4 Disorder Policing and Community Needs. 'Revising' Broken Windows Theory

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Introduction

Dutch police surveys show that citizens find issues such as 'drunkards on the streets' and 'drug-related troubles' more threatening than issues like 'violent offences'. When asked which situations result in feelings of insecurity, the item 'places where juveniles hang around' is mentioned most often. In British Crime Surveys the item 'young people hanging around' also takes the lead (Wood, 2004). Apparently citizens – in certain circumstances and under particular conditions – are more sensitive to incivilities and disorderly behaviour than to crime (Innes, 2004). Dutch citizens also take the view that the police should fight disorder problems more effectively. The police should be more visible in neighbourhoods (Elffers and De Jong, 2004).

How to interpret these patterns? Theorists like Skogan (1990) and Roché (2002) point out that accumulated disorder problems such as public drinking, group loitering and school disruption give the impression that the local community lacks moral consensus and neighbours cannot be trusted. Incidental disorderly situations are not annoying, nor are they found to be morally objectionable. But the high frequency of these situations makes them disturbing. A mass of incivilities may unsettle everyday life and makes them unacceptable. They might even suggest that society itself has been eroded.

If insecurity feelings are correlated so strongly with neighbourhood disorder, the police and local security policies must be affected. Whereas Dutch figures concerning burglary and theft have been dropping for several years, vandalism figures are still rising (Wittebrood and Nieuwbeerta, 2006). Some disorder problems, such as persistent antisocial behaviour, are at the centre of public concern. For these and other reasons Dutch urban policies try to improve the security and quality of life, especially in poor and vulnerable neighbourhoods (Van Stokkom, 2007).

In this respect reassessing the broken windows theory may be promising. The authors of that theory, Wilson and Kelling, stressed that order maintenance is actually the core of police-work. In the criminological world the theory was severely criticised, notably because the 'root causes of crime' were neglected;

moreover the theory came to be identified with New York City zero tolerance policing. Without doubt the broken windows theory accelerated theorizing on policing. But as a result of over-politicised discussions several convincing ideas had no real bearing on theoretical innovations concerning police strategies. Some potentially fruitful aspects of the theory were neglected. To find out its real value I will pass over the mystified case of New York and make an inventory of various research evaluations on controlling and fighting disorder.[19]

'Disorder policing' may serve as an umbrella for various approaches to enhance security and quality of life in problematic urban areas, from aggressive approaches like zero tolerance in New York to approaches that stress consultation and cooperation with citizens and professionals. However I will claim that the principles of disorder policing are only met when police programmes correspond with some core ideas which were formulated by the theorists of broken windows: police strategies should be attuned to the 'collective needs' of the residents, whilst the neighbourhood defines what the 'appropriate level of public order' should be. An example of this kind of disorder policing is the alternative police programme in Chicago where citizens are invited to participate in a collective process of indicating and prioritising crime and disorder problems. Another example is the recently implemented reassurance policing programme in England in which local 'signal events' are collectively discussed and dealt with. Can these programmes give an impetus to bring peace and order in vulnerable and problematic urban areas?

So this chapter outlines broader developments; reassurance policing is viewed as 'only' one of the variants of disorder policing. I will first deal with the theory of broken windows policing. After sketching the core principles, the main criticisms are explicated. It is argued that the participative role of residents in defining order is a fruitful idea, and that advocates and critics of the theory share the view that 'disorder' is a theoretically relevant concept, and that disorder can have many detrimental effects, such as lowering neighbourhood status. After this reinterpretation of broken windows theory, the Chicago alternative police strategy and the English reassurance-programme are described briefly. As mentioned, these programmes make considerable efforts to consult residents when it comes to assessing and prioritising disorder problems. In the last sections I will discuss in which respects disorder policing could renew the theory and practice of Dutch community policing. I will deal with some complicating factors but I will claim that a 'politics of order' offers a more fruitful perspective for policing than 'classic' criminological and law enforcement perspectives, especially in marginalised neighbourhoods.

19. The New York success story relies mainly on political symbolism. Many big cities in the United States had similar crime drops as New York. Some of these cities, for example San Diego, did not use aggressive strategies of order maintenance like New York did. While in San Diego the manpower of the police force increased by 6 percent between 1990 and 1995, the number of New York police officers rose in that period by nearly 40 percent. And while in New York – still in the same period – the number of arrests rose sharply (for instance twice as many drugs-related arrests), the number of arrests in San Diego fell by 15 percent (Greene, 1999). This suggests that New York was far more successful in selling the radical decline of crime (Punch 2006; Manning 2001).

