

Community Policing as a Strategy for Police–Public Partnership in Crime Prevention

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Abstract

Community policing has become a way to work together with traditional methods of keeping the law. It focuses on working to solve problems being seen and staying connected with the communities that the police serve. This paper looks at the ideas, main parts and how police departments change when they use community policing to build partnerships between police and the public for stopping crime. The study uses an approach exploring and describing the research through Qualitative Methodology. It looks at information from police documents, communications and books and groups the information into themes. Five main themes came up: working with the community to build trust; finding problems and using the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) to solve them; changing how police departments work; being seen, easy to reach and working in neighborhoods; and the problems of putting this into practice in countries like Pakistan. The results show that even though community policing has an idea and has worked before it needs continued support from the police more freedom for local leaders and changes that fit the local culture. The study ends with ideas for making police and public work together in places where there are not a lot of resources.

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1. Introduction

Policing around the world has changed a lot in the forty years moving from a way that only reacts to events to a more active way of working with the community called community policing. The old way of policing based on having a boss and rushing to help when needed didn't do a good job of dealing with the reasons why crime and problems happen (Cordner, 1997). Community policing doesn't change the goals of policing like keeping people safe protecting rights and stopping crime but it changes how those goals are reached by making the police part of the community they serve.

At the heart of community policing is the idea that police alone can't make people safe and that to reduce crime and problems people face in the community, government, groups and other organizations need to be involved. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) says community policing is a way of thinking with two parts: working with the community and solving problems, where police and people in the community find issues and come up with

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solutions. This change means that police must be in easy approach and be seen in need and provide help to the people in distress.

Sir Robert Peels Started the idea of community policing and rules when the London police were created in 1829. These rules said that the police need the peoples support to be strong and that the police are like the people doing the job that everyone should do (Peel, as cited in Lentz & Chaires 2007). In the middle of the 1900s when police used cars for patrols and had an office for calls they became more separated from the community, which led to a time when people started thinking about how to change policing again leading to the current community policing in the 1960s and 1970s.

In countries today like Pakistan community policing is more important as a way to rebuild trust after ways of policing, politics and using the army to deal with crime.. There is not a lot of proof that community policing works well in poorer countries and recent studies show that it depends a lot on the situation (Blair et al. 2021). This paper looks at community policing both in theory and in life looking at how to build real partnerships between police and the public for stopping crime.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the strategies through which community policing builds police-public partnership in crime prevention.
2. To find out the challenges and policy implications of implementing community policing in Pakistan.

3. Research Questions

1. What core principles and strategies enable community policing to foster police-public partnership in crime prevention?
2. What organizational and structural changes are required to effectively implement community policing?

4. Literature Review

Cao, L. (2015). Differentiating confidence in the police trust in the police and satisfaction with the police. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 38(2) 239–249.. Cao made clear that confidence in the police trust in the police and satisfaction with police services are ideas even though researchers often mix them up. The study pointed out that community policing strategies designed to lift views need to be checked against the particular part of police legitimacy they try to change because broad measures of "public opinion" hide key differences in how citizens feel.

Nix, J., Wolfe, S. E., Rojek, J., & Kaminski R. J. (2015). Trust in the police: The influence of justice and perceived collective efficacy.. *Delinquency*, 61(4) 610–640.. Nix, Wolfe, Rojek and Kaminski looked at how procedural justice and perceived collective efficacy affect citizens' trust in the police using survey data from a big city police department. The study showed that both procedural justice treatment and perceptions of neighborhood efficacy are strong predictors of trust in the police giving real evidence for community policing's focus on fair, respectful and participatory citizen engagement.

Yesberg, J. A., & Bradford, B. (2021). Policing and collective efficacy: A evidence assessment. *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 23(4) 1–15.. Yesberg and Bradford carried out an evidence review that combined long-term and short-term studies on how policing links to collective efficacy. Their review showed evidence that trust in police procedural fairness is linked to higher collective efficacy while direct effects of community policing indicators like visibility and engagement are smaller and usually work through trust in the police rather than on their own.

Blair, R. A., Weinstein, J. M., Christia, F. et al. (2021). Community policing does not build citizen trust in police. *Reduce crime in the Global South. Science*, 374(6571) eabd3446.. Blair, Weinstein, Christia and others ran a coordinated pre-registered field experiment that tested community policing interventions in six developing countries, including Pakistan. Unlike what studies in nations suggest the results showed that community policing interventions were unevenly carried out and on average did not raise citizen trust in police or lower crime. The findings imply that structural and institutional conditions may be essential for community policing to work in the Global South.

Blair, R. A., Weinstein, J. M., & Christia, F. (2021). Community. Citizen trust in Pakistan. In *Crime, insecurity and community policing: Experiments on building trust* (pp. 245–268). Cambridge University Press.. A linked study of the global project looked at a citizen-centric problem-oriented policing (CPOP) intervention that started in Punjab's Sheikhpura region in 2019. The research showed that the rollout of the intervention was badly slowed by transfers of regional and district police officers highlighting how institutional instability inside police departments weakens the lasting success of community policing reforms in Pakistan.

