

When Volunteers Become Part of Crime Prevention: Organised Voluntarism in Collaborative Public Safety Partnerships

Bengt Andersen

bengt.andersen@oslomet.no

OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University

Helene Oppen Ingebrigtsen Gundhus

University of Oslo

Research Article

Keywords: collaborative policing, crime prevention, organised voluntarism, volunteers, multi-agency partnerships

Posted Date: October 14th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-11082673/v1>

License: © ⓘ This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

[Read Full License](#)

Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

Collaborative crime prevention increasingly involves voluntary organisations and unpaid citizens, yet little is known about how collaboration reshapes volunteering itself. Drawing on qualitative secondary analysis of ethnographic material from a Norwegian youth crime-prevention initiative, this article examines how volunteers were incorporated into a multi-agency partnership involving police, welfare services and civil society. Volunteers provided distinctive relational support, while recruitment, matching and follow-up were shaped by professional assessments and interagency coordination. We conceptualise this as organised voluntarism: voluntary engagement was neither displaced nor autonomous, but reorganised within collaborative crime-prevention structures that simultaneously enabled and constrained it.

Introduction

The Leave & Return initiative

The empirical case examined in this article is Leave & Return, a collaborative youth crime prevention initiative implemented in Oslo between 2006 and 2009. The initiative was run by the Oslo Red Cross but embedded within SALTO, the city-wide collaborative crime prevention structure linking the City of Oslo and Oslo Police District. SALTO provided the initiative's broader institutional anchoring, while responsibility for interventions concerning individual participants remained with their local district authorities, including convening the multi-agency responsibility groups. Leave & Return's staff functioned as a link between public agencies, the young person and private networks, while recruiting, matching and supporting the adult volunteers. The volunteers had no formal responsibility for coordinating interventions – their distinctive role was to provide relational and social support.

The initiative targeted young people aged approximately 14–20 who were involved in, or considered at high risk of becoming involved in, criminal and drug-related environments in central Oslo. Rather than focusing exclusively on law enforcement, the project sought to strengthen participants' social inclusion by combining formal welfare interventions with sustained personal relationships. A central ambition was to support young people in disengaging from criminal environments while facilitating their access to education, employment, housing and ordinary social networks.

Leave & Return occupied the boundary between secondary and tertiary prevention. While it was not formally a youth contract or criminal justice sanction, its target group included both young people at risk of entering criminal environments and those with substantial offending histories. In some cases, participation became intertwined with decisions concerning conditional or custodial sentences. The initiative thus formed part of a broader Norwegian development towards intensive, individually tailored and cross-sectoral follow-up of young offenders, including youth contracts and follow-up teams (Egge and Gundhus, 2012).

Representatives from the police, child welfare services, district welfare agencies, schools and voluntary organisations participated in regular meetings where individual cases, preventive measures and responsibilities were discussed. What distinguished the initiative from many other collaborative crime prevention programmes was the prominent role assigned to unpaid adult volunteers. The project was explicitly designed around the assumption that volunteers could provide forms of support unavailable to professionals. They were expected to function as trustworthy adult role models, establish long-term personal relationships with participants, introduce young people to ordinary social environments, and help expand their social networks beyond criminal peer groups. Volunteers were thus conceived not as peripheral contributors but as a central preventive resource.

Yet this division of roles also created a central tension. Volunteers were expected to establish close and trusting relationships with young people while operating within a collaborative structure in which professional actors retained formal authority. Leave & Return therefore combined ambitions of horizontal collaboration with a clear institutional distinction between professional authority and voluntary engagement.

Leave & Return is analytically significant as an early attempt to institutionalise collaborative crime prevention by integrating public authorities and civil society actors. Revisiting the initiative almost two decades later allows us to examine how partnership, shared responsibility and voluntarism were translated into everyday collaborative practice.

From collaborative policing to organised voluntarism

Over the past three decades, crime prevention has increasingly been understood as a shared responsibility. Research on plural policing, partnership policing and collaborative governance has demonstrated how crime prevention is increasingly accomplished through networks involving police, municipalities, welfare agencies, schools, voluntary organisations and local communities (e.g., Loader, 2000, Crawford and Cunningham, 2015, Krogh, 2022). Rather than signalling a withdrawal of the state, these developments reflect a reorganisation of governance in which responsibility is distributed across actors possessing different forms of authority, expertise and legitimacy.

