

Chapter 2

Community Policing in Support of Social Cohesion

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2.1 Communities and Crime—The Role of Social (Dis) Organisation, Social Cohesion, Community Cohesion, Integration and Resilience

Concepts of safety, crime, policing and community are frequently used in professional but also laypersons' discourse. However, definitions and the interrelatedness of these concepts are often very complex and vary between different theoretical perspectives and research fields. Thus, this chapter first gives a short overview of the core concepts together with the relations among them.

Higher levels of concerns about neighbourhood safety are correlated with higher levels of perceived physical incivilities (e.g., Taylor 1997), higher levels of crimes against people and property (e.g., Taylor 2002), lower levels of community care and vigilance and lower levels of place attachments/territoriality (Sampson and Graif 2009). Crime rates in communities are strongly related to the extent of community social (dis) organisation (Sampson and Groves 1989), and both disorder and crime should be treated as outcomes of disorganisation, not as causes of one another (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). *Social capital* generally refers to the intangible resources of a community (Saegert and Winkel 2004) such as mutual trust, patterns of reciprocity, communalism, shared norms and identity (Flora et al. 1997) produced in “relations among persons that facilitate action” for mutual benefit (Coleman 1988, p. 100). Social disorganisation erodes social bonds and increases social disruption in communities

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(Brewer et al. 1998), resulting in a lack of common values and social cohesion within the community.

The level of cohesion determines the level of collective efficacy. *Collective efficacy* is the driving force for residents to take an active role in modelling their communities (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999) and in maintaining effective and collective social control of crime and security (Sampson and Groves 1989). High collective efficacy is negatively associated with crime rates and neighbourhood disorder, and it reduces neighbourhood disadvantage, residential instability and fear of crime (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). Even neighbourhoods with weak social ties can have low crime rates if they have high levels of collective efficacy; so networks and resources may be necessary but not sufficient for social control (Morenoff et al. 2001). The breakdown of social cohesion and erosion of social capital can both be causes and consequences of increasing levels of insecurity (see also Chaps. 3 and 17).

Social cohesion is an ordering feature of a society and, according to Durkheim, represents the interdependence between the members of society, shared loyalties and solidarity (Jenson 1998). The term *social cohesion* is thus often used to describe how well people who live in the same area are integrated into their local ethnic or religious community (Robinson 2004) or as the amount of individual participation in social groups in the community. There are two principal dimensions of social cohesion: (1) *social inclusion*, i.e., the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion and (2) *social capital*, i.e., the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties (Berger-Schmitt 2000).

The term 'social cohesion' has occasionally been used synonymously with the term 'community cohesion' though they should be differentiated (Cantle 2001). The term *community cohesion* was established following riots and disturbances in the northern towns of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham (UK) in 2001 and the subsequent *Report of the Independent Review Team* in which the problem of 'parallel lives' was identified (Cantle 2001; see also Chap. 7). This emerged as a policy response to the perceived need for strengthened community identity and purpose in the context of increasingly differentiated identities, transnational attachments and a general climate of fear and marginalisation (Cantle 2005). According to Cantle (2001), *social cohesion* assumes that all societal differences are essentially determined by social class and economic inequalities while *community cohesion* assumes that problems between identifiable groups, based on ethnic, faith or cultural divisions, create a sense of unfairness and undermine solidarity among community members. Community cohesion describes how well micro-communities are knitted together as a whole, and its focus is on the existence of shared social values that enable all communities to work together for common goals and to feel a sense of belonging and citizenship (Robinson 2004).

Recently, policymakers have turned their attention from 'community cohesion' to issues of 'integration' and 'resilience'. *Integration* means creating the conditions for everyone to play a full part in national and local life (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012), while *resilience* refers to the extent to which a community is able to adapt to (economic) shocks and (cultural) changes (Centre for Local Economic Strategies 2014).