4.1 What is wrong with broken windows theory?

4.1.1 *The theory*

In their now classic article in the *Atlantic Monthly* (1982) Wilson and Kelling formulated their thesis as to how disorderly behaviour attracts crime and causes neighbourhood decay. Residents tend to withdraw when they notice that antisocial behaviour gets the upper hand and the surroundings are dirty and depraved. They are not prepared to exercise informal control. 'Vandalism can occur anywhere once communal barriers – the sense of mutual regard and the obligations of civility – are lowered by actions that seem to signal that "no one cares".' Defiant youth groups claim the streets and get more opportunities to commit crime. Consequently, neighbourhoods run into a negative spiral: predatory troublemakers from outside the neighbourhood are invited to join unruly insiders. Thus, signs of social and physical decay would trigger a 'criminal invasion': 'serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behaviour goes unchecked.' Conversely, restored social networks and clean streets would re-establish informal social control and keep crime at a distance.

When commenting on the broken windows theory this supposed causal relationship between disorder and serious crime (like assaults and robbery) gets the most attention. But the theory comprises aspects that are regularly underexposed. One of these core aspects is the idea that the prime task of policing – its raison d'être – is regulating public behaviour and maintaining social order. Wilson and Kelling stress that detecting and apprehending criminals is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. The objective is order, an ambivalent concept to be sure, but a concept that residents often recognise and interpret in common ways. Unlike discussions about legal rules there are no general standards to settle arguments about order and disorder. A judge would be powerless, but the police officer is forced to interpret disorder problems and to make a choice.

The authors point out that earlier police generations concentrated their work on order maintenance. Only in the sixties did attention shift to law enforcement and crime fighting. The relation between order maintenance and crime prevention faded into the background. To protect individual rights and prevent stigmatisation the police were not to focus on the behaviour of, for instance, beggars, vagrants, drunks and unruly youth. Rather, disreputable behaviour that 'harms no one' like public drinking and prostitution should be decriminalized to end the 'overreach' of criminal law.

Wilson and Kelling criticise the idea that the police should stick to law enforcement. The police should strengthen the informal social-control mechanisms of 'natural communities' in order to minimise fear in public places. 'Law enforcement, per se, is no answer. A gang can weaken or destroy a community by standing about in a menacing fashion and speaking rudely to passers-by without breaking the law.' Arresting some mobsters wouldn't help because the remaining youngsters keep on claiming street. According to Wilson and Kelling: 'If an arrest is the only recourse for the police, the residents' fears will go unassuaged.' For that reason the authors suggest that chasing away gangs would be more effective. Doing nothing would demoralise the neighbourhood: 'Failing to do anything about a score of drunks or a hundred vagrants may destroy an entire community.'

Policing disorder, Wilson and Kelling stress, should be congruent with 'community needs'. The police should protect the community, not only individuals. Crime statistics and victim surveys only determine individual harm, but do not measure community losses.

The problem is that harm is interpreted solely in individual terms. What's good for the individual, is also supposed to be good for the community. But some individuals tolerate behaviour that is intolerable for many others, and the reactions of these others – fear, withdrawal, flight – may ultimately make matters worse for everybody.

These views return in Kelling and Coles' study *Fixing Broken Windows* (1996). Citizens are chiefly concerned about daily threatening behaviour and 'in your face' indignities. These experiences may be more detrimental to a neighbourhood than incidental crimes, especially when the social fabric is affected. Shopkeepers can manage some robberies, but not persistent intimidations. For that reason, contextual problems that affect the local community rather than incidents should direct police action. The police should take care that community life, conceived as 'preventive capital', remains intact.

Kelling and Coles argue in favour of a neighbourhood oriented crime prevention, a kind of community policing that comprises the following aspects (1996: 158/9):

- a broad policing function: keeping the peace and restoring public order;
- reliance of police on citizens to get information about neighbourhood problems;
- eschewing general tactics, like preventive patrol and rapid response to calls for service, in favour of specific tactics, targeted on particular problems, in cooperation with citizens.

Crime prevention is the prime task, which calls for visible and authoritative police action. The authors stress that order maintenance is risky because there is often no legal backup. Residents may object to police decisions. At the same time order maintenance often relies on an aggressive style, because timely intervention in disorder problems requires 'hands-on' approaches.

4.1.2 *The theory criticised*

Without doubt the broken windows theory is innovative, simply because attention is guided away from the 'garden variety crime' that generally occupies the mind of criminologists. The theory stresses contextual factors, and may be viewed as a theory of urban demoralisation or urban decay. The chief innovation, or one could say, provocation, is that the root causes of crime (poverty, racism, bad housing etc) do not play a role. The solution for urban disorder problems lies in the hands of the police and the residents themselves.

These suppositions of the theory have met with considerable criticism. Particularly the presumed causal relationship between social and physical disorder and serious crime seems to be erroneous. The claim that decay and dereliction must lead to crime seems to be untenable. In his impressive longitudinal study of Baltimore city areas Ralph Taylor (2001) found that neighbourhood status and poverty are far more relevant to explain crime than disorderly behaviour and incivilities. And after meticulously studying Chicago neighbourhoods Sampson and Raudenbusch (1999) concluded that social disorder and crime are both symptoms of deeper social and economic lags in development. Thus the sociological root factors remain forcefully in place.

