is put into practice at the local level. Many areas across England and Wales have a long history of multi-agency community safety, as a result of the Safer Cities initiatives in the late 1980s and the Morgan Report in 1991; the CDA attempted to formalise and standardise a great deal of this. In short, the CDA designated local authorities and the police as the responsible authorities in the fight against crime at the local level, although more recently the fire service, police authority, primary care trust (PCT) and probation service have also become responsible authorities in what have become known as

the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) or Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).[2] Since 1998, every local authority in England and Wales has a CSP, which addresses crime and disorder in a localised way[3] and is funded by central government.

In this paper I explore if the 'preventative partnerships', described by Garland (2001), illustrate 'responsibilisation'. I focus on Garland's account in order to empirically examine and compliment the particulars of his argument.[4] Furthermore, CSPs are a worthy topic because they are an important development in the field of crime control. By examining the issue of 'responsibilisation', I also hope to develop a deeper understanding of some of the complexities and contradictions involved in multi-agency partnerships, such as the CSPs, and in particular the tensions between central government and local actors. That is, I intend to consider the wider political context of the CSPs and how this affects the way in which community safety is interpreted and practiced at the local level.

In order to address these issues, I firstly situate Garland's account of the CSPs amongst a number of other accounts of the partnerships and their political context. Secondly, I outline the methodological framework of my research. Thirdly, I examine some preliminary observations from my research so far, in one of three case studies, called Elmside. I discuss practitioners' views on the responsibility for crime and disorder and the implications for the blurring of boundaries and the balancing of differing community safety priorities. I examine how practitioners' perceptions of responsibility for crime and disorder coalesce with political choices, taken locally and nationally. The main argument I wish to make is that in the case of Elmside 'responsibilisation' occurred, at the level of rhetoric, but not necessarily in practice or reality; there appears to be a gulf between the two, which epitomises other contradictions embedded within the field of crime control.

Partnerships, 'Community Governance'[5] and the Polycentric State?

The partnerships, like many other activities in the field of crime and criminal justice, are inherently political; perhaps because they are one representation of the ability of statutory authorities to deliver public safety (Edward and Hughes, 2002). In a climate of 'hyper-politicisation', in which politicians appear to be on a permanent election campaign (McLaughlin, 2002), the partnerships represent a tool, used by politicians, to convince the electorate of their credentials to address the issue of law and order effectively, particularly because of the appeals they make to 'community'[6] with all its connotations of 'fluffiness' (Wiles and Pease, 2000) and the 'feel-good factor' (Hughes, 1998).

The overarching theme in discussions of the political context of CSPs is that the partnerships have implications for the relationships between the state and civil society. Edwards and Hughes (2002) suggest there are three main ways of interpreting recent developments in 'community governance', which are not mutually exclusive, but rather operate in parallel. First there are Neo-Marxist approaches, which suggest 'community governance' is a means of reasserting sovereign authority; the state becomes stronger (in order to further the interests of capital). Stanley Cohen's Foucauldian thesis about the dispersal of social control fits into this interpretation that the power of the state has been strengthened. Cohen (1979) suggests the disciplinary project of the nineteenth century has become transported from its carceral setting and dispersed into wider society, creating a 'carceral archipelago'. Cohen (1985) also alerts us to the possibility of the blurring of boundaries between state and non-state organisations and individuals and the potential for net widening, in which more and more

people are drawn into the net of the criminal justice system. Hence, the tentacles of the state reach deeper and deeper into the social fabric, resulting in a more powerful state.

In the second interpretation, through 'responsibilisation', the responsibility for goods, such as security, are devolved from statutory authorities to individuals and organisations in communities and the state's role in providing public services is lessened.

The third interpretation suggests the partnerships represent a new model of participatory liberal democracy, which gives a voice to pluralism and diversity and restores public faith and their consent to being governed. There is simultaneous centralisation and decentralisation of the state, in which its power is simultaneously strengthened and weakened by having multiple sites of governance.

David Garland's concept of 'responsibilisation' coincides with the second and third of these interpretations of 'community governance' because, whilst Garland suggests there is an attempt to devolve responsibility for public safety (manifest in the 'preventative partnerships'), this is contradicted by the reassertion of the power of the sovereign state (manifest in mass imprisonment).

