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Francis Dodsworth

# The Security Society

History, Patriarchy, Protection

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## Series Editor's Introduction

This book provides a fascinating insight into the history of security and the politics of protection. It takes us on a journey to better understand what the author calls the development of the 'security society'. A striking observation running through the text is the discussion of how and why many modern concerns and debates are often repeats of similar ones that occurred in the past.

The author starts by discussing the relationship between forms of crime control and the influence of 'security' discourses and practices. There is a particular focus on the influence of the civilising process (drawing on the work of Norbert Elias) highlighting how British society is secured from threats by the evolution of a range of experts and technologies (including private ones). Francis Dodsworth's skilful work takes the reader through the cultural changes and what influenced them and the ways in which there has been a reframing of what it means to be vulnerable and the different responses that ensued.

The links between disorder, politics, and monarchical allegiance are explored alongside the influence of religion, class, patriarchy, and feminism amongst others. In one of the many interesting points of historical analysis, Dodsworth explores how the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the expulsion of the Catholic James II in favour of his daughter and son-in-law

(William III and Mary II), challenged conventional approaches to maintaining order (not least because it severed the principle of primogeniture). Alongside this were changes in the way protection was provided.

Moving forward a century or so, the roles of Henry and John Feilding are explored, generating what for many may be a different understanding of their respective roles not only on state policing but the evolution of private security too.

Roll on to the next century where the author traces the development of security expertise. We are guided through the emergence of a market in security technologies; these include locks (there was actually a celebrity lock picker Alfred C. Hobbs at The Great Exhibition in 1851) and electric alarms, alongside private security firms and private detection agencies (especially surveillance operations relating to divorces after the Matrimonial Causes Act 1857). Strikingly, private protection which was once the preserve of those who were privileged changed over time to become affordable by many less affluent. Dodsworth postulates a view, albeit one of many on this issue, that this can be seen to represent the democratisation of security. Private security is not often seen in those terms.

This book will be an essential read for historians of public protection generally as well a private security specifically.

February 2019

Martin Gill

## Preface

In the late 1970s, shortly after he had completed *Surveiller et Punir* (1975), published in English as *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Michel Foucault began to wonder whether he was not witnessing a significant change in what he called ‘the general economy of power in society’. Rather than living in the ‘disciplinary society’ he had identified in *Discipline and Punish*, in which individuals pass through a range of disciplinary institutions, designed to shape and guide their conduct according to a set of ideals, he wondered whether the changes he saw taking place in the criminal justice systems of the time meant that we were now living in a ‘society of security’ in which government was directed not so much at shaping the ideal behaviour of its targets, but which sought principally to work pragmatically with the realities of life as it was lived, and to manage and mitigate risks and threats to those patterns of life. These ideas were delivered at the start of his lecture series at the *Collège de France* in 1978 that went on to become his lectures on ‘governmentality’, a subject that was to have a profound influence on criminologists in the 1990s. The first decade of the present century saw the idea that we live in a ‘society of security’ attract considerable criminological attention. Most of this attention, however, was directed at the transformations of the recent past, particularly the period since the late 1970s, when the emergence of the ‘new right’ in Britain and the USA under Margaret Thatcher and



Ronald Reagan, and the rise of 'neo-liberalism' (another component of Foucault's lecture series), seemed to have precipitated a great transformation in approaches to government.

This book takes seriously the idea that we live in a 'security society', that is, a society in which we are governed, and govern ourselves in relation to security; a society in which 'security' justifies the exercise of power over others; that defines the organisation and operation of our institutions; and even how we shape ourselves and our personal lives through practices like self-defence, or the routes we take home at night. It argues that our society has become 'securitised' in the sense that 'security' pervades almost every aspect of our lives, even, for many of us, our personal and occupational identities: our society is regulated by security organisations, peopled by security professionals and experts whose role in life is defined as conducting surveillance, managing risk, and protecting those identified as vulnerable from threats to their well-being and safety. However, this book does not locate the 'securitisation' of our society in the recent past; rather, it identifies the securitisation of society as the outcome of a long-term process of transformation in the provision of protection, a form of power that has a particular historical association with patriarchal masculinity. The security society, it is argued, is the outcome of a series of problematisations of governing masculinities, a development closely linked to the processes of civilisation analysed by Norbert Elias and to the genealogy of liberalism explored by Michel Foucault. Under the pressure of both social change and cultural critique, patriarchal claims to the power to protect were challenged and transformed, so that protection, and the subordination with which it was associated, was translated from something carried out by the heads of households over their dependents to something carried out by security specialists, experts in protection who established new forms of significance for themselves and others by creating new organisations, new roles, and new identities oriented around security. Over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these roles were expanded to new social groups beyond the propertied elite, so that security became, in Carole Pateman's words, more a fraternal than a directly patriarchal form of power. By the twentieth century, even that fraternal power was under threat from a women's movement that promised liberation from subordination and which configured patriarchy

and patriarchy as sources of oppression rather than protection. Not only, then, have protection and the provision of security been forms of power fundamentally concerned with practices of subordination, but they have also been vehicles for the empowerment of particular individuals and organisations, enabling them to assert themselves in the public domain.