The (limited) academic literature has been quite critical of the policy of community cohesion (Lowndes and Thorp 2011). It was criticized for its lack of clarity and consistency (Flint and Robinson 2008; Joppke 2007) and seen as representing a new form of governmentality (McGhee 2003). Also, community cohesion was considered a ‘new buzz phrase in policing and community safety’ (Chainey 2005). Community cohesion is “undermined by the disadvantage, discrimination and disaffection experienced by the identifiable community as a whole” (Cantle 2005, p. 52), and a lack of social cohesion results in increased social tensions, violent crime, targeting of minorities, human rights violations and, ultimately, violent conflict, etc. (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery 2009). Socio-economic status and deprivation (90% of participants), access to services and facilities (70% of participants), and crime (58% of participants) were considered the factors with the greatest impact on community cohesion and resilience (cp. Centre for Local Economic Strategies 2014).

Enhancing community security and cohesion has been identified as one of nine outcomes under the broader Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) outcome area in the UNDP Strategic Plan (2008–2013) (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery 2009). Cohesive and resilient communities are less likely to experience neighbourhood problems such as anti-social behaviour, crime and waste mismanagement (Centre for Local Economic Strategies 2014). The concepts of community security and social cohesion are mutually reinforcing. If communities feel physically secure, they are likely to act in more cohesive ways and vice versa (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery 2009). However, community cohesion does not necessarily mean that there is an absence of conflict but that the community has ‘a collective ability to manage the shifting array of tensions and disagreements’ (Gilchrist 2004). Consequently, it can be argued that to some extent the relationship between crime and collective (dis)organisation may be mediated by the role of police in community (cooperative or conflicting) (Skogan 1989), since police are society’s first-line defence in dealing with conflicts among people (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1991) and the function of the police involve more than just enforcing the law (Goldstein 1987).

2.2 (In)formal Crime Control and Community Policing

Controlling crime is performed either through formal controls or informal controls. *Formal controls* are imposed by Law Enforcement Agencies. *Informal social controls* are usually imposed by family members, friends, teachers, neighbours, etc., who use sanctions such as shame, condemnation, corporal punishment, isolation and other detrimental consequences, which are not formally specified by law or pronounced by a judge (Benson 1989). The importance of informal control in shaping neighbourhood crime rates is widely accepted (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003), and there is strong evidence that social ties and social control help to lower neighbourhood crime rates (e.g., Bellair 1997, 2000; Sampson 1997). However, the

effectiveness of informal social sanctions depends on different factors including low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility and family disruption (Sampson and Groves 1989).

Studies also show that formal sanctions and other external institutions do not work effectively within disorganised communities (Bishop 1984; Jiang and Lambert 2009), that formal sanctions work well when they are supported by informal sanctions—the police need the support and assistance of private citizens (Meares 2002), but that the role of formal control cannot be neglected (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003).

Formal control may influence crime and disorder directly and indirectly by influencing residents' informal control practices (Kubrin, and Weitzer 2003). The amount and quality of police activity in a neighbourhood can significantly affect its crime rate. Visible proactive policing influences residents' perceptions of the probability of arrests for illegal acts (Sampson and Cohen 1988¹), and at the neighbourhood level increases in police activity in a community reduces residents' risk of crime victimization after controlling for other factors (Velez 2001). Insufficient or excessive formal control by the police may lower the residents' desire or capacity to fight crime and disorder, deflate the sense of collective efficacy among law-abiding residents and their willingness or ability to engage in informal control or/and invite illegal retributive practices by some community members (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003).

Community Policing illustrates proactive policing in which formal and informal social control can reinforce each other, helping to reduce crime (Greene 1999; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Skogan and Hartnett 1997). Community Policing aims to deformalize the formal mechanisms of control by emphasising resident-police interaction of social control (Hawdon and Ryan 2003) and by integrating the police into the neighbourhood's primary groups (Greene 1987). The 'police officer–community residents' interaction also diminishes the anonymity residents may have relied upon to perpetrate their illegal activities. As police officers identify with an area and become familiar with its residents and lifestyle, it is argued that their work reinforces the informal social controls of the area (Wilson and Kelling 1982). Unfortunately, however, to date very little research has addressed this formal-informal control relationship (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003).

2.3 Community Policing in Support of Social Cohesion

Community Policing emerged as a means of addressing high crime rates in the early 1990s (Lewis and Lewis 2012) and of improving the relationship between the police and the public (Eck and Rosenbaum 1994). Community Policing was

¹Sampson and Cohen (1988) found that robust arrests for disorderly conduct and drunk driving had a deterrent effect on an unrelated crime—robbery.

governed by the ideal of ‘policing as community problem solving’ and ‘policing by consent’ (Goldstein 1987) in order to be more responsive to the needs and expectations of citizens (Hesketh 1992). Today, Community Policing has become an internationally widespread paradigm of contemporary policing (Oliver 2000).