Garland situates recent developments in 'community governance' in the wider socio-political processes of the past and present. Garland argues that 'responsibilisation' is one response to a set of cultural beliefs and understandings, called the 'crime complex', in which crime is a normal social fact. The 'crime complex' is underpinned by the wider socio-political processes of late modernity;[7] in particular, managerialism, neo-liberalism and communitarianism, all of which are a central part of Third-Way politics and the formation and operation of the CSPs.

Recent decades have seen increasing privatisation (Crawford, 1997) and the growth of managerialism in the provision of public services, which introduced 'private sector management methods to the public sector' (Rhodes, 1996: 655) and often takes an actuarial form, in which risk categories are identified and instrumentally acted upon (Simon and Feeley, 1992). Privatisation and managerialism were given impetus by the rise of neo-liberalism which refers to 'the re-assertion of market disciplines' (Garland, 2001: 98) resulting in greater economic freedom and greater individual choice. Closely associated with neo-liberalism was the rise of communitarianism, which reasserted the common moral base of society and the value of 'communities', whose collapse was attributed to rampant individualism (Etzioni, 1993 and 2001). Communitarianism does not advocate governing through communities; rather it attempts to govern 'through a community of remoralized, responsibilized and decriminalized local communities' (McLaughlin, 2002: 97). The CSPs are an example of the communitarian agenda of New Labour.

The Research Base

My research uses three CSPs, as case studies, to examine a range of issues.[8] Within each case study I employ a multi-method approach (interviews with past and present members of the partnership board and working groups, observation of board and sub-group meetings, analysis of minutes, agendas and other relevant documents for as far back as they are available and also analysis of police data relating to burglary and antisocial behaviour).[9]

Understanding the minutiae of the local as well as the broader trends at the national level (Edward and Hughes, 2002) is important because, first, developments in community safety at

the national level remain uneven in their interpretation at the local level (Hughes, 1998). Second, the contexts in which community safety takes place are diverse. In addition, the accumulation of localised knowledge of the CSPs might also contribute to in-depth understandings of the national picture of community safety.

My research is situated within a wider methodological framework of Adaptive Theory[10] (Layder, 1998), which is eclectic and synthetic and attempts to bring together a range of approaches, paradigms and epistemological positions. For example, it fuses inductive reasoning with deductive reasoning, meaning that research should make use of extant theory to help mould the process of data collection, whilst also allowing theory to emerge and be refined as the data is collected and so theorizing should be a continuous process. Adaptive theory also attempts to combine both empiricism and rationalism, in equal measure and in a way in which they are open to each other's influences. Furthermore, Layder (1998) emphasises that social reality is multi-layered, complex and dense, being made up of both objective and subjective elements, and in this way adaptive theory reconciles positivism and interpretivism as well as encouraging research which employs multiple strategies of research.

Elmside

In the most recent census, Elmside had a population of approximately 110,000. It has two universities and a number of language schools, which means a large, transient population of students who may not have been counted in the 2001 census. On the whole, it is a relatively affluent place, which has recently benefited from the boom in the high-tech industry. Levels of unemployment are well below the national average.[11] There are however, pockets of deprivation; based on a range of deprivation indices, four of its fourteen electoral ward were ranked in the top 2000 of the most deprived wards in England and Wales. It is a predominantly white area; in 2001, levels of diversity were below the national average. (Asian and black populations are below the national average and Chinese populations are above the national average). Elmside is part a two-tier or shire local authority, which means there are representatives on the CSP from both the City and the County Council (along with the other statutory and non-statutory agencies). Furthermore, recorded crime in Elmside is generally below the national average, with the exception of domestic burglary.

The CSP was established a decade ago, although it was substantially reorganised as a result of the CDA. On average, it comprised of a Board of thirteen attendees, which met every two and a half months for two hours and 43 minutes. The board deliberately excluded elected members.[12] It was supported by an Officer Support Group, which comprised of four members, one each from the police, the county council and the city council and one administrative support officer. In the 2002-2005 strategy the partnership covered seven priority areas – violent/hate crime, young people and crime, antisocial behaviour, property crime, substance misuse and persistent offenders. These priorities were implemented by five subgroups, some of which also had subgroups: for example, the antisocial behaviour working group had two subgroups, one for dealing with problem behaviour on the streets, such as street drinking and aggressive begging and another dealt with graffiti and fly-posting. This information is summarised in Figure one below.