Besides, there is too much variation in the range of incivilities. In this respect the findings of Maxfield (1987) are highly important: incivilities do not influence crime directly, but nonetheless influence what residents believe about crime (overestimating crime and victimisation risks). He specified that some incivilities do not influence fear of crime, others do influence some groups in certain conditions. Drunkards and beggars on the street are highly related, street litter and graffiti (obvious signs that 'no one cares') are not related (1987: 33).

The repressive tone in which broken windows is articulated, evoked much resistance. The authors suggest that 'chasing away' the homeless and youth-gangs would offer a solution. They do not seem to reckon with displacement (and thus postponing finding solutions) and seem to neglect respectful treatment of citizens. The proposal to identify neighbourhoods at the tipping point, 'where public order is deteriorating but not unreclaimable', gives the impression that some neighbourhoods are so crime ridden that they are actually given up.

The views of George Kelling, who presented himself as the main protagonist of broken windows, contain many ambiguities. On the one hand he moved away from the rhetoric of zero tolerance and 'street sweepings'. In an interview he expressed that zero tolerance is an 'illegitimate child' of fixing broken windows. The phrase is a 'political sound bite' and antithetical to the highly discretionary activities that broken windows implies (2002: 129). On the other hand he advocates intrusive and aggressive police action. Moreover, in *Do Police Matter?* (2001) Kelling and his colleague Sousa jr, applaud New York police strategies and the tens of thousands of arrests for 'quality of life'-offences that are involved. Mat-

thews could be called a proponent of 'continually recycling the same marginalised population through the criminal justice system' (Matthews, 1992: 47). It is hard to understand why Kelling identifies so strongly with New York policing. Departing from some basic ideas in the original broken window article – 'law enforcement, per se, is no answer'; reinforcing informal social control – this strategy would be no option. So Kelling's line of thought is ambiguous: arresting huge number of minor offenders, and giving priority to order maintenance above law enforcement.

4.1.3 *Convincing aspects of the theory*

Nevertheless the views of the proponents and critics do converge more than one might expect. Like Taylor, Sampson and Raudenbusch (1999: 637) recognise the theoretical relevance of disorder. First, perceived disorder correlates strongly with fear of victimisation (Taylor, 2001). Perceived disorder also correlates with higher levels of distrust of police officers and other local professionals. Residents take the view that their problems are not taken seriously and they feel abandoned by public organisations (Skogan, 1990; Roché, 2002).

Secondly, when disorder gains momentum, residents lose confidence in their neighbourhood; they withdraw or move to other parts of town. Dissatisfaction and feelings of insecurity are the driving forces behind patterns of neighbourhood decay. They determine school choice, investments in properties, and transactions on the housing market; ultimately they determine neighbourhood status and patterns of migration. None of the main critics of broken windows theory, not even Harcourt (2001), deny the relevance of disorder for neighbourhood dynamics like moving decisions. In terms of Sampson and Raudenbusch: physical and social disorder comprise highly visible cues to which residents respond: disorder problems 'turn out to be important for understanding migration patterns, investment by business and overall neighborhood viability'. For these reasons disorder could indirectly have an effect on crime (Sampson and Raudenbusch, 1999: 637).

Thirdly, the broken windows thesis simply suggests that disorder gives more opportunities for crime. Harcourt (2001) confirms that some groups of offenders are sensitive to signs of weakend citizenship. As stated, the argument that graffiti, street litter, vandalism or rowdy behaviour would elicit serious crime is not convincing. However, there seems to be a strong correlation between persistent antisocial behaviour and crime (Burney, 2005; Koffman, 2006). Thus one could agree with Kelling and Coles (1996: 243) that policing persistent antisocial behaviour gives information about the hard-core '6 percent' of youthful offenders. The high visibility of police in areas characterised by high levels of disorder could also send a message to 'wannabes' and those committing marginal crimes that their actions will no longer be tolerated.

But regardless of these potentially preventive effects, there are good reasons to stimulate disorder policing. The 'classic' viewpoint that security should be promoted primarily through fighting 'structural factors' like poverty, illiteracy, addiction etc. – the 'root causes of crime' – remains conclusive in the long run, but does not offer clear answers. Of course improving education and social policies does strengthen social competences, but disorder policing – aiming at the immediate goal of neighbourhood stability – remains relevant psychologically in terms of restoring trust. It safeguards everyday social contacts, regular school attendance, keeping shops open, repairing properties, etc. In other words, residents need order maintenance to prevent exit-options like avoiding streets or moving away.