In making this argument, the book has a number of overlapping aims. First, and most straightforwardly, it seeks to make comprehensible to a criminological audience the large range of recent historical research related to the subject of security, the implications of which have yet to fully filter through into the criminological mainstream. Recent research in criminal justice history has radically transformed our understanding of the histories of crime and policing, the representation and prevention of crime, and the cultural history of violence. At the same time, there are fields of historical research that are of relevance to the idea of security which many criminologists could not be expected to be aware of. In drawing on this wide literature, I have inevitably had to treat some complex subjects in broad brush strokes and to minimise engagement with detailed historical debates about the interpretation of specific elements. However, at the very least, hopefully this book will provide a signpost for those who wish to explore particular aspects in further depth.

The second aim of this book is to offer a new historical interpretation of the processes of securitisation, a central aspect of which is a distinctive account of the development of the institutions of public protection, what are now the police. In doing so the book engages with issues addressed in the developing literature on the 'new police science', particularly the work of Mark Neocleous and Markus Dubber. Both have provided considerable inspiration for this book, although its interpretation departs from theirs in some key ways. Neocleous' history of security places the emphasis on class struggle and capitalism as the motors of historical change; my account places less emphasis on these elements, but for those interested in those aspects, I would advise reading Neocleous' *The Fabrication of Social Order* (2000), *Critique of Security* (2008), and *War Power, Police Power* (2014), the last of which has an emphasis on the affinity between the police power and militarism that finds some echo here. Dubber's emphasis on the patriarchal nature of the police power has also, and

very obviously, been very influential here. However, his account in *The Police Power* (2005) moves rather seamlessly from the Roman and medieval systems of patriarchy to patriarchal police in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America, without exploring the significant reconfigurations to patriarchy that took place in the early modern period. This book is in some senses an attempt to fill in that gap and to add dynamism to the idea of patriarchal police. However, it is also important to stress that there is more to security than police, and there is now a developing body of research on this aspect of history, most notably the work of David Churchill. There is also a range of historical work by people like Peter King, Robert Shoemaker and Tim Hitchcock, and Joanne Klein, which challenges top-down accounts of historical change and emphasises the roles played by middling people and the poor in the transformation of government in the long term. This book draws on this literature, but there is much more to this approach than I have been able to do justice to here. Likewise, I would encourage further exploration of the relationship between security, police, and technology, particularly through Chris Williams' *Police Control Systems* (2014), the focus of which overlaps with this volume.

The final aim of this book is to engage with the traditions of work provoked by the two great genealogists of the late twentieth century, Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. There is now an enormous body of scholarship on governmentality, and a developing body of work on the civilising process, and this book seeks to both link and critique these bodies of literature through the concept of security and its link to the genealogy of patriarchy. This term had come to seem rather unfashionable in some quarters, so it was reassuring to see a special forum on early modern patriarchy appearing in the July 2018 edition of *Gender and History*, just as this book was nearing completion.

Finally, I should add that the focus of this book is on the genealogy of security in modern Britain; indeed, the principal focus is not only on Britain, nor even on England, but on London, with occasional forays elsewhere. There is an element of necessity here, in terms of the direction of existing historical research, my knowledge of it, and what is possible to achieve in a book which already tries to compress more than 400 years of history into a few hundred pages. However, there is a virtue in this

necessity as well, because an important part of the story that is told here is a story about urbanisation and the impact of life lived in close proximity to large numbers of strangers. Although it is rather counterintuitive to a world more familiar with Macek's *Urban Nightmare*, where the city is configured as the source of vice, crime, and disorder, in fact, the work of both Elias and Foucault, and much empirical historical research, would suggest that for most of modern history, the city was an engine of civilisation and pacification and a primary site for the contests over power, agency, and identity that Jef Huysmans and colleagues call the 'politics of protection'.

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# Acknowledgements

Writing this book has been a journey back in time in more ways than one. Not only have I been on an intellectual voyage back to the sixteenth century, but in doing so, I have also been on a personal voyage back to south Manchester at the turn of the twenty-first century. I completed the writing of this manuscript almost exactly 20 years from the date I completed my MA and began work on my PhD, at what was then the 'Victoria' University of Manchester, on the genealogy of 'police' in London and Manchester. My understanding of the subject has evolved considerably since that time, as has the intellectual conversation to which it was a contribution. Nevertheless, given that some of the writing of this text has involved revisiting not only the themes, but also some of the notes from that thesis, I think it's only fair to start my acknowledgements by recognising both those people who contributed to my thought processes when writing the PhD all those years ago and those who helped me with more practical matters, most notably by keeping me 'in the game', providing me with sufficient work as a graduate teaching assistant to keep the wolf from the door, at least during term time, and reducing my dependence on Rusholme Jobcentre Plus. As far as the latter is concerned, I owe a great debt to Peter Gatrell, Max Jones, Stuart Jones, and Bertrand Taithe, both for providing me with teaching and teaching me how to teach. In terms of the former, my ideas about the past were developed, challenged, and clarified through discussions with Kate Blair-Dixon,