Figure 1 Structure of Elmside CSP (based upon their most recent strategy)
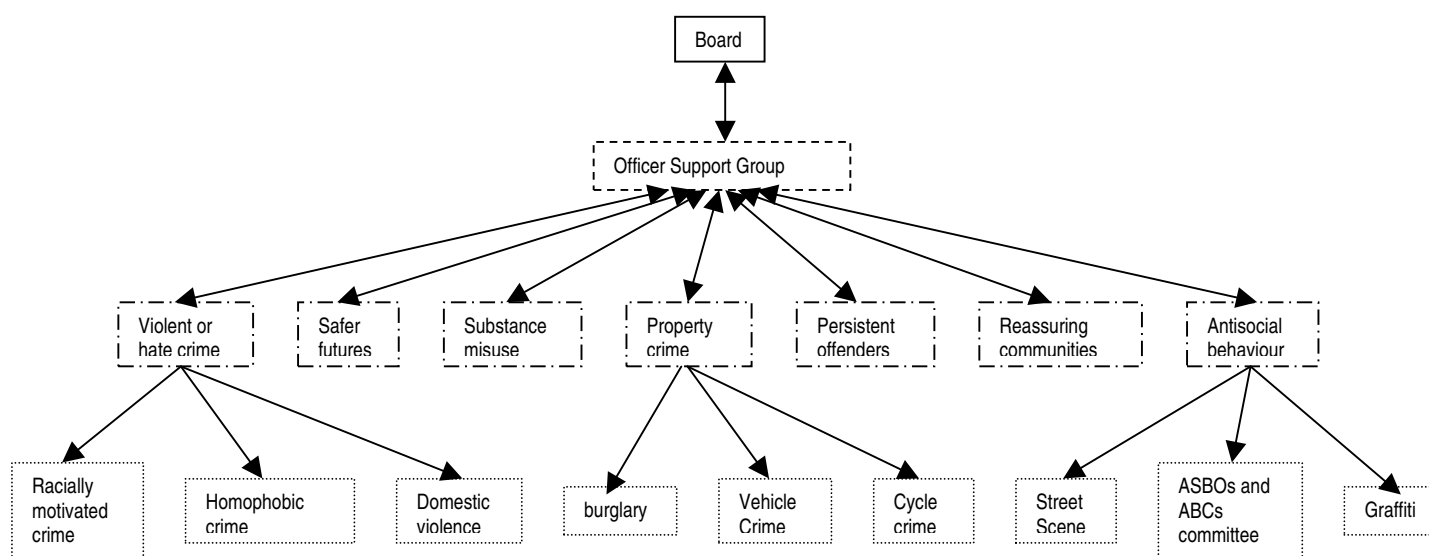
Practitioners' Views on the Responsibility for Crime and Disorder

Practitioners, primarily viewed the police, closely followed by the local authority, as responsible for crime and disorder in Elmside. Many interviewees expressed the view that 'we are all responsible' for crime and disorder, although when they went into detail, many viewed the responsible authorities (i.e. the police and the local authority) as sharing the responsibility for crime and disorder more than the other partners. This was because crime and disorder was viewed as the 'core business' of the police and local authority, for which they also had relevant performance indicators, unlike other partners.

Practitioners suggested the 'community' shared a limited amount of the responsibility for crime and disorder because the involvement of the 'community' in the partnership was limited.[13] The 'community' were involved directly through the statutory consultation process (including with 'hard-to-reach groups') and community conferences and indirectly through the involvement of community organisations in the subgroups. Some interviewees noted, however, that the partnership should improve on local involvement:

> I think one of the issues for me personally, is that we haven't really … fitted with the community as much as we should have done so I think there is work to be done. I see it as a constructive irritant, which is good … because I think everyone needs that … kind of challenge to what you're doing. I would like to see us go out and meet the public and that's something that I've changed my mind on. (Representative from the probation service)

This quotation suggests partners should aim for greater local involvement in the future, perhaps in a participative local democracy (Edward and Hughes, 2002). However, this was something they had yet to achieve. Hence there was a contradiction between the extent to which the 'community' *should* be involved and the extent to which the 'community' *is* involved in the partnership.