Why not build upon the concept of 'collective efficacy' that Sampson and Raudenbusch have developed? The concept points to 'the linkage of cohesion and mutual trust with shared expectations for intervening in support of neighbourhood social control' (1999: 612). The concept incorporates both a static 'mutual trust among neighbours' and a more action-oriented 'willingness to intervene for the common good' dimension. This concept is clearly empirically stronger than the broken windows theory in explaining the connection between disorder, crime and neighbourhood problems (Hancock, 2001). But the question is whether it can provide guidance in everyday situations. The theory is coupled with deep-seated urban variables such as 'concentrated disadvantage'. The reduction of social-economic disadvantages seems to be a distant prospect and presupposes radical social-economic policies (Bottoms, 2006: 268). The question as to which 'here and now' interventions could disempower disorder and crime seems to be more urgent. In short, in vulnerable neighbourhoods where collective efficacy is most needed, it is less available, and also very difficult to realise. This demanding type of social capital is hard to develop..

Fighting neighbourhood disorder requires active and sometimes intrusive policing strategies. These strategies contain a risk that is often mentioned: they are concentrated on marginal groups as street kids, beggars and prostitutes. How can negative implications for these groups be prevented? Is there a type of disorder policing which may protect these groups? Perhaps radical forms of consulting the neighbourhood population offer a way out.

4.2 VARIETIES OF DISORDER POLICING

Disorder policing can be viewed as an umbrella for various policing strategies to counteract disorder and 'quality of life'-problems, ranging from aggressive strategies like zero tolerance policing in New York City to more responsive strategies which focus on cooperation with other local professionals and citizens. It seems however more logical to limit disorder policing to programmes that take the 'community needs' of residents as their starting point, exactly because order is so difficult to define. According to Wilson and Kelling the neighbourhood indicates

what the 'appropriate level of public order' should be. So disorder policing aims to make use of the 'preventive capital' of citizens, not arresting massive numbers of citizens for 'quality of life' offences as is the case in New York.

What is the 'appropriate level of public order'? Wilson and Kelling stress that 'order' is an ambiguous term and difficult to assess. In *Disorder and Decline* (1990) Wesley Skogan reflected further on the problematic nature of determining order. In former times when the police exuded more authority and communities were more homogeneous, citizens did not specify order in contested ways. But nowadays every social or ethnic group within a neighbourhood seems to have its own view. It is difficult to reach agreement on questions such as what are threatening or depraved situations, and when should one intervene in street conflicts. What one citizen experiences as 'nuisance', is 'freedom' to another. In heterogeneous neighbourhoods neither the police nor citizen-organisations can claim that their vision on order is authoritative and is readily complied with. In these conditions, Skogan says, it is a challenge to involve citizens and other relevant parties explicitly in determining local public order. Order is negotiated, rather than imposed. In that way policing becomes an open political process.

So it is important to include citizens in determining and selecting disorder problems, in particular in vulnerable neighbourhoods that struggle with many different problems such as drug trafficking, prostitution and intimidating youths. Actually this view is the starting point of some of the most radical police innovation programmes of the last fifteen years, notably the alternative police strategy in Chicago (CAPS) and reassurance policing in England. These programmes 'reinvent' some of the core features of earlier community policing approaches (prevention, cooperation, problem-solving, etc), but also add some 'new' aspects: stimulating residents and other stakeholders to find solutions for (contested) local security problems, giving high priority to combating disorder (which is also a consequence of involving the public), and implementing this participation in structured and systematic ways.

4.2.1 *The alternative police strategy in Chicago*

Since 1993 Chicago has developed one of the most ambitious and intensive community policing programmes in the United States. The strategy is implemented in all 279 police beats of the city. In addition the Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety (CANS) was formed, a body in which police officers educate residents how to deal with insecurity problems. They try to offer citizens realistic expectations as to which problems they could solve themselves and which problems they should not tackle (drug gangs etc.). All 279 beats have monthly meetings in which residents, police officers and other professionals meet. The aim is to identify and prioritise local problems together, and to develop plans to deal with them. In smaller civilian advisory committees professionals and citizens concentrate on the most disturbing problems.

Another chief aim of the programme is to reduce distrust between police and citizenry. The police explicitly embraced the broken windows philosophy, and consequently also the expansion of the police mandate (Skogan, 2006: 179). Nevertheless, CAPS was launched by the city administration. Getting the police behind this agenda, Skogan states (2006: 317), was the most difficult task of all. Maybe the innovative aspects of the Chicago strategy are not so much related to its methods of participation, than with the rigorous long-term organisation and the political will to establish and maintain partnerships in every neighbourhood. Besides, most local administrations wouldn't dare to initiate such an ambitious long-term programme (Carr, 2005: 149).

Evaluation studies (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997; Skogan, 2006) show that on average the monthly beat meetings attract twenty residents. These participants are far more conscious of disorder and crime problems than non-participants. The latter perceive less crime and neighbourhood decay, but at the same time have less positive views about the police. CAPS attracted citizens who did not participate prior to the programme. Participation of women, blacks and economically poor persons increased. A remarkable finding is that participation in black neighbourhoods is just as high as in white neighbourhoods, even in high-crime districts where the police were unpopular. Participation in Latino neighbourhoods is not as high, in particular when Latino subgroups do not speak English.