Within this broader development, collaborative governance has become a key analytical perspective for understanding how organisations with distinct institutional mandates coordinate action around shared public problems (e.g. Klijn and Koppenjan, 2016). Instead of relying exclusively on hierarchical command or market-based coordination, collaborative governance emphasises negotiation, reciprocity, trust and joint problem solving across organisational boundaries. In policing research, these perspectives have generated valuable insights into partnership arrangements, multi-agency crime prevention and local governance networks, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges associated with collaborative forms of public action (Strype et al., 2014, Crawford, 2024).

Research on voluntary citizen involvement in policing has predominantly focused on patrol groups and neighbourhood-watch schemes within the “extended police family” (Button, 2002; Bullock, 2014; Foshaugen, 2025; van Steden and Mehlbaum, 2019). Swedish research shows that police-citizen partnerships can take different organisational forms, police volunteers operate within a space created and defined by the police, whereas Missing People Sweden occupies a civic space created more independently (Uhnöo and Hansen Löfstrand, 2018). Such arrangements nevertheless involve mutual dependencies and close collaboration that can blur organisational and legal boundaries (Hansen Löfstrand and Uhnöo, 2020). This literature advances our understanding of voluntary involvement in policing, but pays less attention to how collaboration transforms volunteers’ roles, autonomy and everyday practices once they become incorporated into formal crime-prevention systems. This matters because volunteers are valued for flexibility, continuity, trust and access to informal relationships, yet participation in collaborative arrangements may simultaneously embed these qualities within professional assessment, organisational routines and interagency coordination.

These questions have been addressed more explicitly within research on organised voluntarism. Rather than treating volunteering as inherently informal or independent, this literature demonstrates how voluntary organisations increasingly operate within institutional environments characterised by public funding, accountability requirements, managerial coordination and professionalisation (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). Consequently, voluntary organisations increasingly occupy what Fyfe and Milligan describe as an intermediate position between autonomous civic action and state governance. Volunteers continue to represent civil society, yet their activities are increasingly organised through institutional arrangements shaped by public policy.

Subsequent research has further demonstrated that this organisational transformation also affects volunteering itself. As voluntary organisations assume more complex responsibilities and become integrated into welfare governance, the relationship between volunteers and professionals changes. Organisational growth, managerial requirements and accountability structures tend to increase the importance of professional coordination, while volunteers increasingly operate within frameworks established by paid staff and formal organisational routines (Milligan and Fyfe, 2005, Neville, 2016). Rather than eliminating voluntary engagement, these developments reconfigure the conditions under which it takes place.

Despite these important insights, organised voluntarism has rarely been examined within collaborative prevention. Existing studies have primarily focused on welfare provision, community development and social care, whereas comparatively little attention has been paid to how voluntary engagement is organised within crime prevention partnerships involving police, welfare agencies and civil society organisations. This represents an important gap. Crime prevention partnerships bring together actors operating under markedly different institutional conditions, including legal authority, statutory responsibility, professional discretion and voluntary commitment. Understanding how volunteers participate within such arrangements therefore requires attention not only to collaboration between organisations but also to the organisational transformation of voluntarism itself.

Drawing on an ethnographic study of *Leave & Return* – one of the earliest Norwegian initiatives to fully integrate volunteers into a formal collaborative crime prevention network – this article addresses that gap. Building on recent work on qualitative secondary analysis (Hughes et al., 2022), we revisit ethnographic material collected in 2008–2009 to examine how volunteers became incorporated into collaborative policing in everyday practice and ask: *How does collaborative policing reshape the role of volunteers in crime prevention?*

By addressing this question, the article contributes to two closely related literatures. First, it extends research on collaborative policing by directing attention towards the changing organisational conditions of voluntary engagement. Second, it contributes to research on organised voluntarism by demonstrating how processes previously identified within welfare governance also unfold within collaborative crime prevention, where voluntary action becomes intertwined not only with welfare institutions but also with policing, risk management and preventive governance.