This contradiction in relation to 'community' involvement in the partnership suggests a wider gulf between who is and who should be responsible for crime and disorder, that is, between rhetoric and reality. Practitioners suggested, in theory, everyone (including the 'community') should be responsible but in practice, the police as well as the local authority continued to take the most responsibility for crime control:

> Well I suppose they [the partners] all should have responsibility, I think at the moment it's probably mainly the police, and that's about it really at the moment. But, I don't know, I suppose the youth offending team do as well, and everyone does to a certain extent, but I mean, the police, they see that as their core business, whereas the county, they might see that as one of the little strands even though everything they do will actually contribute, they don't actually necessarily see it that way. It's just totally changing the way of thinking with everyone, in every organisation, which is going to take a long time. (Member of the Officer Support Group, based at the County Council)

Practitioners' views, however, on the responsibility for crime and disorder may be different from those of members of the public.[14] Some interviewees suggested members of the public retained the view that the police were primarily responsible for crime and disorder. Indeed, one interviewee suggested the partnership should, through a carefully considered media strategy, encourage the public to view the responsibility for crime and disorder as shared between agencies, rather than the sole responsibility of the police.

Blurring of Boundaries?

'Responsibilisation', the idea that the responsibility for crime control should be shared, coincides with Cohen's (1985) view that the divisions drawn, in the past, between the state and civil society or between different organisations within the partnerships are blurring. In Elmside, the blurring of boundaries, between agencies, was undermined by what might be called 'joined-up independence'. Partners embraced the rhetoric of joined-up practice and partially subscribed to an 'ideology of unity' (the need for a consensual approach to partnership, free of inequality (Crawford, 1997)). At the same time, they maintained a degree of independence in their responsibility for community safety issues; they focused on the interests of their agency and the activities they performed on a daily basis, in which they were already 'experts'.[15] For example, interviewees only felt responsible for the parts of the strategy, on which they could deliver, individually through their organisation. Indeed there appeared little that partners delivered collectively, as a partnership:

> I suppose I feel responsible for delivering what we said in the strategy but … what should my objectives be, you know delivering on the strategy or should my objectives be to reduce crime in [Elmside]. It was ridiculous to give me an objective, … like an objective of reducing crime in [Elmside] given that there are so many factors that would influence it and my control, well I can control some of it but not everything. But I think that's quite interesting, it's the responsibility and how far are you responsible. (Representative from the City Council)

In the subgroups and at the board level, partners were also under pressure to look out for the interests of their own agency, which hampered joined-up practice. For example, in one subgroup meeting, the chair of the group asked attendees to prioritise bids for money, which

were to be submitted to the partnership Board. This was a difficult task as attendees tended to favour the bids that had come from their own organisations.

'Joined-up independence' might also explain the earlier distinction I drew between who *is* and who *should* be responsible for crime and disorder. 'Joined-up independence' suggests agencies with different 'core businesses' and levels of 'expertise' were, in practice, more or less responsible for community safety, despite believing that the responsibility *should* be shared.

Cohen (1985) also recognised the potential for the blurring of boundaries between the state and civil society, such that community organisations and actors would become an adjunct of the state, in the 'carceral project'. Again this seems unlikely in the context of the CSPs. Partners recognised the *potential* role of the 'community' (and thus civil society) in the local community safety agenda, but they also recognised their lack of involvement and the existence of many communities in Elmside:

> [W]ell that should be the focus of [the partnership], engaging communities' needs and dealing with particular problems, or particular situations, rather than the community of Elmside, because there isn't a community of Elmside, there's lots of different communities, and some people feel distant from the community safety partnership, and some will want to be close for particular reasons, Arfield [relatively affluent part of the city], they want to be close to the partnership but that's because they want their issues dealing with, and you've got to think whether you're dealing with it in preference to other communities, or whatever, because there's other sides of the town. (Representative from the police).

The blurring of the boundaries, between the state and the 'community', through the CSPs, appeared limited. It was perhaps more likely that community members retained individual identities and interests in the same way that the partners did.

Competing Priorities?

Diversity amongst practitioners and the 'community' also appeared to be accompanied by tensions between central government and local practitioners. Central government appeared to have a role in determining the local community safety agenda of Elmside CSP, which illustrates a contradictory trend within the partnerships of simultaneous centralisation and decentralisation by the state. On the surface, the government appeared to devolve responsibility for crime and disorder to Elmside, but at the same time they retained some control over the local community safety agenda, although not without resistance from local practitioners.

Central government[16] influenced Elmside CSP in a number of ways. Most interviewees noted the pressure they were put under by central government, in terms of deadlines and funding. For example, interviewees commented on the rushed nature of the audit and strategy, in the first round (between 1998 and 2001), as well as delays in the production of Home Office guidance. The partnership also had a limited amount of time, in which to spend money allocated to them, by central government,[17] compounded by delays in announcements about how much money they had to spend.