Over the period 1994-2003 crime went down, which is – according to Skogan – in part attributable to CAPS. In the same period confidence in the police improved considerably. Popular views of police effectiveness, responsiveness and demeanour within the 'three Chicago's' (white, black and Latino) increased substantially. Since 1997 African-Americans reported lower levels of social disorder and decay, but among Latinos things grew worse (Skogan, 2006: 319). Not much changed for the city's white neighbourhoods. Skogan comments that they did not need community policing in the first place. They already had neighbourhood organisations and political channels at their disposal to solve local problems (2006: 326).

After studying Chicago beat meetings Archon Fung (2004) points out several problems. Some beats fail to address priority problems. Often police resources are allocated in an inequitable way. The 'natural' course of participation leads to 'conflictual paralysis' in one beat and domination by wealthy and well-educated residents in another. Often energetic beat facilitators succeed in breaking through this laissez faire, first come, first served style, manage to put problems of underrepresented subgroups on the agenda, and call in intervention teams to take action against, for example, drug houses. Thus beat meetings need powerful facilitators. Fung argues that even in neighbourhoods that lack resources or are weighted down with internal conflicts, citizens gain more from the new deliberative arrangements than they did from former bureaucratic organisational forms.

In a case study of a neighbourhood watch group in Beltway, a quiet suburban district in Chicago, Carr (2005) specifies that only after the initiation of a CAPS-

structure did citizens receive support from the police and other local public services. Consequently, a small group of active Beltway citizens was able to mobilise resources and initiate partnerships. Carr challenges the supposition that neighbourhoods need strong social networks in order to effectuate crime and disorder prevention. For instance, campaigns against graffiti are successful thanks to a small group of activists, and are not dependent on social cohesion.

Without CAPS, Carr stresses, the Beltway activism would have been impossible. In his view a semi-formal consultation structure between citizens, police officers and other professionals functions as a blueprint for future prevention programmes and community policing.

The main factor that stimulates citizens to participate is trust in public professionals. Even in poor ethnic neighbourhoods consultation and partnerships could be successful; but they have to overcome 'legal cynicism' and the tendency of residents to tolerate antisocial behaviour (Carr, 2005: 150).

4.2.2 *Reassurance policing in England*

The Reassurance Policing Programme was recently implemented within the framework of national neighbourhood policing. The programme aims to reduce levels of neighbourhood insecurity whilst increasing public trust and confidence. The programme is built upon three ingredients (Innes, 2007):

- ensure that officers on patrol are visible, accessible, familiar and effective;
- identify specific problems that function as 'drivers' of insecurity in neighbourhoods through developing community intelligence (particularly through recognising 'signal crimes' and 'signal disorders');
- co-produce solutions with community members and partner agencies wherever possible.

The theory of reassurance policing has been influenced by CAPS policing in Chicago and Skogan's work on neighbourhood disorder and decline (Herrington and Millie, 2006; Innes, 2005; Innes, 2007). But the reassurance approach adds important psychological insights. According to Martin Innes who developed the theoretical framework of 'reassurance', a police which operates in publicly visible ways, communicates a sense of 'guardianship' towards residents. Citizens feel comfortable and safe when they have the impression that the neighbourhood is under control, and crime and disorder will be dealt with. But high visibility on the streets is not enough. Police officers should be locally known and knowledgeable, and be familiar with the history of a neighbourhood and its people; they should also take residents' concerns seriously.

Reassurance policing aims to identify local incidents and problems that residents experience as disproportionally troublesome, and find solutions in co-productive ways. According to Innes certain visible and sometimes spectacular events or

incidents occupy the 'collective memory' of residents; they function as warning signs for future threats. But also a range of seemingly trivial disorderly behaviours, like hanging around on the streets or recurring fighting after closing time in entertainment districts, may develop into 'signal events' that tend to dominate the psychological concern of residents (Innes, 2004; Innes and Fielding, 2002). The police have the task of consulting citizens and collecting information about these 'signals crimes' and 'signal disorders' that may threaten security feelings. Before intervening it must be checked whether residents agree about the presence of these risks or harms.

Subsequently the police (and other parties involved) can develop 'control signals'. Innes defines control signals as actions of social control that communicate a sense of regained peace and order (Innes, 2004). He distinguishes negative from positive control signals. An example of a negative control signal is not reacting adequately upon citizen requests to intervene, or failing to give protection against intimidation. These signals are communicated rigorously to other residents, and may initiate powerlessness, distrust and 'exit'-behaviour. Conversely, positive control signals convince citizens that police officers view order as a serious public good that they are concerned about.

The first evaluation results one year after the start of the national programme are promising. There is a positive change in key outcome indicators in the sites that were matched to control sites: compared with control sites 12 percent of the residents report more confidence in police, 11 percent perceive less crime, and 5 percent report lower levels of victimisation. Sites that carried out targeted problem-solving activity and where partners and the community were involved, showed a significant positive change in public perceptions of juvenile nuisance (Tuffin et al., 2006: 91).