Methods

Research design

This article draws on qualitative material originally collected during an ethnographic evaluation of *Leave & Return*. Rather than asking whether the project “worked”, we offer a new analytical interpretation of how collaboration between public institutions and civil society actors was organised, negotiated and enacted in everyday practice.

Accordingly, the article adopts an approach informed by qualitative secondary analysis (QSA). Rather than treating the temporal distance from the original fieldwork as a methodological limitation, we understand it as an analytical resource. As Hughes, Hughes and Tarrant (2022) argue, revisiting qualitative material after a substantial period of time may generate new insights because changing theoretical perspectives, research questions and policy developments enable researchers to reconnect existing data with new analytical debates. In this sense, the present study represents a configurative form of qualitative secondary analysis, where empirical material produced in one context is reinterpreted considering subsequent conceptual developments regarding collaborative governance, voluntarism and plural policing.

Importantly, the present analysis has not been undertaken by researchers detached from the original project. Instead, the first author conducted the original fieldwork, providing detailed contextual knowledge of the empirical setting, while the analytical distance created by almost two decades of subsequent research enables the material to be approached with new theoretical questions. Rather than viewing proximity and distance as mutually exclusive, we follow Hughes et al. (2022) in understanding them as complementary analytical resources.

Empirical material

The analysis draws upon several complementary qualitative sources collected during the ethnographic evaluation of *Leave & Return* between October 2008 and August 2009. The empirical material includes participant observation of weekly collaborative meetings and project activities, informal field conversations with key actors, semi-structured interviews with six representatives of the collaborating organisations, two volunteers, and six young participants, as well as project documents produced during the implementation of the initiative. Combining observations, interviews and documentary material enabled us to examine both the formal organisation of the collaborative network and the everyday practices through which relationships, responsibilities and preventive work were negotiated and enacted. Participant observation constituted the primary source of data, while interviews and project documents were used to contextualise, elaborate and triangulate the observational material.

The ethnographic design was particularly valuable because collaboration was understood not as a formal organisational arrangement alone, but as an ongoing social process. Observations provided insight into how responsibilities were negotiated, how professional and voluntary actors interacted during meetings, and how organisational boundaries were reproduced or challenged in everyday situations. Interviews complemented these observations by allowing participants to reflect on their own roles, expectations and experiences of collaboration.

Analytical strategy

The empirical material was analysed through iterative reading and comparison across interviews, fieldnotes and documentary sources. Rather than coding the material according to predefined theoretical categories, we moved repeatedly between empirical observations and conceptual perspectives on collaborative governance, voluntarism and plural policing. Analytical attention was given to how authority, responsibility and relational work were distributed between public agencies and volunteers, and how these distributions shaped the everyday practice of collaboration. We examine how different organisational mandates, professional norms and institutional responsibilities influenced interactions between actors, and how these relationships affected the role that volunteers ultimately came to play within the preventive network.

Findings

Collaboration at the intersection of care and control

One meeting observed during fieldwork illustrates the practical dilemmas that emerged when collaborative crime prevention brought together public agencies and a voluntary organisation. The meeting involved representatives from the district welfare services, the police, SALTO and *Leave & Return* and concerned a young man with a history of violent offending who had recently been identified as a potential participant in the project.

Before the young man entered the room, the professionals discussed whether participation in *Leave & Return* genuinely represented a voluntary choice. One caseworker questioned whether the initiative was something the young man wanted, or whether it was simply “an alternative to prison”. When the young man joined the meeting, his first question reflected precisely this concern: if he participated in *Leave & Return*, would he avoid imprisonment? Throughout the conversation, the project leader repeatedly returned to the issue of motivation, asking whether the young man genuinely wished to take part in the programme. The young man consistently answered that he did. Yet once the meeting had ended, project staff continued discussing whether his motivation reflected a sincere commitment to change or merely a strategic response to the possibility of imprisonment.

The ambiguity became even more explicit during a subsequent meeting between district welfare services and *Leave & Return*, also attended by the local SALTO coordinator.

