



Local security management Policing through networks

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Keywords Finland, Police, Strategy, Partnering, Networks

Abstract *Anglo-American community policing has been implemented in Finland since 1996 but there has been a long tradition of the community policing style, called the village police, since the 1960s. The police enjoy a great deal of public confidence, the welfare society has been stable, with no significant social divisions and rather low crime, and therefore there have been no urgent needs or pressures for policing reform. Both the adoption and the implementation of the community policing strategy have been a part of wider public sector modernization, including the service orientation, improved efficiency and responsibility. This paper is based on two process evaluation studies; "The implementation of community policing in Finland – a management of change approach" (2000) and "Local security networks and safety planning – a case of Tampere" (2001). The implementation process has been one of learning by doing. There was a shift in thinking and practice in 1999 when community policing was seen more as a dynamic development process and means rather than a model and a goal, as before. Community policing policy in Finland prioritizes strategic partnerships, networks and local safety planning, and it is re-named as local policing or local security management. A process evaluation of local networking and safety planning (Tampere) shows that several factors contribute to the successful process of partnership formation, networking and collaboration.*

Introduction

Community policing has been implemented in Finland systematically since 1996. A few area-based neighbourhood policing initiatives and experimental projects were adopted since 1978, but they were not very successful. "The new wave" of community policing came to Finland in the briefcase of a police officer who visited in San Diego and imported the ideas of more systematic, proactive and holistic approach to policing – and Goldsteins' book *Problem-Oriented Policing* (1990) – and who was in charge of the implementation of these ideas in the Ministry of Interior. Similar new principles were introduced after police managers' visits in The Netherlands, Belgium and the UK. The whole package was at first adopted as such; it included changing the policing philosophy, policing practice and organization. The model was based on the problem-oriented approach, and the main principles were crime prevention, proactive policing and multi-agency cooperation.

In the last few years a whole new language of partnerships has emerged in the policing field. In contrast to a reliance upon autonomous bureaucracies, networks of diverse interest groups have become the dominant ethic with a greater emphasis upon the more holistic approach to social problems (Crawford, 1997, p. 25). Security networks can be seen as an outcome of community policing policies, as is the case in Finland. Networking is, however, challenging conventional wisdom about the role of the police in society; it generates complexity. Partnership has opened up political spaces for new



primary definers to articulate a strategy for urban, social and political regeneration. Strategic challenges to urban governance, debates about crime, insecurity and social anxiety are central to the contemporary struggle over notions of public as well as private interests (Coleman and Sim, 2000, pp. 632-4).

Local policing is being increasingly enmeshed in complex networks of relationships and interests. This is also true in centralized police organisations, as in Finland. Community policing has placed new obligations on the police to cooperate in the development and implementation of local crime prevention and security strategies. As one of the main players the police have been required to develop mutual priorities with other agencies as well as local communities (McLaughlin and Murji, 2001) The formation of partnerships and networking have been the main objectives of community policing in Finland since 1999. The purpose of networking is local safety planning, local policies and strategies and their implementation, updating (continuity) and development, i.e. locally shared responsibility of security.

It has been argued that community policing research has tended to be a series of stories of organizational rearrangements and reforms without connections to wider socio-political developments (Crawford, 1997, p. 5). The contextual and ethnocentric character of policing is an important factor in analyses of the significance and success of the reforms. Community policing needs to be understood in terms of local and national exigencies, e.g. whether the political culture (and within that, the specific police culture) of the particular society provides for an acceptance of state police officers conducting activities outside more general public order and crime-related functions (Brogden, 1999, p. 167). If we look at the community policing philosophies, policies, plans and programmes in Western countries all we easily see is an Anglo-American façade that looks the same everywhere. To avoid this façade in research, it is necessary to look behind the formal statements, and to investigate changes in policing philosophy, policing practices and police organizations in each country. A change in the name of policing philosophy with no change in ways of thinking, institutions and working methods is no change at all (Virta, 2001a).

