

## Introduction

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It has been 20 years since *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: an international journal* was launched. To mark the occasion, the publishers and I agreed to produce a commemorative issue in which we asked five distinguished members of the board<sup>1</sup> to provide their perspectives on how crime prevention and community safety discourses had changed in that time.

As the five contributions make clear, the research agenda and policy implications have changed markedly in those 20 years, albeit not necessarily in a positive direction. Back in the 1990s, debates over crime prevention and whether or not it should be broadened to encompass community safety more generally focused to a large extent on property crime, especially burglary. In the UK, a range of initiatives addressed burglary prevention through the identification of at-risk communities (hot spots) and households (hot dots) and the provision of a series of measures directed at enhanced protection, notably through target hardening, burglar alarms and neighbourhood watch. Indeed at one point, the UK promised to be the burglar alarm capital of the world, with more households ‘alarmed’ than anywhere else. But of course, those who purchased alarms were not usually those at most risk, a point reflected in a plethora of national and local initiatives to improve home security for the most vulnerable. These included the *Five Towns Programme*, the *Safer Cities Initiative*

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<sup>1</sup> Drafts of the five papers were distributed among the ‘team’ and also independently peer-reviewed by other referees. Each paper was reviewed by at least three referees, including at least one of the other contributors and at least one independent referee. In the latter respect, I am grateful for the constructive and sometimes critical advice of: Rachel Armitage; Garner Clancey; Pam Davies; Bonnie Fisher; Dan Gilling; and Lesley Simmonds.

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and *Locks for Pensioners*, a programme tailored to older residents of crime-prone areas.

And this emphasis appeared successful, even if not all individual projects were effective. The first fifteen or more years of the new millennium saw a decrease in crime in the UK and elsewhere in the developed world, even surviving the period of austerity and reductions in, *inter alia*, police numbers. However, crime seems to be increasing again, and it is particularly appropriate to revisit crime prevention initiatives, as the five papers in this issue do.

The first paper, by Nick Tilley and Gloria Laycock, addresses the issue of effectiveness directly. However, while early twenty-first-century UK initiatives such as the *Crime Reduction Programme* (CRP), the *What Works Centre for Crime Reduction* (WWCCR), the *National Police Improvement Agency*, and its successor, the *College of Policing*, were explicitly committed to addressing the ‘what works’ question and to developing evidence-based policies, the reality was that they were not fully exploited, and paid lip service to rigorous evaluation prior to policy implementation. Additionally, as the earlier *Locks for Pensioners* initiative illustrated, the lessons from failure, often as valuable as those from success, tended to be ignored.

The lack of government enthusiasm for crime prevention policies is addressed in the context of the USA by Steven Lab in the second paper. Within a federal system the role of central government in taking a lead in policy development is constrained, but Lab argues that even at the local level the enthusiasm for promoting crime prevention policies is noticeably lacking. In Lab’s words, there is an ‘absence of any driving force giving direction to a true prevention movement’. One exception that has benefited from central funding is the *Project Safe Neighborhoods* (PSN) that targets general violence, especially firearms and gang behaviour, and there is some evidence that it has been successful. Perhaps the best known US initiative, though, is the International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Association, an independent body that certifies individuals as CPTED practitioners, but—in contrast to the *Secured By Design* programme in the UK—does not certify buildings or communities as CPTED compliant. The reasons for this lack of government commitment to crime prevention are partly, Lab argues, because crime prevention is not a politically expedient activity. The fact that crime prevention initiatives rarely provide a ‘quick fix’ limits their appeal to politicians looking to the forthcoming elections, leading to a lack of commitment in the USA and, arguably, an exasperation with the ‘what works’ agenda in the UK.

One research-led policy development that has gained cross-national acceptance has been recognition of repeat victimisation as a common feature across a range of offence types, provoking policies aimed at reducing crime by targeting recent victims. Ken Pease has been at the forefront of such initiatives, and in the third contribution to this volume he and his colleagues address the apparent demise of policies concerning repeat victims. This is ironic at a time when the reduction in crime has been balanced by an increased proportion of those offences committed being repeats. Pease therefore argues that targeting repeat victims is a particularly cost-effective strategy but one that appears to have lost interest among policy makers.

One particular feature of CPTED that has been developed by Danielle Reynald and others is the concept of guardianship. In the fourth contribution to this issue,



Reynald and her colleagues step away from policy measures and look in more detail at the principles that underpin them, especially the ways in which increased guardianship can help reduce crime rates. Reynald considers the use of guardianship in the literature, distinguishing between guardianship by people (e.g. neighbours) and guardianship by objects (e.g. locks and bolts), which broadly correspond to the difference between community crime prevention through neighbourhood watch and target hardening. Reynald's own preference is for a definition based around the first of these, guardianship by people, and she identifies three crucial dimensions if guardianship is to impact on crime: availability or presence of guardians, supervision or monitoring by guardians, and willingness of guardians to intervene when necessary.

Taken together, these four contributions illustrate the extent to which crime prevention discourses have focused on property crimes, although Reynald and her colleagues note its useful application to other offence types, including sexual offences and cybercrime. The final contribution, by Sandra Walklate, takes this on board by arguing that in addressing property crimes, crimes against women have been marginalised by crime prevention discourses. Noting the extent to which violence against women is commonly a process rather than an incident, or even a series of related incidents, she addresses the fear, risk and impact that coalesce to make violence the lived reality for many, particularly marginalised, women.

While it is true that the crime prevention and community safety agenda is broadening to encompass a wider range of crimes, *inter alia* stalking, hate crimes, human trafficking, forced marriage and cybercrimes, it is equally the case that the dominant discourse is one that addresses crimes by the other, the outsider, rather than the insider, spouse, partner, neighbour, employer or friend. To illustrate the limitations of this approach, it is pertinent to end this editorial with an example of crimes directed at tourist victims. In the Caribbean, one of the preferred crime prevention strategies is to encourage the promulgation of all-inclusive resorts, where holiday-makers can relax, insulated from the crime and disorder problems experienced in the 'outside world': the touristic equivalent of gated communities. As I write, it seems that such crime prevention strategies offered no protection to the two female tourists raped at gunpoint by a resort employee.<sup>2</sup> It is only when crime prevention addresses the risks posed by insiders, as well as outsiders, that it will truly come of age. It is the intention of this journal to be at the forefront of this journey.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.travelmole.com/news\\_feature.php?c=setreg&region=3&m\\_id=\\_rdmbmn&w\\_id=35249&news\\_id=2034250](http://www.travelmole.com/news_feature.php?c=setreg&region=3&m_id=_rdmbmn&w_id=35249&news_id=2034250), accessed 3 October 2018.

