

Policing Partnerships:

‘The challenges of working across organisational boundaries, cultures and established ways of working’



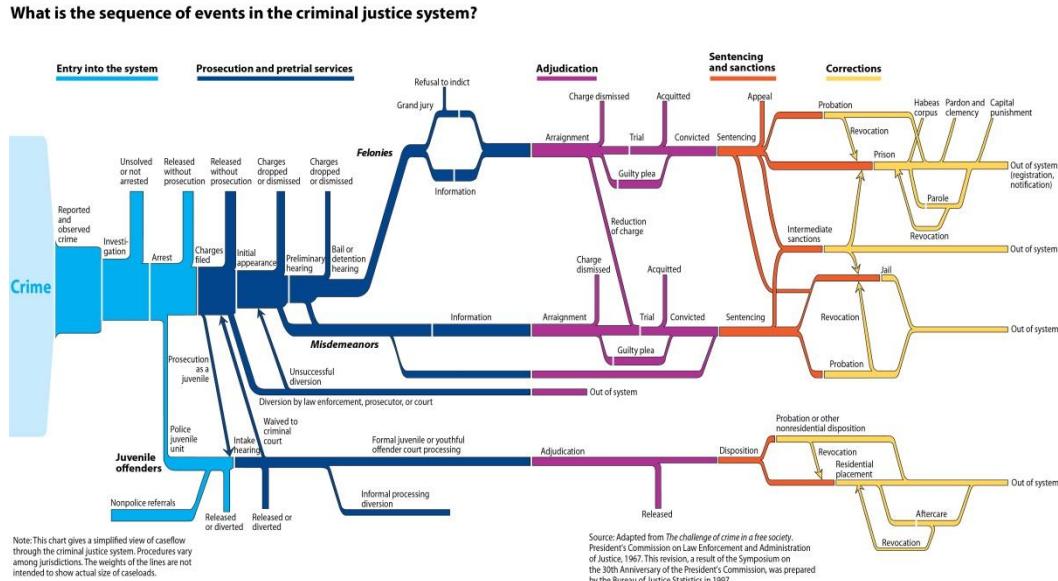
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Aims:

- Introduce the ambitions and appeal of partnership working.
- Identify some of the ingrained and deep-seated structural, organisational and cultural challenges that attend to working in partnerships in the field of policing and community safety.
- Say something about the nature of partnership relations and how they differ from contractual ones.
- Assess the role of the private sector in policing partnerships and the (potential) growth of private sector involvement.
- Conclude with some thoughts about the implications of austerity for partnership working.

Early precursors:

- Report of the President's Commission (1967) *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* – A 'systems analysis' of criminal justice.
- Systemic mode of thinking: Funnel-like qualities (Blumstien).
- Home Office modelling of criminal justice to emphasise its inter-dependence and 'system quality' (Morgan 1985; Moxon 1985).
- Criminal justice 'non-system' (Cohn 1978).
- Identification of 'system failures' and 'institutionalised gaps'.



The changing landscape:

- Since the 1980s the promise of partnerships
 - Circular 8/84
 - Morgan Report 1991
 - Crime and Disorder Act 1998

'Over the past two decades... a whole new infrastructure has been assembled at the local level that addresses crime and disorder in a quite different manner... The new infrastructure is strongly oriented towards a set of objectives and priorities – prevention, security, harm-reduction, loss-reduction, fear-reduction – that are quite different from the traditional goals of prosecution, punishment and "criminal justice".'
(Garland 2001: 16-17)

1. Many crime and policing issues are by their very nature ‘wicked problems’ (Rittel and Webber 1973) - that have multiple causes, many of which are interdependent.

Hence, they demand the engagement of multiple actors and agencies.

2. The ‘rat problem’:

- *‘If a rat is found in an apartment, it is a housing inspection responsibility; if it runs into a restaurant, the health department has jurisdiction; if it goes outside and dies in an alley, public works takes over. More complex undertakings compound the confusion.’* (Mudd 1984: 8)

Wilson and Kelling, developing upon Mudd’s analogy, add:

- *‘a police officer who takes public complaints about rats seriously will go crazy trying to figure out what agency in the city has responsibility for rat control and then inducing it to kill the rats’* (1989: 52).