Different names have been used to capture the term that refers to a broad and heterogeneous set of policing strategies and program concepts such as problem-oriented policing, community-based policing, neighbourhood policing and service style policing (Goldstein 1990; Toch and Grant 1991). Community Policing refers to the partnership between residents and police to address neighbourhood-specific issues (e.g., graffiti, gang violence, burglaries), where residents are involved in decision-making processes and engage in local problem solving. Thus, Community Policing consists of two complementary core components: (1) community partnership with the goal of establishing and maintaining trust (Trojanowicz and Moore 1988) and (2) problem solving (Goldstein 1979), a process by which the specific concerns of communities are identified and the most appropriate remedies to abate these problems are found (Bureau of Justice Assistance 1994). To develop community partnership, the police aims to (Bureau of Justice Assistance 1994):

1. Develop positive relationships with the community (interactions with residents)
2. Involve the community in the quest for better crime control and prevention (participation of residents in their own protection by collective action against crime)
3. Pool their resources with those of the community to address the most urgent concerns of community members.

According to Meares (2002) the combination of these three substantive practices should be supplemented with organizational adaptation in the form of implementation of specific practices required by the relationship between community partnership and problem solving as well as requirements of rapid societal change (Verschelde and Rogge 2012).

Activities surrounding Community Policing serve to promote social cohesion and to reduce the fear of crime and neighbourhood disorder. These activities range from neighbourhood crime watches by residents to neighbourhood surveys that identify local problems and evaluate police satisfaction. Broader measures of police performance were partly a result of the shift from traditional policing to Community Policing (Rena et al. 2005). The management of public confidence has become almost as important as the management of crime itself (Home Office 2009), because if citizens do not have confidence in the police they are less likely to defer to police authority, to report crimes, to provide witness information or to obey the law themselves (Hough and Roberts 2004; Tyler 2004).

Research suggests that public confidence in policing is less about the effectiveness of police services to reduce crime and provide safety (Tyler 2006) than about the perception of police “as old-fashioned representatives of community values and norms—as symbols of moral authority who address everyday problems”

(Jackson et al. 2009, p. 6), and strengthen social order, cohesion and informal social control (Jackson and Bradford 2009; Jackson et al. 2009; Cooper and Innes 2009) and the belief that the police are fair in their procedure and just in their treatment and decision making (Jackson et al. 2013). Thus, public confidence is based less on instrumental concerns about crime (in terms of crime-rates, perceived chances of victimisation or fear of crime) and more on expressive ‘day-to-day’ concerns about neighbourhood stability and breakdown (in terms of cohesion and collective efficacy; see also Chap. 8).

Reiner (2000) suggested that the police are faced with the paradox that they are judged by the lack of need for them and by public diagnoses of local values and moral structures that shape perceptions of crime. In essence, low confidence in policing expresses not only an unfavourable assessment of police activities, but also an unfavourable assessment of the strength of the ties and bonds within the local community. As such, narrow attempts to reduce fear and to communicate the reality of crime did not significantly improve public confidence (Jackson and Bradford 2009). However, Community Policing strategies that look to take active part and engage more with the day-to-day social order of civil public space and civil society, seeking to increase the visibility, accessibility and familiarity of the police (Innes 2004) may address both fear of crime and public confidence in policing (Jackson et al. 2009).

Cooperation between police and citizens is the central premise of Community Policing (Goldstein 1987; Hawdon and Ryan 2003) and the key factor for successful implementation of a Community Policing programme in support of social cohesion (Greene and Pelfrey 1997; Goldstein 1987; Williams 1998). Again, there is the question whether certain crimes will ever come to the attention of police without Community Policing. Community Policing empowers citizens by enrolling them as partners in efforts to make their communities a better and safer places to live: They are expected to identify problems in their community, to give input into decision making on the forms of required police services and to provide feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of police services. Police officers should be sensitive and responsive to residents’ concerns.