A representative from the welfare services explained that the public prosecutor regarded participation in *Leave & Return* as part of the judicial response and concluded that “there is coercion behind this voluntariness.” Representatives from the project acknowledged that they also relied on different forms of pressure. One explained that participants who failed to attend meetings or comply with agreed activities would not be matched with a volunteer, while another noted that although the initiative was fundamentally about care, it could also involve monitoring and control. At the same time, participants emphasised that young people should not be forced into the programme and repeatedly stressed the importance of genuine motivation.

Rather than presenting collaboration as a straightforward partnership based on shared values, this episode reveals how different organisational mandates became intertwined in everyday practice. The collaborative arrangement combined welfare support, voluntary mentoring, criminal justice and informal social relationships within the same intervention. Consequently, the distinction between voluntary participation and institutional authority became difficult to sustain in practice. Although *Leave & Return* relied heavily on the language of trust, relationships and voluntary engagement, participation was simultaneously embedded within broader legal and organisational structures that shaped both the opportunities available to young people and the expectations placed upon them.

The episode also illustrates that collaboration did not dissolve organisational differences. Instead, actors brought distinct institutional responsibilities into the network. Police officers and welfare agencies remained responsible for legal decisions and formal sanctions, while the voluntary organisation sought to establish supportive relationships. Collaboration therefore did not replace hierarchy with equality; rather, it created a setting in which care, control and voluntarism were continuously negotiated through interaction between actors with fundamentally different forms of authority.

Producing motivation

Throughout the fieldwork, *motivation* emerged as one of the most frequently invoked concepts in discussions about young people. It functioned not merely as a description of participants' willingness to change, but as a practical criterion for inclusion, continued participation and the allocation of resources. Decisions about whether a young person should be recruited into *Leave & Return*, matched with a volunteer or offered additional support were repeatedly framed in terms of whether the individual was considered "motivated".

Importantly, motivation was not treated as a stable personal characteristic. Rather, it was something that professionals continually attempted to assess, encourage and verify through interaction. During collaborative meetings, participants repeatedly discussed whether expressions of commitment reflected a genuine desire for change or merely a temporary response to external pressures, such as police attention, criminal proceedings or family expectations. Consequently, motivation became an object of continuous professional interpretation rather than an observable fact.

This ambiguity was particularly visible in the case described above. Although the young man consistently stated that he wanted to participate in *Leave & Return*, professionals continued debating whether his motivation was "real". His statements alone were considered insufficient; motivation had to be demonstrated through repeated attendance, reliability, compliance with agreed activities and sustained engagement over time. In this sense, motivation was not simply identified but gradually produced through participation itself.

The empirical material further suggests that motivation also operated as a boundary-making device. Professionals repeatedly distinguished between young people who were regarded as "ready" to change and those considered beyond the project's reach. Individuals who expressed little interest in participating were typically described as "unmotivated" and therefore outside the target group. Conversely, those who demonstrated even tentative willingness to engage were understood as individuals for whom intervention might still make a difference. Motivation therefore functioned not only as an individual attribute but also as an organisational mechanism for defining who the collaborative network could legitimately invest its resources in.

Seen from this perspective, motivation was less a precondition for collaboration than one of its central products. Collaborative meetings, repeated conversations and ongoing relationships were all directed towards strengthening young people's commitment to alternative futures. We argue that motivation became a shared object of governance through which police officers, welfare professionals and voluntary actors coordinated their interventions. In practice, collaboration was therefore organised around a collective effort to recognise, cultivate and sustain motivation for change.

Volunteers between autonomy and organisation

The distinctive feature of *Leave & Return* was the prominent role assigned to volunteers. According to the project's own description, volunteers constituted its central preventive resource. They were expected to

become part of young people's everyday lives, offer stable adult relationships, expand participants' social networks and introduce them to ordinary social arenas beyond criminal peer groups. In this respect, the project differed from many conventional crime prevention initiatives by placing civil society actors at the heart of the intervention rather than at its margins.