The power of community policing is that it wraps the police in the powerful good images of community, cooperation and crime prevention; one cannot take issue with its extremely good aspirations. It evokes powerful positive images that tend to insulate the strategy, and the police operating within that strategy, from critical analysis (Barlow and Hickman Barlow, 1999, p. 667). Community policing needs to be evaluated, however, on the same scale as other policing initiatives, i.e. its distributional and political aspects should be taken into account, too. Networks are usually seen to be a way to organize multi-agency cooperation in community policing strategies. Consequently, networking is seen as a method, as a structural matter in a policy domain. But if networks are to explain policy outcomes, then the characteristics of networks themselves should be the primary explanatory element. They appear, though, at present more useful at the metaphorical level; networks matter, but to answer how needs more serious investigation (Peters, 1998, p. 25).

The implementation of community policing – learning by doing

Background

There is a long tradition of a close relationship between the police and the public in Finland. There is also a tradition of a community policing style of policing, called “the village police” in 1960s. A policeman lived in his or her own district and knew the residents. Community policing of foreign origin was not initiated until 1978, and in 1981 the Ministry of Interior issued official instructions on the matter. In 1987 there were 160 community officers in 40 different police districts (2 percent of the entire police force). The new point was that community policing was regarded as part of the preventive activity of the police. Main reasons for implementation failures of initiatives were lack of resources and resistance among the staff; community policing was regarded as non-police work (Mantila, 1987, p. 172).

Over the past few decades, Finnish society has undergone changes similar to those in many other European countries. Still, the police enjoy a great deal of public confidence and the welfare society has been rather low crime, peaceful and non pluralistic. Over a couple of decades this confidence on the part of the people has been stable: in 2000, 88 percent of people had a great deal of confidence in the police. Comparative numbers are Denmark 86, Norway 81, the UK 71, Spain 66, Portugal 39, and the average in Europe is 56 percent (source: European Trusted Brand, Annual Report of the Finnish Police, 2000). Therefore, there was no urgent need for community policing reform. Consequently, the policy was based on community development in the first place, not on defence. Graham and Bennett have classified community crime prevention initiatives as developmental and defensible. Defensible community policing strategies, for instance neighbourhood watches, tend to appear when there are serious problems to tackle (Graham and Bennett, 1995).

Why, then, was a community policing strategy initiated in Finland? A number of surveys made by police in the name of improvement of service since 1990 showed that the social need for policing reform existed. Police were the first authority in Finland to start the Quality of Services programme in 1993. People wanted the police to be more visible and more foot patrols were wanted on the streets. Local authorities and political decision makers expected more and better quality cooperation with the police (e.g. Virta, 1990; Korander, 1994). Community policing was seen as an answer to these increasing demands.

Methodologically, the process evaluation of the implementation of community policing in Finland is qualitative, based on content analysis of administration documents in 1995-2000 and on interviews of 47 senior police officers (middle managers) who were in charge of the implementation during the period all over the country, in police districts of various size. An approach to implementation is the management of change.

Structuring in community policing, 1996-1998

If innovative changes that challenge the principles, philosophy, structure and values of policing are to succeed, they must become the operating philosophy of

the organization. Commitment to change is a necessary condition for implementation and institutionalization. In this sense the starting point was a bit problematic in Finland, because there were no strong inside or outside pressures or demands for reform. Police managers had difficulties stressing the importance of change. When one of the most important reasons for the adoption of community policing in many countries has been the need to improve or even rebuild the relationship between the police and the public, Finnish community policing lacked that mission due to the existing trust and good relations; there was no need to build or rebuild support and legitimacy. Education is also a critical point at the beginning of the process, and in Finland the police education and training lacked community policing knowledge for several years.

However, even when police managers are fully committed to the process, external changes such as demographic shifts, racial conflict, or high levels of unemployment may create barriers to the implementation. There are also other social and economic factors over which police executives and local authorities have little control (Gardarelli *et al.*, 1998). In practice, in 1996 three main means in implementation of community policing were a local security management model (in few big cities; a strategic, holistic approach based on multi-agency cooperation), a problem-oriented program model (in small cities and the countryside; short time schedules, few participants, mostly youth projects) and a neighbourhood policing model (in cities; area-based, contacts with the public made easy by personal mobile phones, foot patrols, bicycles, etc.).