Usually, the problems of disorder and low-level crime—and not high profile index crimes—pose an immediate and direct threat to residents and their families (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1991). Thus police officers should be able to deal with the full range of community problems and not only violations of the law. They should participate in peacekeeping and/or maintaining order (Goldstein 1987) as well as supporting community-based efforts to reduce neighbourhood incivilities and improve its physical appearance (see Chap. 7) Policing also empowers police officers to be more independent and creative in developing alternate solutions to community problems and to blend aspects of social work with police work (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1991) providing residents with what they really want—crime prevention, i.e., to be spared from becoming a victim (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1991).

According to Lewis and Lewis (2012), two major perspectives on crime prevention can be differentiated—those based on victimization theory and those based

on social control theory (Lewis and Salem 1981). While victimization theory focuses on understanding crimes as events that occur between a potential victim, offender and the environment (Lewis and Salem 1981), social control theory suggests that social interactions influence criminal acts through the informal enforcement of social norms (Hirschi 1969). From the *victimization perspective*, a potential victim or offender assesses the risk of being victimized or caught, respectively (Lewis and Salem 1981), while from a *social control perspective*, social norms shape the morals and values of a community that influence criminal behaviour. While social control theory is the basis for crime prevention from the community perspective, police primarily embrace the victimization theory as a method to understand and prevent crime (Skogan 2006). Thus by developing prevention strategies, police mainly focus on changing the behaviours of potential victims and offenders by impacting how they assess the risk of being victimized or being caught.

2.4 Challenges of Community Policing in Support of Social Cohesion

The results of evaluations of Community Policing programs have generally been mixed and disappointing, regardless of the particular type of approach implemented (Kerley and Benson 2000). Community Policing was mostly criticised because of its failure to strengthen broader community processes of community cohesion and organization (Kerley and Benson 2000). Observed failure of Community Policing programs was attributed to structural factors such as improper implementation of Community Policing programs (e.g., officer resistance), limited community involvement, greater effectiveness in communities that are already somewhat organized and cohesive (Buerger 1994; Kerley and Benson 2000), lack of permanent assignment of police officers to a given area and lack of devotion and effort to outreach (Goldstein 1987). Failure of Community Policing programs was linked by some researchers to more substantial factors such as the flawed basic premise of Community Policing that communities exist (Jiao 1997) and that communities are easily identifiable and homogeneous, that police and community share the same interests (Walker 1984) and that residents are willing to cooperate with the police (Hawdon and Ryan 2003).

In order for Community Policing to be effective (e.g., visibility of police officer and familiarity), the community for which a patrol officer is given responsibility should be a small, well-defined geographical area (Bureau of Justice Assistance 1994). However, major technological changes (mass transportation, mass communication and mass media) have contributed to the breakdown of the geographic connection in the traditional definition of community (Trojanowicz and Moore 1988).

Community Policing assumes that residents trust the police and are willing to cooperate with the police, which is often far from the truth in many poor or minority neighbourhoods (Manning 1997), high crime areas (Bartollas and Hahn 1999) and disorganized communities (Langworthy and Travis 1999). The more crime and risk factors a neighbourhood faces, the less likely it is to develop any organized activity to fight crime, and residents are more reluctant to take the risk of intervening in neighbourhood problems (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there is often a lack of the value consensus and resident cooperation that Community Policing needs to succeed in reducing crime (Hope 1995; Walker 1992). Their residents consider that police have an ‘outsider’ perspective of the neighbourhood (i.e., residents are often seen as ‘deserving victims’ whose lifestyles invite victimization) and they are dissatisfied with police services (e.g., police respond less vigorously to residents’ calls, there are higher rates of officers’ misconduct than in more affluent areas) (e.g. Kane 2002; Mastrofski et al. 2002; Reisig and Parks 2000; Smith 1986; Velez 2001; Weitzer 1999, 2000). Also, there is distrust, a poor relationship and low support of the police and high resistance to crime prevention programmes, since they do not see the benefit of community programs and consider those programmes to be ineffective in controlling the crime problems in their community (Stein and Griffith 2015). In disorganized communities, informal networks of social control are lacking. Thus, local offenders often try to administer their own form of informal control or ‘justice’ to others in the community (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003) or communities tend to employ more formally organized responses to crime (Skogan 1989) or the police is forced to use more traditional styles of policing (Hawdon and Ryan 2003).