The fieldwork, however, revealed a more complex picture. While volunteers occupied a central position in the project's stated philosophy, their everyday role depended heavily on the organisational structures surrounding them. Recruitment, assessment of young people, decisions about matching volunteers with participants, and coordination with external agencies remained firmly under the control of the project's professional staff and collaborating public authorities. Volunteers rarely acted independently; rather, they became part of a broader organisational arrangement in which professional actors defined the framework within which voluntary engagement could take place.

This organisational dependence became particularly visible during discussions about whether and when young people should be matched with volunteers. Project staff repeatedly emphasised that volunteers should not be introduced until participants demonstrated sufficient commitment and stability. Concerns were expressed that unsuccessful matches might discourage volunteers, undermine trust or weaken the project's long-term capacity to recruit and retain committed adults. Consequently, decisions regarding volunteers were guided not only by the perceived needs of young people but also by considerations related to protecting the voluntary resource itself.

The empirical material also suggests that volunteers occupied an ambiguous organisational position. On the one hand, they were expected to establish personal relationships characterised by trust, continuity and informality. Unlike professionals, they were not intended to represent statutory authority or institutional control. On the other hand, their activities became embedded within an organisational system characterised by formal case discussions, interagency coordination and continuous professional oversight. Their contribution therefore depended upon organisational decisions over which they exercised relatively little influence.

This tension became particularly apparent when comparing the intended and the realised role of volunteers. Although project documents described volunteers as the initiative's primary resource, field observations and interviews suggested that it was often the professional staff who established the closest and most enduring relationships with young people. The employees coordinated interventions, maintained contact with external agencies and frequently became the individuals whom participants turned to when practical problems arose. Volunteers remained important contributors, but their role differed in practice from the position envisaged in the project's original design.

This discrepancy can be understood as revealing an inherent feature of collaborative governance. The more volunteers became integrated into a coordinated interagency system, the more their activities depended upon professional judgement, organisational routines and institutional priorities. Their autonomy was therefore not replaced by bureaucracy, nor entirely preserved from it. Instead, voluntary

engagement became organised, coordinated and, to some extent, governed by the very collaborative structures designed to support it.

Seen in this light, the relationship between professionals and volunteers was characterised less by substitution than by mutual dependence. Public agencies relied upon volunteers to provide forms of relational continuity and social inclusion that statutory services often struggled to deliver, while volunteers relied upon professionals to identify participants, coordinate interventions and manage the legal and organisational responsibilities surrounding each case. Collaboration therefore did not dissolve the distinction between professional and voluntary roles. Rather, it reconfigured the relationship between them, producing a form of organised voluntarism in which autonomy and institutional coordination continuously had to be balanced.

Discussion

Collaborative governance is frequently presented as a means of broadening responsibility for crime prevention by mobilising actors beyond the police and the welfare state. Our findings support this general observation, but they also suggest a more specific process. Rather than simply extending preventive work to civil society, collaboration reorganised the conditions under which voluntary engagement could take place. The central contribution of the article is therefore not merely that policing increasingly occurs beyond the police, but that volunteering itself is transformed when incorporated into collaborative policing arrangements.

Organising voluntarism within collaborative policing

The literature on organised voluntarism has shown how voluntary organisations increasingly become integrated into public governance while simultaneously being expected to preserve the flexibility, autonomy and civic engagement associated with voluntary action (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003, Milligan and Fyfe, 2005, Neville, 2016). Our findings extend this literature by demonstrating how this transformation unfolds within a crime prevention context.

In *Leave & Return*, volunteers were presented as the project's defining innovation. They were expected to provide precisely those qualities that public agencies were assumed to lack, such as long-term personal commitment, informal relationships, authenticity and access to ordinary social life. Yet these supposedly autonomous relationships were never independent of the collaborative structure itself. Decisions regarding recruitment, matching, timing, information sharing and follow-up remained embedded within professional assessments and interagency coordination. Volunteers therefore did not simply complement public agencies from the outside; they became incorporated into an organisational system that simultaneously enabled and constrained their contribution.

This finding resonates with Fyfe and Milligan's (2003) observation that voluntary organisations increasingly operate within public governance arrangements rather than alongside them. However, our analysis also suggests a further development. Whereas previous research has primarily examined

organised voluntarism within welfare provision, the present study illustrates how similar processes unfold within collaborative policing. Here, voluntary engagement becomes intertwined not only with welfare institutions but also with preventive policing, criminal justice and interagency coordination. Voluntarism is therefore reorganised within a field characterised by legal authority, risk assessment and preventive governance.