It is interesting that the programme did not have any effect on 'collective efficacy' (measured as the extent to which respondents agreed that residents would intervene if young people were causing trouble and that neighbours would help each other). Neither did the programme show any effect on public involvement in community organisations, including neighbourhood watch (Tuffin et al., 2006: 57). This is no surprise: only a small minority of residents are involved in partnerships which combat insecurity problems; far more social investments would be needed to improve social capacity and social cohesion.

4.3 REPOSITIONING DUTCH COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chicago alternative police strategy and the national reassurance policing programme in England offer structural and systematic ways to deal with neighbourhood problems. Innes (2007) does not hesitate to call the reassurance programme 'a scientific approach to police street craft'.

What do these rigorous police programmes have to offer Dutch local security policies? In which respects could Dutch community policing be more attuned to the theory and practice of disorder policing? And could this help to overcome the present vulnerable position of community policing?

Since the seventies Dutch police strategies in neighbourhoods have complied with many suppositions of community policing (building partnerships; operating in visible and accessible ways; etc.). Pragmatic attitudes within Dutch police forces promoted consultation and cooperation; problem-solving found broad acceptance. As a consequence, trust in the police is still high, also compared with other countries (Van der Vijver, 2006).

Nevertheless Dutch community policing struggles with many problems. In every police district neighbourhood work is practiced in different ways. How neighbourhood officers are embedded also varies in every district. More importantly: internal communication within the force often fails and there seems to be a lack of management-steering. Neighbourhood officers develop their own methods, optimise their discretional power and often operate in isolation, without much support from other officers. Many districts have no explicit rules or accountability structures for neighbourhood-officers. Many officers do not adequately record structural problems. There seems to be a natural tendency to restrict work to short-term interventions and run from one problem to another ('quick fixes') (Zoomer et al., 2002).

Moreover, recent national security policies are not really supportive for community policing. Since 2002 law enforcement, crime fighting objectives (combating persistent offenders) and increasing clear-up rates dominate the Dutch policies. Consequently, promoting co-production work in neighbourhoods got into hot water and participation in neighbourhood-partnerships stagnated (Terpstra and Kouwenhoven, 2004). At the same time neighbourhood officers were 'harassed' by performance indicators that are alien to preventative work. Nevertheless, the regime changes in large cities as Rotterdam (Tops, 2006; Engbersen et al. 2005) did stimulate 'aggressive' intervention strategies like removing prostitutes and addicted junkies from the streets (and forcing many to enter care programmes). In many respects these strategies correspond with disorder policing objectives: to bring back peace to the streets. But another objective of disorder policing, that 'community needs' should drive these security strategies, seems to be neglected. Moreover, the 'preventative capital' of residents is underutilised.

For these reasons I believe that Dutch community policing would benefit a lot from attuning strategies to structural programmes of disorder policing. In that way the eclecticism and opportunism in local community policing practices could be overcome. Moreover, the theory and practice of disorder policing contain some approaches that could revise some of the 'out-dated' suppositions of Dutch community policing. The trick is to secure a stronger connection between neighbourhood police strategies and the requirements of current local security policies and to get rid of the label of 'being soft'. Three suppositions are examined.

4.3.1 *Legitimate repressive interventions*

Community policing is often associated with communication and cooperation. But disorder policing shows that neighbourhood officers cannot always present themselves as 'social'; they must be able to work in repressive ways when necessary. Often residents in problem areas are not satisfied with communication, partnerships, and strengthening self-help networks. They welcome police interventions to control urgent local problems, like open air drug markets.

Order maintenance, as Kelling and Coles state, is in many respects a 'hard' police strategy. It is linked with the 'natural' *habitus* of the police to protect the public interest in authoritative ways. Moreover, many disorder problems have a collective nature, their supposed risk or harm is often contested, so intrusive interventions elicit much opposition.

The legitimacy of these repressive strategies, such as removing junkies from the streets and sending them to rehabilitation centres, could be strengthened through citizen consultation. This is also true of other rigorous methods like curfews and orders prohibiting contact. These coercive interventions often bring forth tensions within neighbourhoods and threaten social contacts and cooperation. In these situations 'community needs' also could determine local security policies.

4.3.2 *Symbolic order maintenance actions*

Reassuring the public cannot be achieved merely through higher police visibility in the neighbourhood. It is the symbolic communication that counts: police officers should communicate the meaning of 'guarding' and 'something is being done'. They should be responsive and committed, and show interest in residents' narratives to build up trust. Feelings of citizens need to be responded to in such a way that a sense of urgency is conveyed and residents are stimulated to take their own responsibility (van Stokkom, 2008).

