



Dining with the Police

Resistance and Acceptance of Community Policing

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Abstract

While community policing has been widely studied with regard to policing practices and attitudes of personnel engaged in community work, the reception of community policing from a community perspective has received considerably less attention. Based on 10 months of fieldwork in a Danish neighbourhood officially designated as a ghetto, this article explores local residents' reception of a specific community policing initiative. We find that community policing initiatives, while possibly benevolent in intent, might not always be received enthusiastically by all segments of the community. We argue that acceptance or rejection of such initiatives depends on the ability of the police to inscribe its initiatives into the social processes which constitute the social dynamics of the community and that a reflexive awareness of social relations between the police and the community can help the police reach distrusting community groups.

Keywords

Community policing, ethnic minority, extended case study, Denmark, territorial stigmatisation

1. Introduction

The policing of ethnic minority communities is a central and recurring topic in contemporary policing research. In particular, the question of whether ethnic minorities are disproportionately stopped and searched has garnered much research attention (Meehan & Ponder, 2002; Holmberg & Kyvsgaard, 2003; Miller et al., 2008). In particular, studies of how minority groups experiences police interactions have been conducted in the US (Brunson, 2007), the UK (Sharp & Atherton, 2007) and more recently in the Nordic countries (Solhjell et al., 2019; Saarikomäki et al. 2020; Haller et al., 2020a, 2020b). This research has mostly focused on young people, leaving us with little insight on adult experiences of being policed. Community policing has also been a central element in the policing of ethnic minority communities (Lea & Young, 1993), though fewer studies have been conducted on how

such policing practices are experienced from community perspective. This article addresses both these knowledge gaps by providing an ‘extended case study’ of how adult community members, who are not necessarily stopped or addressed directly by the police, respond and react to the implementation of a community policing initiative in their neighbourhood. The article illustrates how the reception of community policing initiatives can be highly contested within communities. Drawing on the notions of ‘lateral denigration’ (Wacquant, 2007) and ‘ambient policing’ (Loader, 2006), we show that internal social differentiation within the community lead to varied interpretations of the initiative and differing inclination to support the policing approach. Based on the findings, we argue that support for community policing initiatives depends on the ability of the police to inscribe themselves positively into the socio-historical dynamics within a targeted community and we emphasise the importance of taking such dynamics into account when devising and implementing community policing initiatives, especially in marginalised or otherwise disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

1.1 The contested role of ‘community’ in community policing

By invoking and activating ‘the community’, community policing generally strives to be in greater correspondence with local community norms and desires, aiming at increased accountability and legitimacy in the community’s perception (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005; Corder, 2014; Skogan, 2006; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1998). Several commentators have, however, argued that community-orientated policing has been reconfigured by law-and-order politics, securitisation and order-maintenance policing, favouring a control-orientated version of community policing and thus prioritising neighbourhood safety over accountability (Garland, 2001; Squires, 2006; Brogden & Nijhar, 2005; Liederbach et al., 2008; Reiner, 2010). Others have further pointed out that community policing only presumes to rearrange power relations while maintaining state objectives (Garland, 2001; Innes et al., 2020; Larsson, 2017; Somerville, 2009) and that due to institutional (Bullock & Johnson, 2018; Craig et al., 2010; Fielding, 2001; Harfield, 1997) and cultural (Campeau, 2019; Fielding, 2001; Herbert, 2006; Liederbach et al., 2008; O’Neill, 2017; Pelfrey, 2004) barriers, police forces struggle to adjust to local demands. This leaves communities’ role in community policing approaches contested, ranging from active partners to objects of control.