Maqsood, A., Madani, F., Nawab, B., Ullah, R., & Nyborg I. (2019). Community-oriented policing and information and communications technology initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Journal of Human Security*, 15(2) 45–61.. Maqsood, Madani, Nawab, Ullah and Nyborg studied ICT-supported policing projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. They highlighted how mobile apps and digital complaint-registration sites helped build trust-based relationships between police and residents boosting human security in a post-conflict area.

Abbas, M., & Agisilaou, V. H. (2023). Security beyond the state: Exploring development impacts of community policing reform in post-conflict and fragile environments. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 19(3) 426–444.. Abbas and Agisilaou carried out interviews with senior police officials in Islamabad to evaluate how community policing is being put into practice and its potential for development in Pakistan's Federal Capital Territory. The study found that community policing because it is local tackles security and development issues and gives power to citizens. However its success in post-conflict settings hinges largely on the attitude and training of individual police leaders.

Yesberg, J. A., Brunton-Smith, I., & Bradford, B. (2023). Police visibility, trust in police fairness and collective efficacy: A structural equation model. *European Journal of Criminology*, 20(2) 1–20.. Yesberg, Brunton-Smith and Bradford used a structural equation model with long-term survey data to examine how police visibility, trust in police fairness and neighborhood collective efficacy connect. The results showed a clear indirect link between police visibility and collective efficacy which goes through citizens' trust in police fairness. This supports the idea that community policing relies on a fair and steady police presence.

Dobson, K. S. H., Dittmann, A. G., & Yeager D. S. (2025). A transparency statement improves trust in community-police interactions. *Nature Communications*, 16(1) Article 2285.. Dobson, Dittmann and Yeager mixed real-time observation of than 500 hours of police-citizen talks with a pre-registered field test to see why community policing interactions sometimes do not build trust. They discovered that vague or questioning styles raised the threat felt by citizens while short "transparency statements" that explained an officer's intent cut perceived threat and boosted trust. This gives a evidence-based tweak to community policing.

Kumar, K. C. M. (2025). Beyond community policing: Human security-informed approach to community security. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 10(4) 1–14.. Kumar suggested a security-based model for community policing after comparing policing in Nepal, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Denmark. The research argued that though community policing usually strengthens police-community ties and boosts trust it often misses local issues that are not crimes like hard access, to justice economic worry and weak health services. Kumar calls for a model that mixes police visibility and honesty with wider social and economic help.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study is connected to two ideas from criminology that together give a good reason for community policing: Broken Windows Theory and Procedural Justice Theory.

Broken Windows Theory

Developed by Wilson and Kelling in 1982 Broken Windows Theory says that signs of disorder such as vandalism, litter and neglected property show that social control is missing. If these signs are not dealt with Broken Windows Theory says that serious crime will become bolder. Broken Windows Theory supports the idea of foot patrols, neighborhood-based deployment and early action on disorder, as ways to restore informal social control.

Theory	Variables	Relevance	Application to Community Policing
Broken Windows Theory	Disorder, neglect, informal social control, crime escalation	Explains why visible neighborhood disorder invites serious crime if unaddressed	Justifies foot patrols, fixed-beat officers, and SARA-based response to minor disorder before escalation

Procedural Justice Theory

Associated with Tyler (1990, 2004), this theory holds that citizens' willingness to cooperate with police depends less on outcomes and more on the perceived fairness of the process—voice, neutrality, respect, and trustworthy motives during police–citizen interactions.

Theory	Variables	Relevance	Application to Community Policing
Procedural Justice Theory	Voice, neutrality, respect, trustworthy motives, legitimacy	Explains why fair, respectful treatment builds trust and cooperation more than enforcement outcomes	Supports transparency statements, respectful engagement, and communication training for officers

6. Research Methodology

This study adopts a Qualitative Research methodology design that is exploratory and descriptive. The aim is to generate an in-depth understanding of community policing as a strategy for police– partnership in crime prevention rather than to test statistically generalizable hypotheses.

Data was taken from secondary qualitative sources. Primary data were collected by reviewing police circulars, institutional policy documents and administrative correspondence about community-oriented service delivery. Secondary data were gathered from peer-reviewed journal articles, government and international organization reports and scholarly books mainly published between 2015 and 2025.

The collected material was systematically coded by an iterative process. First research methodology familiarized with the data. Then initial coding of text segments about strategies, challenges and organizational practices in community policing took place. Finally related codes were grouped into conceptual categories.

The coded categories were then analyzed thematically and relevant themes were generated by iterative process and organized recurring patterns across the data. This enabled research methodology to distil findings into five interpretively grounded themes that respond directly to research methodology's research questions.