Community policing can benefit from highly visible actions and interventions to reduce disorder, even when executed by agencies from outside the immediate locality. Designing these demonstrative 'control signals' is not easy. 'Shock and awe' policing tactics, such as high profile raids, can raise community fears and concerns, in particular when residents are not informed (Innes, 2007). Municipal workers, brought in to restore and clean the streets, often do not show responsive attitudes. Again a necessary condition is that 'control signals' reflect community needs; they should be based on the concerns and perceptions of residents (Innes,

2004). For instance, preventive search and frisk actions can offer strong signals of reassurance. They undermine the status of addicts and other intimidating groups, balance power relationships on the street, and communicate to vulnerable groups that justice counts. But prior to any action, the local population should be consulted; if those actions meet considerable opposition the police should not carry them out.

4.3.3 *Limited value of social cohesion*

Often community policing embraces the high aims of 'bringing back' citizenship and strengthening social cohesion and social networks. As Chicago policing shows: participation will not get off the ground without the support of police officers, social professionals and other public servants. Citizens do not fight disorder and insecurity spontaneously. As stated before, developing social capital in vulnerable urban areas demands many long term investments. It is doubtful whether active citizenship has any fruitful future at all in urban contexts: many inhabitants are flexible, ready to move elsewhere, and do not want close relationships.

However 'restoring networks' and 'restoring neighbourhood cohesion' are not necessary conditions for local order maintenance policies. A successful clean-up action only needs a small group of dedicated civilians. Members of local partnerships constitute a small group of energetic residents. The trick is to identify those people, and to give them proper professional support (Carr, 2005).

The different suppositions are put together in the scheme below. To distinguish the two approaches further we should remember that disorder policing is based on an open political process, in which different interests are recognised. So 'community needs' are always contested.

Table 1 Community Policing and Disorder Policing compared

	Community policing	Disorder policing
Public order	Communitarian	Political
Strategy	Responsive	Responsive and repressive
Communication	Being reachable and accessible	Enlarge security feelings through co-production of control-signals
Social cohesion	Stimulate	Not directly relevant
Complications		

There are many arguments for adapting Dutch community policing in the outlined ways and to introduce systematic participation structures characteristic of disorder policing. The chance that police interventions fail diminishes when

police objectives are congruent with community needs and expectations. Especially in vulnerable neighbourhoods in which residents have less trust in police and police interventions automatically raise critiques, consultation and co-management may generate positive developments.

Still, a refashioned community policing would raise many practical questions. First of all cooperation with residents is exacting and extremely demanding. A spirited beginning may soon be followed by consultation-fatigue. Many participants in CAPS' beat meetings feel dissatisfied (Skogan and Steiner, 2004). When interventions are used continuously or too often, they do not contribute to the belief in effective police action. Many police officers are reticent about this. They get involved in what they view as 'non-traditional' police tasks such as orchestrating neighbourhood cleanups or preventing people from giving money to panhandlers.

Secondly heterogeneous neighbourhoods have difficulties defining order. In inner city areas the expectations of residents, shopkeepers and café owners may vary considerably. In these politicised contexts police officers and other professionals are continuously forced to negotiate. When many disorder and crime problems occur simultaneously the police can do nothing more than control these (often unsolvable) (cf. Zoomer, 2002: 108/9).

In fragmented and ethnically divided neighbourhoods the police are regularly tempted to contact only groups who share their vision ('preference citizens'). In that case other groups, such as minorities or youth groups, risk becoming the target of policing; they subsequently become defiant, whilst the police are accused of being biased. The trick – as practised in Chicago – is to include 'activists' from under-represented subgroups, and if necessary to track these persons through door-to-door visits.

Public demands for order are often laced with emotions and motivated by 'parochial desires for injustice, xenophobic antipathy towards others, or unattainable fantasies of absolute security' (Loader, 2006: 207). The police must oppose these claims, often expressed by angered and discontented majorities within neighbourhoods (Crawford, 2007; Bottoms, 2006). The police also should oppose the idea that prompt responses to incidents are always necessary or that 'consumer wishes' must be satisfied at once. In these cases sworn officers should take up impartial and authoritative positions that are in line with their task of protecting the public interest.

Lastly, the police often perceive problems that do not correspond with actual concerns of the neighbourhood population. One might call this the trap of 'police centrism' (Fielding and Innes, 2006: 136): security problems are re-interpreted as police problems for which only police solutions are available. It is a well-known fact that performance indicators push officers to approach problems only in law enforcement terms. But the police are only one of the stakeholders, and disorder

problems, ranging from truancy to prostitution, are related to social factors which the police have very little control over.

DISCUSSION

Disorder policing finds its legitimate place mainly in poor neighbourhoods that lack organisations and political networks. These areas wrestle with high levels of disorder and crime, whilst residents feel powerless. They are not able to initiate order in their own territory. The police and other public organisations should therefore take the lead and set up partnerships, as it is happening in Chicago and in English reassurance programmes. This seems to be the best way to involve ethnic and poor communities in local security policies.