While the employment of community policing has received quite thorough research attention, little is known about how communities react to being ‘community policed’. Lyons’ (1999) study of the implementation of community policing in Seattle is a rare example of a study that includes community reactions and finds that the inherent position of the police as an outside force unavoidably makes community acceptance a barrier for successful community policing approaches. Herbert’s (2006) study, also from Seattle, shows how communities do not represent coherent entities to be included in partnerships. Some other studies of community perspectives have either still focused on police personnel’s perceptions of how they have been received (Bullock & Johnson, 2018) or on community members’ active participation in partnership *meetings* (Gasper & Davis, 2018) and participation in partnership crime-prevention activities (Choi & Lee, 2016; Bullock & Sindall, 2014), thus focusing on more formal participation. These studies indicate that class-related factors and specific neighbourhood contextual factors influence levels of support (Badiora & Ntamark, 2020; Bullock & Sindall, 2014), and neighbourhood attachment and belonging in particular have been found to promote participation and support (Badiora & Ntamark, 2020; Bullock & Sindall, 2014; Gasper & Davis, 2018). Thacher (2001a) has, however, pointed out that com-

munity policing that only pays attention to those who actively cooperate risk only being responsive to more resourceful community members, failing to deliver equal distribution of services to all. However, recent studies have shown that such efforts to reach marginalised groups in community policing can be successful (Kammersgaard, 2019; Houborg et al., in press).

Communities might respond to how community policing influences other public services provided to the community. Multi-agency and plural policing are integral elements of community policing (Loader, 2000; Squires, 2006). Though the police and other public institutions share goals, they serve different social functions, which makes institutional segregation key to delivering on these different functions simultaneously (Thacher, 2001b). By promoting cooperation between institutions, community policing can threaten this segregation when advancing safety and order concerns (Herbert, 2006, chap. 4). Simon (2007) has coined the term “governing through crime” to describe a development where social problems increasingly become reconfigured as issues of crime and security, making social issues a police responsibility. Loader (2006) describes a similar process in relation to the implementation of community policing and argues that security has “become the prevailing discourse for understanding social problems, the lens through which they are defined, examined, and acted upon” (p. 208). With the term “ambient policing”, he warns that policing strategies that aim at giving the police a broad and constant presence within marginalised communities might in fact turn out to undermine security and trust in the police, especially for the most disadvantaged groups in such communities, because it becomes “pervasive” (Loader, 2006, p. 204).

1.2 Background – community policing in Denmark

Community policing has been tried in Denmark (Balvig & Holmberg, 2004), though during the last decades the Danish police force has undergone major reorganisation leading to centralisation (Holmberg, 2014). One exception to the centralisation of the Danish police force has been the policing of officially termed ghetto areas.

Before 2010, Danish ghettoisation policies mainly addressed issues of integration (Danish government, 2004, p. 7). This changed with a new anti-ghettoisation strategy in 2010, that declared that “parallel societies” had emerged, where respect for the public authorities declined, unemployment was widespread and where irresponsible parenting resulted in high levels of youth crime and deviance (Danish Government, 2010). A central part of this strategy was defining a set of criteria for when a neighbourhood qualified as a ghetto, which made it possible to list these neighbourhoods to monitor the progress of countering ghettoisation. This strategy has been expanded twice, in 2013 and 2018, and the criteria have changed over time. During the fieldwork behind this study, the criteria were neighbourhoods with 1,000 residents or more, where at least 50 per cent of the residents were immigrants or descendants of immigrants from so-called “non-Western countries”, and fulfilled two of the following additional criteria: high unemployment rates, high rate of residents with only basic education, high rates of residents with a criminal record and a lower average income compared to the region average (Ministry of Transport, Buildings and Housing, 2018).

Across these ghetto policies, the police have been tasked with restoring trust and respect for public authorities, and with formulating a strategy for addressing crime and deviance in these neighbourhoods. In 2011, the Danish National Police published a general strategy overview (the specific strategy was classified) for their specific activities in ghettos and other problematic neighbourhoods, which showed that presence, visibility, prevention and cooperation with external partners in local communities were at the heart of their strategy

to reach these aims (Danish National Police, 2011), revealing central characteristics of community policing. In 2019, the Danish National Police published a new strategy paper, stating that “presence, visibility and control” were still the guiding principles for their community-orientated approach, with further focus on establishing “close relations” with residents and other local actors such as businesses, schools and local organisations (Danish National Police, 2019).