Recent research speaks in favour of socio-economic deprivation as a cause of poor community cohesion in disadvantaged areas rather than differences in ethnic groups (Centre for Local Economic Strategies 2014). High crime rates exist not because oppositional values are anchored in the community, but because limited opportunities make it difficult for residents to pursue conventional goals and because they lack the willingness or capacity to prevent deviance (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Skogan 1989). Thus, the major challenge for the government is to mobilise communities to participate in fighting crime (Lewis and Lewis 2012).

Local authorities and police forces should take the lead in establishing effective multi-agency arrangements to develop and deliver a coordinated response to crime. Shared moral values strengthen the connections between citizens and institutions (Jackson et al. 2013), so residents should have opportunities for their conflict with or animosity towards the police to be openly addressed (Gilchrist 2004). This can be achieved by establishing channels of communication between residents and between residents and police. Sharing information related to crime among community residents reciprocally and freely is crucial to crime prevention and control (Manaliyo and Muzindutsi 2013). Shared experiences and activities allow people to identify enough of a community of interest to establish a bond of trust. People are linked by geography, but their affluence allows them access to technologies that frees them to exercise a community of interest with those who live elsewhere.

To make the effective flow of information possible, residents should be well-networked among themselves, physically or virtually. One way to enable community residents to know, interact and connect with one another is by using technology to (re)build communities (e.g., web forums or social networking sites). As information and communication technologies (ICTs) have increasingly pervaded our lives, so have they transformed Community Policing efforts. To date, there have been many efforts to design crime prevention technologies (e.g., the mobile phone application *CLEARpath* that allows residents to tag and share areas of the city on a virtual map where they feel unsafe) for increasing feelings of safety and decrease the risk of victimization by providing the user with the information that aims to influence their behaviour—in alignment with victimization theory (Lewis and Lewis 2012).

However, it was found that crime prevention technologies that give individuals information will not necessarily foster communication amongst residents, afford a richer interaction or increase active participation (Lewis and Lewis 2012). Thus, researchers shifted their focus to communication or the transmission of social norms within a community via technology (Lewis and Salem 1981). Hampton and Wellman (2003) found that electronic networks positively impacted neighbourhoods by affording access to information and resources, linking groups and providing social identities. Lewis and Lewis (2012) proposed that in addition to police websites, which provide extensive information, web tools to support Community Policing should be designed to adhere to and support communication that allows residents to share personal experiences, strengthen social ties with other residents, engage in collective problem solving discussions and to informally regulate social norms, while also addressing crime and community concerns.

Overall, in order for Community Policing to support social cohesion, programmes should aim to continually decrease tensions between police and the community, increase the quality of police services, police visibility, effectiveness in dealing with community problems and accountability to the community (Goldstein 1987; Hawdon and Ryan 2003). Police efforts should be aimed towards acting in procedurally just ways helping them to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the residents (Jackson et al. 2013). Community Policing needs strong neighbourhood associations that operate independently of the police (Friedman 1994) in order to increase resident participation in Community Policing programs (Skogan and Hartnett 1997). Therefore, if a grassroots organization does not exist, the police could encourage the creation of such an organization (Hawdon and Ryan 2003). Also, the limits of Community Policing should be more clearly defined by some articulable criteria (e.g., defining the level of a police officer's responsibility for all that goes on in the neighbourhood; Goldstein 1987) and police efforts should be accompanied by appropriate resources.

2.5 Conclusion

Community security and social cohesion mutually reinforce each other. Since along with socio-economic status, deprivation and access to services and facilities, crimes also have significant impact on community cohesion and resilience, a cooperative role of police in a community is very important in securing that communities stay safe and cohesive. Community Policing represent proactive policing in which formal and informal social control reinforce each other helping to reduce crime by employing prevention activities that serve to promote social cohesion and reduce neighbourhood disorder.

To reduce observed failure of existing Community Policing programs in their efforts to strengthen community cohesion and organization, police should overcome obstacles emerging out of its structural features but it should also more vigorously mobilise communities to participate in fighting crime by establishing effective multi-agency arrangements and communication channels to share information among community residents reciprocally and freely by using information and communication technologies. Overall, in order for Community Policing to support social cohesion, programmes should aim to continually decrease tensions between police and the community and aim to increase the quality of police services, police visibility, effectiveness in dealing with community problems and their accountability to the community.

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