Collaboration reorganises rather than replaces hierarchy

The findings also invite a reconsideration of collaborative governance itself. Much of the governance literature contrasts hierarchical administration with horizontal collaboration, emphasising partnership, trust and shared responsibility (e.g. Klijn and Koppenjan, 2016). While such concepts remain valuable, our analysis suggests that collaboration should not primarily be understood as replacing hierarchy. Rather, collaboration redistributes work while leaving important forms of authority intact.

Throughout *Leave & Return*, responsibilities were widely shared, but authority was not. Volunteers contributed relational work, municipal welfare agencies controlled access to housing, education and employment measures, while police and child welfare services retained legal authority and sanctioning powers. The network therefore depended upon collaboration without dissolving institutional differentiation. Rather than horizontal equality, what emerged was a differentiated form of collaboration in which actors contributed distinct resources under unequal organisational conditions.

Importantly, these asymmetries should not simply be interpreted as implementation failures. They reflect the institutional realities of collaborative policing. Public organisations remain accountable for legal decisions, resource allocation and procedural legitimacy, whereas voluntary actors derive much of their value precisely from occupying a different institutional position. The distinction between professionals and volunteers is therefore not eliminated through collaboration; it becomes actively organised and continuously negotiated.

Implications for collaborative policing

These findings have broader implications for contemporary debates on policing beyond the police. Existing scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that responsibility for prevention is increasingly distributed across networks involving municipalities, voluntary organisations and citizens (Loader, 2000, Crawford, 2006, Crawford and Cunningham, 2015). Our study suggests that understanding these developments requires closer attention to what happens inside such collaborative arrangements. The case demonstrates that collaboration is not simply a matter of adding more actors to crime prevention. It also reshapes the practices, expectations and organisational conditions under which different actors operate. Volunteers are not merely incorporated into preventive work; the meaning and practice of volunteering itself changes when embedded within interagency governance. Consequently, collaborative

policing should be analysed not only as an expansion of policing beyond the police, but also as a process through which civil society becomes organised, coordinated and governed in new ways.

For practitioners, the findings highlight the importance of clearly distinguishing between professional responsibility and voluntary engagement. Volunteers need organisational support and coordination, but collaborative arrangements should preserve the relational autonomy that makes their contribution distinctive rather than gradually turning volunteers into quasi-professional service providers.

Conclusion

This article has examined how collaboration between public agencies and civil society was organised in the *Leave & Return* initiative, drawing on an ethnographic study originally conducted in 2008–2009 and reanalysed through the lens of collaborative policing and organised voluntarism. Our findings suggest that collaborative crime prevention did more than extend responsibility beyond the police. It also transformed the conditions under which voluntary engagement was organised. Volunteers remained central to the project's ambitions, but their contribution increasingly depended upon professional assessments, interagency coordination and institutional routines. In this sense, volunteering was not displaced by professional practice, nor did it remain wholly autonomous. Instead, it was reorganised within a collaborative governance arrangement that both enabled and constrained voluntary action.

This perspective contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it extends research on organised voluntarism by demonstrating how the incorporation of volunteers unfolds within collaborative policing rather than welfare provision alone. Second, it contributes to policing scholarship by showing that the expansion of policing beyond the police is accompanied by organisational transformations affecting not only public agencies but also the voluntary actors drawn into preventive work.

The case examined here dates from the late 2000s. Yet the issues it raises have become increasingly relevant as governments continue to promote partnerships, co-production and community participation as central elements of crime prevention. Revisiting this early collaborative initiative demonstrates that understanding such developments requires attention not only to who participates in prevention, but also to how participation is organised. The future of collaborative policing may therefore depend as much on understanding the changing character of voluntary engagement as on expanding collaboration itself.