[The Home Office] set our deadlines for things for us. They give us pots of money to spend and they give us rather short deadlines, and say you've got to agree this spending plan by what seems like the end of next week … They put quite a lot of pressure on the partnership, obviously we've got a statutory duty to reduce crime, we've got to achieve things by the set deadlines and stuff. I suppose it's fair enough to a certain extent, but sometimes it feels that the pressure that the government put on is a bit unreasonable particularly around funding and agreeing funding. They'll take ages before they actually tell us how much money we've got and then all of a sudden they'll just say, oh we want to know by the end of the week what you're going to spend it on and we're expected to jump when they decide. (Representative from the County Council)

There were also rules about the way in which government money could be spent, which were largely inflexible, despite attempts by Elmside CSP to manoeuvre around them.[18] Furthermore, Elmside could be sanctioned; if they failed to spend their allotted money, on time and in accordance with the rules, they received less money the following year. This suggests the partnership could be coerced into abiding by Home Office rules.

The national priorities of central government, such as the recent focus on street crime and antisocial behaviour, also structured the operation of Elmside CSP. For example, Elmside funded a community safety project in July 2002, when media attention was focused on government plans to reduce street crime, in part because it tackled this national priority. In sum, central government appeared to successfully exert pressure upon Elmside CSP,[19] which is in accordance with the third interpretation of 'community governance' (which suggests, through its crime control policies, the state has enhanced its sovereign authority).

The priorities of local government[20] also had to be taken into account by Elmside. Elected members were excluded from attending board or subgroup meetings but they communicated with the partnership and were consulted with on controversial issues, through representatives from the local authority. The need to consult with elected members was perceived by the police in particular as a cause of delays in the decision-making process. For example, in a board meeting a police-led project was not approved because a city council representative had to consult with elected members, over the implications of the project for civil liberties. Tensions and resentment over the involvement of elected members were compounded because some partners felt elected members 'made the right noises' but were not prepared to follow them through with action. By contrast, a city council interviewee recognised the value of involving elected members; they constituted a source of information on local issues and thus enhanced communication with and involvement of local people.

Central government (and to a lesser extent local government) constraints met with resistance by local practitioners and local people.[21] Practitioners in Elmside attempted to manoeuvre around the rules relating to the spending of money, although they were not always successful. For example, the partnership had little success in its attempts to broaden the scope of the partnership development fund (PDF). Practitioners had some success, however, in re-negotiating the proposed merger between the Drug Action Team and the CSP, due to the complications caused by Elmside's two-tier local authority status. The latter example suggests 'people pieces' or (Foster, 2002) (or perhaps more aptly, 'practitioner pieces') matter a great deal in the operation of the partnerships.

Local people also appeared to resist partnership solutions and thus indirectly, central government. In Elmside there were vociferous community groups[22]; one group in particular pressured the partnership to address antisocial behaviour, associated with homeless people, in their ward. Nearly all interviewees commented on this resident's group and the group was frequently discussed at board meetings. Initially, the partnership resisted these community pressures, primarily because the crime problem was not as severe as in other areas of the city, and also because their strategy was thematic, rather than geographical in its focus. Community pressure was eventually effective; after a series of public meetings CCSP decided to respond to community concerns, making use of additional funding allotted to them by the newly formed Policing Standards Unit. This example of 'community' pressure supports the view that crime and disorder is a contested matter. In tackling the problem, the partnership had to balance resources, a range of concerns and possible solutions and the possibility of simply displacing the problem elsewhere.

The example also illustrates the difficulties of balancing the different priorities of local people, practitioners, local government and central government. This was further illustrated by an interviewee from the probation service. He reported that, whilst completing their first strategy, central government wrote to the partnership indicating they should have seven or eight priorities. Government suggested three of those should be violent crime, neighbourhood crime and robbery. The partnership, however, was also under pressure to take into account government Best Value Performance Indicators, such as robbery and burglary. This meant the list of partnership priorities was nearly complete, before the partnership took account of the priorities of local people and practitioners. It was unsurprising therefore, that there was little attempt to balance competing priorities:[23]