Harry Cocks, Tom Crook, Philippa Grand, Leif Jerram, Matthew McCormack, Chris Otter, Gavin Rand, Nathan Roberts, Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, Mindy Silverboard (Gofton), Maiken Umbach, James Vernon, and Dan Vyleta. I'd also like to mention less subject-specific but no less important inspiration and support from Rick Gofton, Sharni Holdom, Catherine McGlynn, Rosie Paice, Tina Sessa, Gina Ward, and James Wise. Thanks also to Bertrand Taithe and Tom Osborne for a searching viva, which made passing really feel like an achievement, although I was too tired to really celebrate it. I should also thank the institutions that made the research possible: the National Archives, Manchester Central Library, and the Greater Manchester Police Museum, particularly Duncan Brodie. My greatest debt from this time, however, is of course to Patrick Joyce, whose work remains an inspiration to me now. That all of this was possible at all is thanks to the ESRC, who funded my doctoral research through Research Studentship R00429834383.

The idea for this book came to me at some point in 2010, during my stint as a research fellow in the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), based at the Open University. This was a partnership with the University of Manchester, which meant that I was fortunate enough to be able to continue to work with Pat Joyce, as well as learn enormously from Tony Bennett, Sophie Watson, and Liz McFall, with whom I worked closely for a number of years. Thanks also to all those CRESC colleagues from the OU and Manchester, who taught me not only about sociology, history, and cultural studies, but also what it meant to be an academic: Michelle Bastian, Simon Carter, Niall Cunningham, Marie Gillespie, Penny Harvey, Andrew Hill, Hannah Knox, John Law, Andrew Miles, Niamh Moore, Evelyn Ruppert, Mike Savage, Farida Vis, Antonia Walford, Alban Webb, Karel Williams, and Kath Woodward. Thanks also to Josine Opmeer and Karen Ho for all the support. I'd also like to single out John Pickstone, whose unique presence is much missed. Huge thanks also to OU social science colleagues beyond CRESC, who shaped or facilitated my work in various ways: Elena Vacchelli, Jef Huysmans, Masaaki Morishita, Karim Murji, Peter Redman, Elizabeth Silva, Dave Studdert, Louise Westmarland, and David Wright. I also owe an enormous debt to discussion with the OU history department, with its fantastic roster of expertise on crime and policing,

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The book was finally completed in the Department of Criminology and Sociology at Kingston, and huge thanks are due to all my colleagues there, past and present, not only for the camaraderie, but also for supporting the sabbatical which allowed me to complete the manuscript. I won't embarrass anyone by singling them out, but I will embarrass you collectively by saying that I could not have wished for better colleagues, so thank you. I'd also like to say thanks to Colin Gordon and the rest of the Foucault, Political Life and History group, which has enabled me to extend my intellectual engagement with Pat Joyce into a 20th year. I'd also like to express my thanks to the team at Palgrave Macmillan/Springer for their patience. This book has taken so long to write that not only have I been through teams of editors and editorial assistants, but even the publisher itself has changed. Great thanks are therefore due to Josephine Taylor and Liam Inscoe-Jones, Stephanie Carey, Adam Cox, Jules Willan and Philippa Grand, and, of course, to Martin Gill.

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Olwen and Philip Dodsworth, and David and Elizabeth Millington not only made it possible for me to survive university and postgraduate study, but much more importantly they taught me the value of history in the first place. It seems somehow fitting that this book was birthed at the end of the best summer since 1976. Finally, my greatest debt is, of course, to Eglė Rindzevičiūtė: without her patience, support, and encouragement, and her critical eye, I would never have completed this book, which is dedicated to her.



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Masterless Men: Patriarchy Challenged, c. 1570–1670</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Patricians and the Rule of Law, c. 1670–1740</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Fratriarchy and the Police Idea, c. 1740–1800</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Institutionalising Fratriarchy, c. 1800–1900</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Protection Beyond Patriarchy, c. 1900–2000</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion: Genealogies of Security</b>	<b>299</b>
	<b>Index</b>	<b>331</b>

## About the Author

**Francis Dodsworth** is Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Kingston University London. Before joining Kingston in 2014, he spent ten years as a research fellow in the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), based at the Open University. His background is in history, historical sociology, and criminology, particularly the history of crime, policing, and social control, but he has also written about the history of architecture and the built environment, and religious cultures past and present. A unifying theme in this work is the relationship between government and self-government and particularly their intersection with questions of gender and identity.