The delivery of community policing at the operational level included foot-patrols, community consultations, visits in schools and area beat officers. There were many variations throughout the country in intensity and volume of community policing initiatives, depending on local activity. One reason was lack of resources, because there were (and still are) no additional financial or personnel resources for community policing in the police budgets. In 1996-1998, the main principles of the community policing model involved problem-oriented policing (with strong emphasis on crime analysis), community crime prevention, area- and team-based policing, decentralization, professionalization (increasing the discretion of the problem-solving practitioners), democratization (seeking more public input and striking partnerships with non-police agencies) and service integration. The main reason for some implementation failures during these years was the lack of prioritizing. All the aspects of the community policing model were to be implemented, all of them were seen as important and inevitable. The lesson to be learnt was that management of change is critical to success. The lack of planning, prioritizing and coordination, training and education led to unwillingness to change.

The management of change was unsuccessful partly for general reasons (no additional resources for community policing, no strong pressures for reforms) and partly because of local failure factors. Locally, common reasons for implementation failures, slow development or non-implementation were as follows:

- community policing was introduced as a new task (with no additional resources);
- perspectives on the change in management level was too general and arguments too weak for effective implementation;
- staff had to rethink and reorient to the police work without proper training and education;
- a heavy burden of expectations on what the initiatives might achieve were placed on the staff; and
- the views and opinions of the staff were not taken account at the beginning of the implementation process.

Consequently, at the end of 1998 there was a bifurcation between community policing and conventional policing in practice. And there were façades too. Some police districts had statements in their annual reports and strategies (“Everything we do is community policing”) but had no specific community policing initiatives. The Ministry of Interior published *An Outline of Community Policing Model* in 1998 (MOI, 1998), with some common, very broadly defined principles and examples of local initiatives. The goal was a safe living environment, but no specific means were offered (“Do it yourself locally, by prioritizing”).

From a model to a strategy

There was a shift in thinking about community policing in 1999. It was seen more and more as a dynamic development process and means, not as a static model and a goal as such. It was understood also more as an alternative or complement to conventional policing and not as competitive as before. Organizational readiness and institutional capacity for sustaining a community policing change grew up. The focus shifted from the operational level to include the management level. There were parallel administrative and management reforms: the Quality of Service project (adopted in 1993) continued to develop quality of police services and the “Management by results” steering system (from 1995 on) was to be implemented. The need to reconcile all these reforms was inevitable but did not succeed until 2001. One problem in Finland has been measuring the results of police work. The lack of crime prevention measures has had a negative impact during the community policing implementation process as well.

To identify the changes in policing since 1996 requires a look at each of the main elements of community policing: philosophy, practice and organizational structures. Most effective changes were seen at the philosophical level, in thinking about police, community orientation and customer orientation. There were changes also in operational strategies and tactics, and a strong emphasis on the development of crime analysis, problem solving and crime prevention. However, changes in organizational structures have been less effective; in fact, there have been very few efforts at organizational reforms (decentralization) locally.

Although all the dimensions of community policing philosophy were seen as equally important, there was a strategy formulation going at the top level of administration and the result was a strategy that prioritised certain goals and objectives. From 1999 on, the main strategy of community policing has been local partnership building and networking. Main objectives are policy making (local security/safety plans), problem identification (citizen surveys, crime analysis) and problem solving. The role of the individual police officer should be planner, problem solver, community organizer and information exchange link, that of knowledge worker. At the same time, community policing was renamed and repositioned as “basic police work” (i.e. local problem-oriented policing) which in turn is a part of local security management and governance (Strategy 1999: *Paikallisella Turvallisuusyhteistyöllä Tulosta. Good Results Through Local Cooperation*) (MOI, 1999).

To sum up, the implementation process has been the one of doing and learning. Now there is a coherent strategy, supportive measures to be built (e.g., strategic planning education and balanced evaluation; a model based on the balanced scorecard) and knowledge management system (crime analysis, information exchange, evaluation) that are preconditions for successful operational community policing. The balanced scorecard is developed by Kaplan and Norton for the business environment (Kaplan and Norton, 2001), but it is widely used in the public sector, and in police organizations in Europe (e.g. in the UK, Germany and Sweden)[1].

The problem still is that once renamed as just local policing, we can no longer see even the façade of community policing. The annual report of the Finnish police (2000) has no word about community policing or local networking. If community policing basically is what the police in Finland has done traditionally for decades, how does the current development make a difference?

Safety planning and local security networks

What is new, however, is the more systematic, strategic approach to local policing. Neighbourhood policing efforts have been rare (no mini-stations or cop-shops, very few community constables), but the same effect is hoped to be gained through networking and getting to know local residents on a novel basis (i.e. common formulation of plans, problem identification and solving).