> So how do we balance it? I don't think we even try to consider balancing it. At the end of the day, really, and honestly I don't believe we balance that. We do an audit, we put out a list of priorities that nobody could argue with, and we all put together some tasks under those priorities, which people probably are going to do anyway, and so I don't believe that there is, I honestly don't believe we do a balancing act. I'm not sure whether we've actually got that balance which is saying, we can do a little bit of this, and a little bit less of that, as a result, I don't think we try to balance, I think we just say, oh well they're worried about this, that and the other, so let's put it in a strategy. (Representative from the Education department, County Council)

The difficulty, however, with including a wide range of priorities, is that at some point they cease being priorities at all. Another possible reason why there were few attempts to balance the priorities of central and local government is that some practitioners assumed they were one and the same. By contrast, other interviewees suggested government priorities would take precedence over local ones:

> [F]or example, I might say, what we really need to do in Elmside is over the course of the next ten years is really deal with the issues in the Buryfield [a relatively deprived area], and really have a long term plan for linking in with the community. Now the government might turn round and say, actually robbery is the most important thing because nationally mobile phones being stolen is quite important. We'll have 100 crimes a year or something, … of mobile phones, it may not be our priority, it may not be something the community has actually said is important, but we could get a focus coming to us nationally that says, actually you've got to deal with this problem. For me on the ground what that means is moving resources, so I might have to move

resources away from what might be the longer term issues to deal with the short term needs. (Representative from the police Service)

This might be because government holds the 'purse strings' to Elmside. For example, as I noted above, Elmside risked cuts in its budget if it failed to abide by government rules. If this is true, then it suggests the local residents of Elmside risk unfair treatment; on the one hand, they are expected to share the responsibility for crime and disorder, with other state and non-state agencies and on the other hand, they receive little in return, as their priorities are by-passed, in favour of priorities prescribed by central government.

Measuring Performance

Central government appeared to further control the local community safety agenda of Elmside CSP through measuring its performance. Since their inception in 1998, the partnerships (like most other public services) have been subject to the new public management approach to service delivery, which means the performance of individual agencies and the partnership as a whole have been closely scrutinised. This desire to survey partnership performance was evident in the comparison of different CSPs through the CDRP families types,[24] and more recently in the partnership self-assessment[25] procedure and IQUANTA.[26]

The Home Office can also 'name and shame' partnerships on particular issues. For example, in a board meeting, Elmside were warned by the Home Office about unacceptably high levels of vehicle crime. They also threatened to 'name and shame' particularly problematic car parks.[27] Not only does central government keep a watchful eye, from afar, on the performance of the partnerships; the partnerships also appear to be coerced into self-regulation and self-monitoring. For example, the CDA stipulates regular monitoring and evaluation, which fits in with a post-panoptic view of the state, in which discipline co-exists alongside an increasingly watchful central executive state (Boyne, 2000).

Responsibility, Rhetoric and Reality

In sum, the evidence from my research on Elmside CSP, for example about joined-up independence, indicates partnership working is more difficult than the rhetoric about partnerships would lead us to believe. The concept of partnership implies a shared responsibility for crime and disorder; in fact, whilst practitioners subscribed to the rhetoric, in practice, 'we' referred to the police and the local authority and to a limited extent the 'community'. A shared responsibility for crime and disorder appeared not to result in the blurring of boundaries between partners and between the partnership and civil society, because of the diversity of both partners (resulting in 'joined-up independence') and the 'community'. A shared responsibility for crime and disorder did, however, result in tensions between central government, local government, practitioners and local people, which were not always resolved. In Elmside CSP, given that central government holds the 'purse strings' to the partnership, local people and practitioners had limited opportunities to resist the concomitant pressures and thus the priorities of central government were likely to take precedence in local community safety matters.

There are three significant contradictions embedded within the discussion so far, which connect with the rhetoric-reality divide. First, there is a distinction between the role that *is* and *should* be played by the 'community' in the CSP. Second, and related to this, the

evidence suggests, whilst we *should* all be responsible, it is not the case that we *are* all responsible for crime and disorder. Again there is a gap between rhetoric and reality. In Elmside CSP, practitioners believed the responsibility for crime control *should* be shared, but the reality *was* quite different since some agencies (particularly the police and the local authority) were able to share that responsibility more than others, due to the lack of equality between partners and also the operation of 'joined-up independence'. This suggests that Garland (2001) is partially correct about the concept of 'responsibilisation'; it is occurring at the level of rhetoric rather than reality.