The ghetto policies have been subject to a range of research in their own right. Freiesleben (2016) addressed discursive and governmental aspects of the policies, while Seeman (2020) looked into how the policies have changed social citizenship status in Denmark. Other studies have addressed how the policies instigate a territorial stigma upon the neighbourhoods and the residents living there (Larsen & Delica, 2021; Jensen & Christensen, 2012). Noteworthy in regard to this article, such stigma has been found to influence intra-community relations based on how different community members react to and attempt to manage the stigma (Jensen et al., 2021). We return to this topic in the discussion, addressing how stigma management also influences relations to the police. First, however, in the following analysis we turn our attention to the resident-police relation rather than the ghettoisation aspect, though ultimately such division of topics is only possible for analytical purposes since community life, stigma and policing practices are intrinsically connected.

2. Method and data

The case material presented in this article was gathered by the first author as part of a 10-month field study of ethnic minority parents’ relation to the police in a neighbourhood figuring on the Danish ghetto list. The neighbourhood is anonymised as Blomsterengen. The participants are similarly anonymised with fake names in line with their ethnic origin. The study focused on parents, as opposed to youth, in order to gain insights into an understudied group within the ethnic minority communities in the ghettoised neighbourhoods. Further, the parent perspective was of interest in order to understand how the anti-ghettoisation and community policing strategies affected local perceptions of the police. Parents are targeted in two ways in these strategies: (a) through their children, who have increasingly been represented as possibly problematic youth; and (b) through a focus on parent responsabilisation in order to make the parents more engaged in the control of their children.

Being concerned with the resident perspective, the study was based on a combination of ethnography and biographic interview methods. This enabled an exploratory approach, avoiding unwarranted and homogenising assumptions about the ethnic minority community and instead providing insights into nuances and variations of doubts and debates within the parent group. The ethnographic approach further made it possible to gain a contextualised understanding of parent-police relations by including data on the parents’ everyday lives and the social dynamics within the neighbourhood. Access to the field was established with the help of a gatekeeper, a local young adult of ethnic minority background, who was well connected and respected both among adults and youth in the neighbourhood. Data was gathered as field notes from observations and interaction with residents and as recordings of conversations. Throughout the fieldwork, several parents became the main participants and were asked to give an interview. These were recorded and transcribed and took their departure from knowledge about the individual participant obtained when establishing a trusting relation. These participants were also selected in order to represent the diversity within the parent group, mainly in regard to age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, occupation, education, income, first/second generation immigrants/refugees/descendants and criminal

records. The gatekeeper also made it possible to use a local communal house as a base during the field study. This house was frequented by many different resident groups, which is why it was an opportune location to become known in the neighbourhood as well as to meet potential participants and follow them over time. This was essential in order to establish a relationship prior to the interviews and thus gain stories and opinions not necessarily shared during an initial encounter. In the end, a total of nine fathers and twelve mothers became central participants and agreed to be interviewed. Several other residents (neighbours and friends of the parents) also figure in the data. The study complies with Danish guidelines for ethical research, with voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymisation of participation and safe storage of data.

The main limitations of the study are related to language barriers and lack of access to the more secluded parent groups in the neighbourhood. The sample group was thus limited to parents who spoke either Danish or English and who, at least sometimes, participated in public life in the neighbourhood. Researcher subjectivity (a white, male, middle-class researcher, considered an outsider entering Blomsterengen with an agenda) also influenced the study, mainly by setting the frame for how rapport and access was negotiated with different groups of parents. In managing this, inspiration was drawn from Madison's notion of ethnography as performance (Madison, 2020) in order to develop a self-conscious appearance as an outsider wanting to learn the insider perspective. This made it possible to ensure that the participants would take the lead during conversations, while the researcher merely directed the topics towards areas of interest.