The partnership formation for the co-production of security has been in most cases a police initiative, mainly because police have the crime prevention and security expertise needed in the first phase of the process. Partnerships vary in size and type. Local coalitions may include representatives from governmental agencies, municipalities, private businesses, voluntary organizations and churches. The main aim of networking is to set the objectives and make a local (or regional) safety plan (strategy of security, policing plan, crime prevention plan; the name depends on the specific focus defined in a policy-making process at the local level). At the end of September 2001, 203 cities and municipalities had some kind of safety plan. In many cases, small municipalities had made

regional plans together. There are 448 cities and municipalities in Finland and all plans should be available to the end of the year.

The purpose of the planning process and networking is to build a continuing system of local security management, to share responsibility of security and crime prevention in communities, and to gain synergy advantages. The management of networks is, however, very challenging to the police, because police play an important role by creating and facilitating partnerships and because every community and its problems are unique. Compared to traditional police work, the management of networks is very much a means of managing and steering expectations.

Building the local security network – a case of Tampere

Tampere is the second biggest city in Finland, with approximately 193,000 inhabitants. The local police initiative process of partnership formation started in 1997. It was a part of the development of community policing in the city police department, focused on problem solving and multi-agency cooperation. The first main goal was to make a safety plan for the city and to connect the security issues to the broader urban development program. Political leaders of the city supported the initiative and insisted that the prevention of social exclusion should include the plan. A positive, supportive political environment has been viewed by police chiefs as the most important factor in their ability to implement community policing and crucial to the long-term success of the programme (Gardarelli *et al.*, 1998) and it had a critical role in Tampere, too.

The coalition of the planning network (17 persons) consisted of the social and health authorities, the representatives of school, environmental and technical and employment sectors, business, church, NGOs (Tampere 2000 network) and the police. The formulation of the strategy at the beginning of the process included the following aims: to decrease and prevent disorder, petty crimes and social exclusion; to initiate surveys and joint projects; to support local activities and information flow; to coordinate parallel initiatives; to find a common view about security matters; and to build models for cooperation and collaboration, i.e. networks.

The evaluation of the networking and strategy making process in Tampere is based on documents collected from the first meeting of the planning group in 1997 to the end of the year 2000, interviews of the participants of the group, and the continuous monitoring of the process.

Identification and positioning

Members of the working group had to find out their own roles and positions in relation to security and crime prevention issues: they had to identify themselves as actors in the security field. It was not an easy process. The concept of security, first presented by the police to the rest of the group, was crime related. However, all other members had different kinds of standpoints, and consequently, after several discussions and meetings, the compromise was a very broad concept of security which included almost all aspects of everyday life.

Next steps in the process were defining common goals, coordinating parallel initiatives, collecting information, setting priorities and mapping the chances for collaboration. The social prevention-oriented approach dominated the discourse and planning during 1998 and traffic and business interests remained rather separate domains. The practical solution in working methods, to divide the security field into sub-processes and to define the main “owners” of each, was successful. There were 15 processes, three of them owned by the police (car thefts, violence in the streets, fear of crime). The first version of the safety plan for the city was completed at the end of 1999.

Monitoring and evaluation of the process was seen to be important, because the success or failure of planning and cooperation could have impacts on the implementation and further networking, and to the effects and outcome of the whole partnership idea of prevention of crime, fear of crime and increasing security. Evaluation was also important for learning through the process so that the process could correct its direction and steer itself if necessary.

Findings

As a network, the planning group was effective and coherent enough for the security policy making. Information exchange and knowledge sharing worked well and all members also found the process beneficial to their own fields. The synergy advantage was significant especially, among the police, social authorities, church and environmental planning authorities (architecture, buildings, parking places). Commitment of the police to the planning was seen to be good but on a narrow personnel basis, because only the deputy chief of the Tampere City Police Department participated in the strategy making process.

The consensus about the goals, priorities and security was achieved rather easily, partly because of conflict avoidance techniques used as early as in partnership coalition formation. The police made decisions selecting the participants, and chose the most important traditional partners (e.g. social authorities) and the most cooperative partners (e.g. church). The party-politicization of the process was intentionally avoided by the police, and the representatives of local political decision makers were not invited. It has been argued that the core participants of policing networks tend to be drawn from a narrow set of groups and institutions who have frequent and high quality interaction on all matters related to the policy issue (McLeay, 1998, p. 127) and this was the case in Finland, too.