Third, the difficulties of joined-up working are compounded by the contradictory and duplicitous role played by central government. In Elmside CSP, the government appeared to devolve responsibility for crime and disorder to the local level, but in fact, retained a great deal of control over the local community safety agenda. Implementation was left to local practitioners and community-based organisations, who had only a few ways of resisting central government constraints, for example in relation to local community safety priorities. This implies that central government is in a powerful position.

The discussion so far indicates that the first and last interpretations of 'community governance', suggested by Edwards and Hughes (2002) are of particular significance. The state's sovereign authority in relation to law and order is stronger (not only because of its strategy of mass imprisonment but also) because of its ability to set the community safety agenda at the local level, whilst also devolving responsibility onto local agencies and organisations. However, the sovereign authority of the state is also weakened by the possibility of localised interpretation of that agenda, by community safety practitioners and their attempts to out-manoeuvre central government on local community safety issues.

The jury is out on whether, as time passes, the responsibility for crime control will become more shared, and reality will start to resemble the rhetoric. If local people and practitioners shared more of the responsibility for crime control, this could result in new opportunities for resisting the constraints of central government and for creating a participative local democracy, as Hughes and Edwards (2002) have discussed in their third interpretation of 'community governance'. At the same time, central government does not appear to be relinquishing control over the partnerships; if anything, the performance measurement agenda demonstrates that the 'honeymoon' is over and central government appears to be tightening its grip on the partnerships.

Notes

[1] Cambridge Institute of Criminology.

[2] In their guidance and legislation, the Home Office refer to the partnerships as CDRPs, although in my research so far, all three of the case studies opt to use an alternative name with which to brand their partnership. In fact two out of my three case studies prefer Community Safety Partnership, perhaps because it conveys a broader understanding of community safety which goes beyond just crime and disorder. In order to reflect practitioners' experiences I refer to the partnerships as Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) not CDRPs.

[3] The partnerships must take account of local crime and disorder issues, by conducting an audit of local crime problems, which has typically been based upon police data (Phillips, 2002). The audit is used to formulate a strategy or three-year plan of how the partnership will address crime and disorder in their area. Under the CDA, the partnership is also obliged to consult with local people about whether the strategy meets their needs.

[4] *The Culture of Control* has been criticised for a number of reasons (see Matthews, 2002a or Young, 2002a), such as getting its facts wrong in relation to the past and present (Braithwaite, 2002); covering too much ground, thus neglecting complexity and richness (Hudson, 2002); neglecting the micro-level (Indemaur, 2002); for being apolitical (Matthews, 2002b); and neglecting the role of critical criminology and feminism (Young, 2002b). Most pertinently, Crawford (personal communication) commented that the concept of 'responsibilisation' not only implies a degree of passivity amongst those who are on the receiving end of being 'responsibilised', but also implies that, prior to the 'responsibilised' era, there was no 'responsibilisation'.

[5] Edward and Hughes (2002) view the CSPs as 'community governance', which refers to appeals to 'community' over the last two decades, in order to encourage participation in crime control and other kinds of public policy, by non-state actors and organisations.

[6] The definition of community is contested; Crawford (1997) summarises conceptualisations of community that are of relevance to community safety practice : (i) a lack of community leads to a spiral of decline and more crime (ii) stronger community relations and institutions results in less crime, (iii) community reflects a shared set of attitudes and/or beliefs (iv) community represents a geographical location (v) a sense of community is necessary as a defence from 'outsiders' (vi) community is homogenous and reflects an ideology of unity (vii) community as a resource which can be utilised by community safety practitioners. This contested definition of community is not acknowledged in the CDA. Since Elmside is a bounded geographical area, community will be conceptualised, for the purposes of this paper, in terms of place.

[7] Late modernity indicates 'an historical phase of the modernization process without assuming that we are coming to the end, or even to the high point, of a centuries-old dynamic that shows no sign of letting up' (Garland, 2001: 77).

[8] In my research, I examine processes within and outcomes of the partnerships, the impact (if any) of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act on practice, and the resultant implications for governmentality and responsibility for crime control. My research will also explore the significance of context for the partnerships, in particular : unitary vs. two-tier authorities, towns vs. cities.

[9] This paper is based upon research conducted since April 2002 and includes approximately 15 in-depth interviews with members of the partnership board and working group (both past and present). I have also observed 6 board meetings, 3 working group meetings, 1 OSG meeting. I have also analysed minutes and agendas from 1996 to the present. Research in this case study will also include analysis of police data once I have access to this data, although this is yet to be completed.