Human Ethics and Consent to Participate declarations

The empirical material analysed in this article was originally collected in Norway in 2008–2009 as part of an ethnographic evaluation of the *Leave & Return* initiative. Participation in interviews and fieldwork was voluntary, and participants were informed about the study and provided informed consent to participate. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained in the collection, analysis and reporting of the material. The present article constitutes a secondary analysis of the original qualitative material and involved no new data collection or contact with participants. The study was notified to and assessed by the

Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), in accordance with the data protection requirements applicable at the time.

Declarations

Funding

No funding was obtained for this study.

Author Contribution

B.A. conceived the study, conducted all data collection, developed the idea for the article, and had primary responsibility for the analysis and drafting of the manuscript. H.G. contributed to the theoretical framework, interpretation of the findings, development of the analysis, and revision of the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Data Availability

The qualitative data analysed in this study are not publicly available due to ethical and confidentiality considerations. The dataset includes interview material, ethnographic fieldnotes and observational data concerning young participants and professionals involved in crime prevention, including potentially sensitive information about criminal offending and interactions with public services. Public sharing of the underlying data would therefore not be consistent with the conditions under which the data were collected and the confidentiality commitments made to participants.

References

1. BULLOCK, K. 2014. *Citizens, community and crime control*. Palgrave Macmillan.
2. BUTTON, M. 2002. *Private policing*, Cullompton, Willan.
3. CRAWFORD, A. 2006. Networked governance and the post-regulatory state? Steering, rowing and anchoring the provision of policing and security. *Theoretical Criminology* 10:449–479.
4. CRAWFORD, A. 2024. Vulnerability and Policing: Rethinking the Role and Limits of the Police. *The Political Quarterly* 95:431–441.
5. CRAWFORD, A., and M. CUNNINGHAM. 2015. Working in Partnership. The Challenges of Working across Organizational Boundaries, Cultures, and Practices. In *Police Leadership. Rising to the Top*, ed. J. FLEMMING. Oxford: Oxford University Press. In:.
6. EGGE, M., and H. O. I. GUNDHUS. 2012. Social crime prevention in Norway. In *Social crime prevention in late modern Europe: a comparative perspective*, ed. P. HEBBERECHT, and E. BAILLERGEA. Brussel: Brussel University. In:.

7. FOSHAUGEN, M. H. 2025. Why on Earth Aren't You Doing Anything?': Private and Voluntary Policing of Nightlife in Norway. *The British Journal of Criminology* 65:440–456.
8. FYFE, N. R., and C. MILLIGAN. 2003. Out of the shadows: exploring contemporary geographies of voluntarism. *Progress in Human Geography* 27:397–413.
9. HANSEN, C. LÖFSTRAND, and S. UHNOO. 2020. Blurred boundaries and legal uncertainty in police–volunteer partnerships. *Policing and Society* 30:950–965.
10. HUGHES, K., J. HUGHES, and A. TARRANT. 2022. Working at aremove: continuous, collective, and configurative approaches to qualitative secondary analysis. *Quality & Quantity* 56:375–394.
11. KLIJN, E. H., and J. KOPPENJAN. 2016. *Governance Networks in the Public Sector*. London: Routledge.
12. KROGH, A. H. 2022. Facilitating collaboration in publicly mandated governance networks. *Public Management Review* 24:631–653.
13. LOADER, I. 2000. Plural Policing and Democratic Governance. *Social & Legal Studies* 9:323–345.
14. MILLIGAN, C., and N. R. FYFE. 2005. Preserving Space for Volunteers: Exploring the Links between Voluntary Welfare Organisations, Volunteering and Citizenship. *Urban Studies* 42:417–433.
15. NEVILLE, P. 2016. Organised Voluntarism in Ireland. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 27:724–745.
16. STRYPE, J., GUNDHUS, H. O. I. EGGE, M., and A. ØDEGÅRD. 2014. Perceptions of interprofessional collaboration. *rofessions and Professionalism* 4:1–16.
17. UHNOO, S., and C. HANSEN LÖFSTRAND. 2018. Voluntary policing in Sweden: media reports of contemporary forms of police–citizen partnerships. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention* 19:41–60.
18. VAN STEDEN, R., and S. M. MEHLBAUM. 2019. Police volunteers in the Netherlands: a study on policy and practice. *Policing and Society* 29:420–433.