These strategies have far reaching implications and risk pervading the whole social fabric of neighbourhoods. For that reason Loader (2006) brings *reassuring policing* under the heading of *ambient policing*: raising overall numbers of policing operatives, coupled with expansive, proactive and visible conceptions of policing. But I would reply that especially in marginalised neighbourhoods maximalist strategies are needed, both in terms of co-production and problem-solving. Those neighbourhoods not only lack organisations, they also struggle with decay, degradation and persistent disorders, often directed at ethnic minorities, where gangs of youth take the opportunity to 'annex' the streets. Against this troublesome background the idea that only 'minimal policing' is 'good policing' (Crawford, 2007; Loader, 2006) lacks realism. However, as stated before, maximalist programmes should be implemented selectively: only in high crime and disorder neighbourhoods.

A precondition for success is support from the police management, city council and other municipal organisations. Only when housing corporations and welfare organisations cooperate and when support facilities are improved, can the social issues that often lurk behind 'disorders' be dealt with. Taking the side of marginalised neighbourhoods requires other municipal policies than have been practiced the last decades: investing in education, care and relief is expensive; the former bureaucrats who were discharged due to spending cuts in the healthcare and care sectors have to come back, this time as frontline workers (Van den Brink, 2007).

Maximalist co-production strategies offer opportunities to empower citizens and to distance oneself from police routines that automatically target Muslim or Antillean street kids. Disproportional police actions and 'invasions' in problem areas only increase feelings of insecurity. Also Dutch zero tolerance initiatives (massive fines for minor offences) drift away from co-production and problem-solving. These 'lash out' strategies would generate many counterproductive effects in marginalised neighbourhoods, interrupting social relationships with ethnic minorities.

Disorder policing as sketched in this chapter, seems to be at odds with current trends of crime fighting in the Netherlands. Within the police-management there is a tendency to retreat to the so-called 'core tasks' and it is believed that combating dereliction and nuisance are not part of the police mandate. But, ironically, security policies increasingly move away from classic law enforcement. In spite of some ambitious strategies to fine citizens for minor offences, like Streetwise policing in Amsterdam (Van Stokkom, 2008), local security organisations do not fall back on exclusive law enforcement methods, but have shifted their policies to anticipation, prevention and control of disorder problems. In many respects this current pursuit of security has left traditional law enforcement behind. Classic criminal justice and criminological discourses do not really contribute to the aim of restoring order. The vocabularies of contract, mediation, partnerships and security networks are alien to those discourses. The modern security pursuit has the function of preventing and regulating harmful and threatening developments. Not punishment, but contract is the core (Crawford, 2003; Boutellier, 2005). Within this new context of regulating a prospective peaceful order, police strategies that concentrate merely upon crime fighting, are rather outmoded and ineffective.

Of course order maintenance and law enforcement are not mutually exclusive, and many residents – also in poor neighbourhoods – appreciate crime fighting. When vandalism brings with it clear harm, sanctions may follow. Nevertheless, I believe the police should primarily be the authoritative 'boss of the street', and act as a supplier to the criminal justice system second. The quality of life in neighbourhoods is of the utmost importance, also for the police. As Anthony Bottoms (2006) states after studying disorder in British cities: security policies in residential areas should always be constructed within a broader understanding of local social order. Any policy which ignores or trivialises incivilities, for example on the grounds that scarce public resources should be devoted to 'real crimes', will fail to engage with the significant concerns of residents.

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5 Reassurance Policing: Prospects for the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Force

Luuk Wondergem and Lodewijk Gunther Moor

INTRODUCTION

The symptoms that led to reassurance policing in England and Wales are also present in the Netherlands. The focus of previous Dutch governments was on crime fighting and not without results. Crime figures have been dropping significantly for several years, yet the decrease in fear of crime lags behind somewhat. In many disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods confidence in the police is low and satisfaction is even lower. Crime-fighting alone does not seem to be sufficient as a local strategy. The riots of 2005 in the French *banlieus* are a painful illustration of what can happen when no confidence-building community-oriented policing units are present. Cooperation with local inhabitants is a conditio sine qua non.

Would it be feasible to implement reassurance policing in the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Force? Rotterdam is a metropolis which has a long tradition of crime and security problems. Some years ago the town administration introduced a 'tough-on-crime' policy that in many respects resembles zero tolerance policing (Tops, 2007). Neighbourhood policing has been intensified, but paradoxically cooperation with citizens has been neglected (Terpstra, 2008). Although insecurity levels have dropped, insecurity problems continue to plague residents. Given this background, introducing reassurance policing could perhaps strengthen some classic tasks of community policing, notably co-production with citizens.

The central question in this chapter is whether it would be useful and potentially feasible to implement reassurance policing in the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police Force. The discussion is based on research regarding the position of reassurance policing in the current Dutch police landscape, group discussions with civilians and retailers, and interviews with local authorities and police officers (Wondergem, 2007a; Wondergem, 2007b; Wondergem and Gunther Moor, 2007; Van Calster and Gunther Moor, 2007).