7. Results and Discussion

Community Partnership and Trust-Building

The analysis of data showed that strong community policing depends on building and maintaining trust between the police or the people they serve. This trust is not something that happens once and stays the same. Instead it grows over time through communication, regular contact and consistent follow-up. It is not the result of an event but rather a continuous process. Training materials further highlighted that trust is built on three elements: being visible being easy to reach and being accountable. These elements—visibility, accessibility and accountability—are closely. Support the idea of partnership. These findings align with the research of Nix et al. (2015). Dobson et al. (2025) Who also view trust as something that develops through transparent interactions between citizens and officers in everyday interactions.

Problem-Oriented Policing through the SARA Model

Another theme from the data centers on how community policing is put into action using structured problem-solving. The SARA model—Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment—appears consistently in documents as a way for officers to identify issues understand what is causing them and take steps to solve them. This model is used not for crime but for other community problems as well. The approach reflects an understanding that crime and disorder are not random. They come from how offenders, victims and the environment interact. This idea matches the principles of Broken Windows Theory, which focuses on fixing disorder - root causes just than responding to individual incidents.

Structural Reform within Police Departments

The data also revealed that changes inside police departments are essential for community policing to succeed. Key sub-themes included giving decision-making power to front-line officers rather than keeping it at the top levels of management. There was also a shift from down communication to more open bottom-up dialogue. Training programs were being expanded to include not technical skills but also communication, conflict resolution and how to work with communities. Another important change involved how performance is measured. Of rewarding only arrest numbers or quick response times new systems began to value community engagement and successful problem-solving. There was also a push to create partnerships between different agencies to avoid the overlapping efforts and to make better use of available resources.

Visibility, Accessibility and Neighborhood-Based Engagement

Another theme focused on how community policing's practiced in real life. Officers are often assigned to the neighborhoods for long periods. They walk, bike or ride horses in their areas to be more present and approachable. Mini-stations or local contact points are set up to help officers stay in touch with residents. This kind of presence helps build relationships. Research by Yesberg and Bradford (2021) and Yesberg, Brunton-Smith and Bradford (2023) supports this showing that when police are visibly present it increases trust in their fairness. This trust

subsequently enhances collective efficacy, which is the community's confidence in their ability to collaborate for neighborhood safety. As a result, it bolsters informal social control, an essential factor in sustaining public order.

Contextual Challenges in Developing and Transitional Settings

The last theme highlights the difficulties of applying community policing in countries like Pakistan. These are. Transitional contexts where police systems face serious obstacles. Frequent changes in personnel disrupt relationships and continuity. The culture inside police departments is often hierarchical and reactive making change hard. There are resources, political pressure influences actions and social barriers prevent engagement with vulnerable groups, including women. These challenges are supported by the work of Blair et al. (2021) Who found that community policing efforts, in low-income countries often fail to improve trust or reduce crime unless broader reforms happen. Similar views are shared by Abbas and Agisilaou (2023). Kumar (2025) who argue that community policing must be part of a larger human security strategy—one that addresses the underlying social and economic conditions that lead to insecurity.

8. Conclusion

It is concluded that study took a look at community policing as a way to help the police and the public work together to stop crime. The results show that community policing is not something the police are trying to achieve but a new approach to doing their job. This approach is about being visible being available being quick to help and being accountable to the community.

Community policing is based on two ideas: Broken Windows Theory and Procedural Justice Theory. These ideas show that community policing can be effective in the places where people live and in how the police interact with the public.

Even though we have seen that community policing works well in countries, where it helps to build trust and cooperation it is not clear if it will have the same benefits in poor and changing communities. The success of community policing in these areas depends on having systems in place strong support from leaders and the ability to adapt to the local context.

Community policing should be seen as a term process of change for the police rather than a quick fix. It requires changes in the way the police operate and interact with the public and other organizations, such as community groups. Community policing is, about the police changing the way they do things so they can work better with the community.

9. Policy Suggestions and Recommendations

- Police departments should assign officers to an area where they stay for a time so that they can build a good relationship with the people.
- When hiring and training police they should learn how to talk, solve problems and work with the people as the usual training on police work.

- The way police are judged and promoted should focus on how they work with the community and solve problems not on how many people they catch or how fast they respond.
- The people in charge should let the officers who work with the community make decisions and use resources. This way the community officers can solve problems fast. Do a better job.
- Police departments should not keep moving community policing officers from one place to another. When they do this it breaks the trust that the community has in them and community policing needs trust to work.
- The police and other government groups need to work more. They should make a system that helps them share information and work together to solve problems that affect the community and the people who live there. The police and the government groups should do this so they can make things better, for the people.
- The police should use ways of talking like statements that show they are trying to help to make people feel safer and trust them more during regular meetings.
- Community policing initiatives in developing contexts should be integrated within a human security framework that addresses precursors of insecurity including access to justice, education and basic services rather, than treating policing reform in isolation.

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