

Neighbourhood Policing and Partnerships

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My background

- Research on partnership working = interviews with police officers in 4 forces
- Research on PCSOs = observations in 2 police forces, included work with partners
- Published on these in *Criminology and Criminal Justice* (with D. McCarthy), *Theoretical Criminology* (with B. Loftus), and contributed to the Stevens Commission and edited book (J Brown ed).
- Mainly focused on Neighbourhood Policing context of partnership working

‘What works’

- Much literature on problems with partnership working in public sector
 - Vested interests
 - Incompatible organisational cultures
 - Differing goals and levels of motivation
 - Differing access to resources

‘What works’

- But success stories, too. Berry et al (2011) summarise good practice:
 - strong leadership
 - data sharing and a clear problem focus
 - communication and co-location
 - flexible structures
 - clear accountability
 - experienced team members
- My own research suggests these as well...

'What works'

- Observations from my research in NP:
 - Flexibility – partners encountered and sought out in a variety of contexts (not just meetings)
 - Included private sector (housing estates and security staff)
 - Not just 'crime' being addressed, e.g. vulnerable residents
 - Action-orientated – stronger bonds with those who work in the field with police/PCSOs
 - Co-location – greatly eases partnership arrangements
 - Social capital – know partners on first name basis, have each others' mobile numbers
 - Trust – work with those who will get job done, go 'extra mile', eases data sharing

Police culture

- Chan (1997) : changes in the field accepted more easily in the habitus if they speak to police values
- Neighbourhood Policing = greater acceptance of ‘outsiders’, appeals to the pragmatic
 - More hands to the tiller
 - Pass on work best handled by other agency
 - Enlist specialists
 - Potential to save time and resources
 - Extended to some degree to PCSOs
- Relationships work best if they are ‘police-like’ (O’Neill and McCarthy 2012). This is not necessarily problematic.

Police culture

- Some areas of concern
 - Data sharing can be done without reflection on broader impact and net widening (O'Neill and Loftus 2013)
 - Partnership working in more challenging neighbourhoods can have punitive orientation (Tufail 2014)
 - Not all areas of police practice as open to 'outsiders'
- Thus not a universal shift in police culture towards the 'outsider'
- Reflects a partial adoption of NP ethos in forces generally (experiences of PCSOs reflect this – if PCSOs can do it, can't be that hard)

The future?

- Many challenges
 - Funding for partners cut, too
 - Time and resources for partnership
 - Retraction of Neighbourhood Policing?
 - Greater enforcement-focus for police?
 - Need to train staff on how to 'do' partnership in some areas
- But savings can be made through partnership
 - Not duplicating effort
 - Sharing office space and thus reduce demand on police estate
- Police can't do it all themselves!