The potential radical shift in governance:

- recognises that the levers and causes of crime lie far from the traditional reach of criminal justice;
- acknowledges that there is no ‘single agency solution’ to crime - it is multi-faceted in both its causes and effects;
- recognises the need for social responses which reflect crime’s multiple aetiology;
- enables a shift to ‘up-stream’, early intervention – causes not symptoms;
- allows for an holistic approach which is ‘problem-focused’ rather than ‘bureaucracy-premised’ (i.e. existing service provision);
- affords the potential co-ordination and pooling of expertise, information and resources – *target scarce resources.*

Collaborative advantage is ‘gained through collaboration when something is achieved that could not have been achieved by any organization acting alone.’

Collaborative inertia ‘relates to the often-pertaining actual outcome, in which the collaboration makes only hard fought or negligible progress’ (Vangen & Huxham 2003: S62).

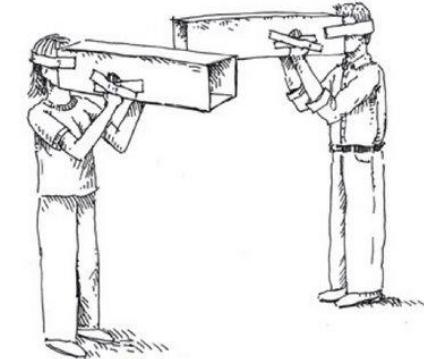
‘The possibility for collaborative advantage rests in most cases on drawing synergy from the differences between organisations, different resources and different expertises. Yet those same differences stem from different organisational purposes and these inevitably mean that they will seek different benefits from each other out of the collaboration’. (Huxham & Vangen 2005: 82)

Systems thinking eschews:

- The existence of structural conflicts over ideology, purpose and interests.
- Conflict and mediation are necessary aspects of (criminal) justice.
- ‘Independent interdependence’ between organisations constitutes ‘the weak force which binds the criminal justice system together’. (Rock 1990: 39)
- A System logic accords to the partners a unity of purpose where this may not exist.
- This does not mean that the basis of a consensus cannot be constructed, but rather to do so necessitates the acceptance of difference and the active negotiation of commonalities, as opposed to an assumed ‘ideology of unity’ (Crawford 1997: 137).

Coordination Challenges:

- Differential power relations between partners.
- Tensions between different organisations – lack of coordination - '*joined-up but fragmented*'.
- *Holistic or myopic?* Wide-angled but tunnelled vision: Managerial reforms encourage an *intra*-organisational focus that pays scant attention to the task of managing *inter*-organisational relations.
- Short-termism – *narrow political horizons*.
- Demands for trust and the institutionalisation of distrust – *through performance management*.
- Co-operation and negotiation in a cold climate of competition.



Barriers:

- a reluctance of some agencies to participate;
- the dominance of certain (policing agendas);
- unwillingness to share information;
- conflicting interests, priorities and cultural assumptions;
- lack of inter-organizational trust;
- desire to protect budgets;
- lack of capacity and expertise;
- over-reliance on informal contacts and networks;
- patchy involvement of the private sector; and
- the role of the voluntary sector frequently marginalized.

- The failure to implement (the spirit of) s. 115.
- Data sharing remains one of the most intractable and contentious problems
- Technological and cultural barriers often undermine partnership work.
- Pervasive and deeply ingrained reluctance to share information between agencies.
- This is sometimes based on an over-interpretation (and occasionally a misinterpretation) of the current data protection legislation.
- Remains substantial ignorance about and misunderstanding of the implications of data protection legislation for data sharing.
- In risk adverse organisational cultures, data protection is commonly cited as a reason not to release data, often in circumstances in which it may be perfectly legitimate to do so (Thomas and Walport 2008: 37).

Good quality data collection, management and use:

- Allow for joined-up provision and continuity of service over-time and between different service providers;
- Afford opportunities for joint analysis and coordinated working between relevant agencies;
- Provide the capacity to track individuals and families through service provision/diverse interventions, and assess their trajectories;
- Enable interventions provided by different service providers to be used in a more strategic manner in which consideration is given to the relations between them and how they interact;
- Provide an evidence-base from which to assess effectiveness and to evaluate what works, for whom and in which contexts;
- Ensure the best use of resources and facilitate best practice;
- Afford opportunities to monitor performance and render services accountable and reviewable.