There were no struggles over the discourses of security, and all members agreed that their interests were taken into account equally during the process. The major problems were the schedule and the amount of work. It was difficult to find enough time for meetings, and participation activity was rather low at the end of the year 1999 (only four to six members at present in meetings). However, the strategy was almost finished, and a lot of exchange could be done by e-mail. The amount of work was seen to be a problem at the beginning of the process, e.g. social authorities used 20-30 hours per month (in addition to their

regular jobs) gathering information and coordinating security-related projects (youth, probation, drugs).

The business sector was alienated from the process after the first year, mainly because of the strong emphasis put on social prevention. The representatives of business found the process not very beneficial for their purposes. Shoplifting is still one part of the crime prevention program in the Safer Tampere strategy, but a minor one. The business sector is used to organizing its own security matters differently, through surveillance cameras, private security agencies etc. in Finland.

As a policy-making network, partnership is also a power-related construction. It has been argued that differential power relations encompass the relative capacity of organizations and actors, drawing upon material and human resources, to achieve desired outcomes. In multi-agency crime prevention power is often exercised through the power to define; to set agendas, direct resources and determine the contours of policy (Crawford, 1997, p. 133). In this sense, inter-organizational, the power relations changed during the process towards a balance. In the beginning the process was police dominated, the police gathered basic information and police knowledge dominated the discourse of security. The result, the Safer Tampere strategy (2000), though, has a very social preventive ethos, and a balance among interests.

Local security network – responsibility and empowerment

The original policy network continues its work as a steering group for the implementation of the strategy. The implementation was reconciled with the urban neighbourhood development program and they have an office with a six-person staff. Area based networking started in 2000 and neighbourhood networks were built on existing structures, only in two areas the security networks are new. Area-based security surveys offered basic information about the problems of each area. Members of the neighbourhood networks are mainly social agencies and health authorities, representatives of schools and voluntary organizations (e.g. residence associations). The role of the police is mainly as an expert and an information exchange link. Each of the five area networks has its own structures and working methods. Crime prevention and security education, as well as teamwork training, were organized during 2000 into five one-day courses for each area. The main purpose of the networking is to make plans at the neighbourhood level and act together for a peaceful, crimeless and safe environment. In Tampere, the strategy is inclusive in nature and welfare-oriented. Responsibility of the area authorities and associations and empowerment of residents are crucial aspects of networking.

Conclusions

The question most often asked by foreign policemen and researchers has been “why?” when I have discussed Finnish community policing. It is a good reason to stress the contextual and ethnocentric character of policing. One explanation for the adoption of community policing in Finland has been, of course, the

transnational trafficking of policemen and policing ideas. It is always appealing to follow new inventions. Community policing was seen also as a response to the increasing demands on and expectations for improved police services. One reason for implementation failures at the beginning of the process was that police managers themselves could not answer the question “why?”, posed by their staff. Therefore, the whole process of implementation of the community policing strategy was a process of learning by doing. The result is now the more systematic, holistic and strategic approach to local policing. Although no longer called community policing, there exists a coherent strategy of partnerships and networking. Local security management means policing through networks, and local networks are important actors in safety planning.

If the future of policing lies in diverse networks, as argued by Johnston (1998), the dynamics of those networks, as well as impacts and outcomes of policy-making, have to be evaluated. In the partnership context, it becomes impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of policing in terms of the effectiveness of the police. We have to take into consideration the whole variety of interests, hybrid combinations of strategies of crime prevention, complexity of relationships, decision-making capacities, power imbalances and the issues of representation and participation. What is needed is politicization[2] of a so far rather technological network and partnership approach (Virta, 2001b). Or, as argued by Stenson and Edwards (2001), a theory of local politics of crime control.

Notes

1. The BSC initiatives in European police organizations are rather new, though. For instance, the NCIS (National Criminal Intelligence Service) in the UK adopted the BSC approach at the beginning of 2001, the Baden-Württembergs police in Germany in the 200, the Swedish police in 1998 (Virta and Kujanpää, 2001c).
2. By “politicization” I do not mean party-politicization with the negative connotations of the term. Rather, politicization is an interpretative action, asking new questions and opening new playgrounds, showing that there are chances for action, choices to be made and a possible opposition against some generally accepted “truths”.

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