[10] Theory adapts to accommodate research findings and the research process adapts and unfolds according to theory.

[11] In the 2001 census, 2.3% of the population in Cambridge was unemployed, compared to 3.4%, nationally.

[12] When the 1998 Crime and Disorder Bill emerged, Elmside CSP decided elected members would be included in the partnership, via twice yearly events. They were also consulted with on the strategy, as well as on specific or controversial issues. These arrangements were chosen because of difficulties in getting a spread of political views at most partnership meetings.

[13] The finding that the 'community' has a limited role in the partnership has been demonstrated in other research. For example, Coleman, Sim and Whyte (2002), in their research on CSPs in Merseyside, found the needs of the 'community' were largely ignored. Similarly Edwards (2002), in research in Nottingham and Leicester, found the degree of citizen involvement (beyond the statutory consultation process) was ill-defined and the partnership was still experimenting with how best to address this issue. Foster (2002) also found that community consultation is often determined by practitioners' agendas and practitioners still work on the behalf of, rather than alongside, local people.

[14] Without interviewing local residents it would be difficult to determine if practitioners' perceptions of citizens' beliefs about who is responsible for crime and disorder are accurate.

[15] This contradiction is also noted by Crawford (2001) who suggests that the partnerships are joined-up but fragmented; whilst partnerships are encouraged to take a joined-up approach, the partners are undeniably different in terms of their traditions, cultures, practices, power base and access to resources.

[16] Central government makes its views known to the partnership via the Regional Government Office. The views of practitioners in Elmside CSP on their Government Office were mixed suggesting a lack of clarity in its role; they saw them as a funnel for relevant information, a source of support and advice or they blamed them for delays in information or suggested they lacked authority on most matters, with the exception of funding deadlines and rules.

[17] Since 1999, money has been allocated on a yearly basis (which makes it difficult for partnerships to commit to long-term projects or permanent staff) with different amounts for each of the three main funding stream - Safer Communities Initiative (SCI), Partnership Development Fund (PDF) and Communities Against Drugs (CAD). The funding process has recently changed with the merging of SCI and CAD and the scrapping of PDF.

[18] For example, Elmside CSP approached the Government Office about spending additional PDF money in a way that did not strictly adhere to the rules. Even still, the additional money had to be spent, in a limited way, upon partnership development and training for tenants associations or other community-based groups and not on actual projects as the partnership hoped.

[19] Similarly, Hallsworth (2002) in his research in South-East London found that practitioners lacked autonomy, which prevented them from developing humane ways of addressing street crime. Coleman, Sim and Whyte (2002) also found, in their research in Merseyside, that the partnerships extend, rather than challenge, the decision-making powers of the state, at both the local (particularly the police as an 'authority' on community safety) and national level. When these findings are taken together they suggest the third interpretation of 'community governance' is plausible, that is, the state has tightened its control over it's citizens and has enhanced its sovereign authority.

[20] The City Council is currently predominantly Liberal Democrat in its make-up (holding 26 out of 42 seats) with Labour holding 14 seats and the Conservatives holding the remaining two.

[21] This is further supported by Edwards (2002) who found that there are opportunities for resistance at the local level because central government is dependent upon 'street-level bureaucrats' to enact their demands. Similarly, Hughes (1996) found, in the early 1990s, that the reason for the non-standardised implementation of community safety was partially attributable to local actors interpreting advice from central government in diverse ways.

[22] Practitioners also recognised there to be a number of other community groups such as cycle groups, lesbigay groups and another residents' group in a different area of the city, who were active and interested to ensure their priorities were incorporated in the strategy.

[23] The difficulty with this approach to priority setting is that if there is a wide range of priorities, then at some point they cease being priorities at all.

[24] The CDRP family-groups were devised by the Home Office. See Leigh et al (2000) or Harper et al. (2002).

[25] The partnership self-assessment examines partnership processes, such as delivery and is completed by practitioners. See http://www.crimereduction.co.uk/selfassessment/

[26] IQUANTA compares partnerships on volume crime rates. See http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/aud0403.pdf

[27] It transpired that the Home Office were confusing figures for Elmside, with the County as a whole, and so there was little to worry about. This example does, however, illustrate the powers of coercion wielded by the Home Office.

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