Most ‘Public-Private Partnerships’ are not partnerships but contractual relations – whilst both are concerned with the distribution of responsibilities and obligations, they are fundamentally different in form, norms and ethos.

Relations	Partnership	Contractual
Form	Negotiation	Contract
Norms	Reciprocity, Resource Barter and Mutuality	Exchange
Medium	Trust	Price
Culture	Cooperation	Competition
Degree of Dependence	Interdependent	Independent ('choice')
Accountability	Blurred: 'many hands'	Formal Reviewability
Conflict Processing	Deliberation, Diplomacy and Adaptation	Legality – in the ‘Shadow of the Courts’

Private sector involvement in policing is on the agenda like never before – ‘lifting the taboo’:

- **Budgetary pressures:** Unprecedented reductions in police budgets and police officer numbers – how to do more with less? - ‘the rational response to austerity’ (Oliver Letwin).
- **Political will:** Ideological commitment by the Government to the greater private sector involvement.
- **New Commissioning infrastructure:** Role of PCCs given their commissioning role, control of police budgets and accountability to the electorate – a volatile mix of politics and public sensibilities.
- **More mature private security industry:** In the light of regulation – Security Industry Act 2001 + SIA.



In June 2012, David Taylor-Smith, head of G4S for the UK and Africa, predicted that private companies would be running large parts of the British police service within five years driven by a combination of '**budgetary pressure and political will**'.

He added:

'We have been long-term optimistic about the police and short-to-medium-term pessimistic about the police for many years. Our view was, look, we would never try to take away core policing functions from the police but for a number of years it has been absolutely clear as day to us – and to others – that the configuration of the police in the UK is just simply not as effective and as efficient as it could be... I have always found it somewhere between patronising and insulting the notion that the public sector has an exclusive franchise on some ethos, spirit, morality – it is just nonsense ... we employ 675,000 people and they are primarily motivated by pretty much the same as would motivate someone in the public sector.'



- Cheshire Police contract with Capgemini to provide finance, facilities and fleet management;
- Cleveland Police 10-year contract with Steria;
- Lincolnshire Police signed a £200m contract with G4S to build/staff a police station (for 10 years).
- West Midlands/Surrey ‘Business Partnering for Police’ (BPP) programme 2012.
- Olympic ‘Saga’!
- PCC elections - Nearly a third of elected PCCs made it clear in their manifestos that they would oppose outsourcing to the private sector.
- Some PCCs considering outsourcing and sponsorship agreements.



National Audit Office Report (2013) identified a lack of transparency and scrutiny with regard to major contractors in delivering public services and a growing crisis of confidence in contracting out processes.

1. It questioned whether there is sufficient competition in contracted-out public services and whether the rise of a few major contractors is in the public interest.
2. Highlighted the issue of whether contractors' profits reflect a fair return and suggested that at present there is limited transparency over rewards that contractors make.
3. Asks how we know that contractors are delivering services to the high standards expected.

Transaction costs - high costs associated with overseeing contracts.
Government/Managers have little time to develop the necessary skills and systems to do so.

- What should the parameters of the public police role be?
- What core tasks should be performed by sworn constables with legal powers? Which tasks might better be undertaken by others?
- How should the police relate to other providers of policing – the ‘extended policing family’?
- What are the moral, cultural and organisational limits to outsourcing and marketisation?
- How should sources of police income generation and sponsorship be arranged and governed?
- What principles should govern the involvement of the private sector in public policing?
- How to ensure the integrity of private sector initiatives and the standards of service delivery?

- The Independent Police Commission warned: ‘the service, constrained by the lack of finances available to it, risks outsourcing key aspects of policing to the private sector in an ad-hoc and unprincipled manner’ (Stevens 2013: 13).
- Need for an informed public debate about the rationales, principles and implications.
- What are the implications for the legitimacy of authority?
- Will marketization herald further erosion to the idea of the police as ‘sacred symbols of national pride’, as a result of which they come to be seen as a more profane and politically contested organisation?

Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision, values and norms of partners involved to establish collaborative advantage • Strong leadership and strategic direction (focused on proving a central coordination effort, getting buy-in from partners and managing the project) • Full integration of project aims into partner organisations' aims • Clear project brief, roles and responsibilities • Core groups to oversee problem solving approach
Data sharing and problem focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity regarding the problem(s) being tackled through focused analysis to ensure a properly problem focused intervention • Regular exchange of relevant information • Having focused interventions in each area • Including researchers within partnership • Continual evaluation to review and inform activity of group
Communication and co-location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular face to face contact and communication between partners • Co-location of agencies, partners and staff • Presence of partners at local level
Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility of structures and processes • Having a research partner as an active member of the task force • Clear monitoring, accountability and integrity mechanisms • Having operational groups to implement strategies • Involvement of most appropriate agencies
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience in working together in partnership (i.e. established relationships) • Secondment of skilled officers into joint team • Careful selection of appropriate partners • Joint training of team members

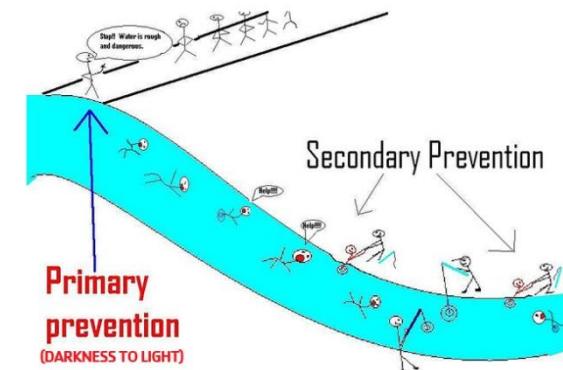
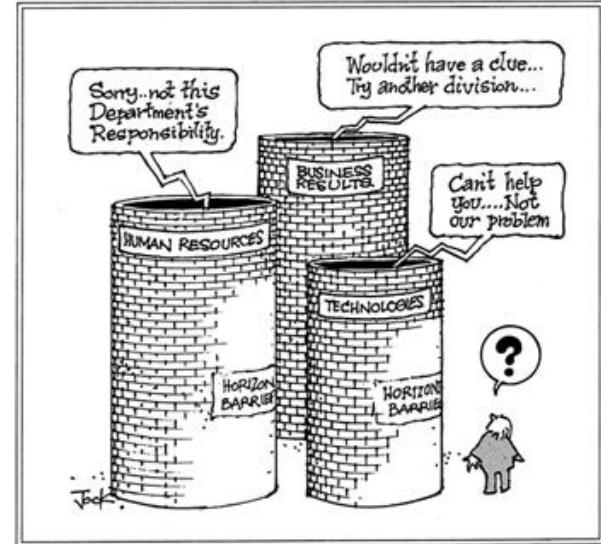
Berry, G., Briggs, P., Erol, R. and van Staden, L. (2011) *The Effectiveness of Partnership Working in a Crime and Disorder Context: A Rapid Evidence Assessment*, Research Report 52, Home Office, p. iii.

- Recognising power asymmetries
- Acknowledging difference
- Negotiating conflict – ‘collaborative disruption’
- Clarifying division of labour (limitations, roles and responsibilities)
- Knowing organisational limitations
- Promoting trust, mutual understanding and regard for difference
- Developing methods to encourage shared ownership
- Developing shared values and understandings:

“Shared understanding demands that the partners understand each other’s positions well enough to have meaningful dialogue about the different interpretations of the problem, and to exercise collective intelligence about how best to seek to resolve it.”

Responding to austerity – various scenarios.
Partners (including the police)...

1. **retreat into their silos** - retract, redraw their boundaries and off-load responsibilities to other organisations.
2. look to make **short-term cost savings**.
3. ask **fundamental questions** about purpose, expertise, responsiveness and effective service delivery.
4. look for **collaborative advantages** as a means of finding efficiencies.
5. invest in **up-stream preventive solutions** to crime problems.



Questions?

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