All data was coded using Nvivo, and the coding process followed two tracks. First, predetermined themes were used as broad categories of interest, including police, politics, crime and deviance, and parent responsibility. Secondly, sub-themes within the broader thematic categories were identified inductively, ensuring an empirically (parent) informed perspective on the themes of interest to the study. The data presented in this article are mainly drawn from the inductive code 'the youth club', which contains information about parents' reflections on how the police operate in and around the local youth club. The data are presented in form of an extended case study (Evans & Handelman, 2006). Based on an ontology of the social as process, this approach intends to capture a moment of the ongoing process within a chosen field in order to investigate how the situational circumstance of the moment came to be (Evans & Handelman, 2006; Kapferer, 2006). This means that we analyse how the announcement of a specific community policing initiative inscribes itself into an ongoing social process within a neighbourhood, and how the social history of the neighbourhood influences the reception of the community members residing there. Through empirical description of three episodes, we unfold how reactions to being community policed are influenced by: (a) past experiences of community life and policing of the neighbourhood, and (b) future hopes, fears and expectations of how community life and the relation to the police can develop. In line with the tradition of extended case studies, the analysis mainly provides raw empirical descriptions, which later in the discussion will be related to issues raised in the community policing literature.

3. The case – community receptions of the dinner initiative

When asked about their thoughts on how the police operated in the neighbourhood, several parents would, independently from one another, relate back to a specific story of when the police wanted to start visiting the local youth club for a shared dinner with the young people. Having observed this tendency, the topic was included in later interviews and brought up

during informal conversations to get a better understanding of how parents perceived what we term the 'dinner initiative'. It turned out that the announcement of the initiative had stirred up some trouble in the community, and, though an event of the past, the tensions were still vividly present in the social relations between parents in the neighbourhood.

3.1 Episode one: the announcement of the dinner initiative

Jamal was a local father and an employee of the local youth club. This put him in a position where he often became involved in bridging the community with social services and thus had to explain to local families why the system worked the way it did. It was the same with the dinner initiative, only in this example it was his own workplace which he had to explain to the community. His partial insider position influenced his own reception of the announcement initiative, of which he recalled:

It was one of my superiors, who just, like, out of the blue, announced it. 'So, from now on, you are going to have dinners with the police.' And the parents, they were very sceptical about it.

Though the parents reacted with scepticism, Jamal stated that from the club and the police's perspective the initiative was important in order to create a relation between the youth and the police:

We do it, so the children can get more acquainted with the police and get a relation to the police. So, when the police enter the neighbourhood, then they actually know the children – or have known them from when they were children. And so, the children know the police. ... So, in the future, when the child is maybe 20 years old, and out on the street and he is involved in something, then when the officer addresses him he can talk to him in a different way. Then there is a relation between them.

This quote illustrates how Jamal interprets the initiative based on a hope that, in the future, the youth and the police will have a better relationship. This hope was, however, rooted in a present concern of Jamal's, a concern based on experiences of the past. He elaborated further on the need for the initiative:

It's also to break down the negativity there is around the police, the bad talk about the police in this neighbourhood, by showing the children that the police are actually ordinary human beings like us. That they just do their work, and also that they can actually be really nice officers who you can talk to about all kinds of things.

According to Jamal, a negative spiral had developed in Blomsterengen. Starting from the age of 10, youths would throw insults at, and express an outspoken hatred of, the police. According to Jamal, Blomsterengen had its stories of police brutality and humiliation of residents in public, incidents that the youth also witnessed. From his perspective, it was these stories that fuelled the negative spiral. He acknowledged that as a result both the police and the youth acted in a less than ideal manner during confrontations – to no one's benefit. But he also stressed that the neighbourhood had stories of good police encounters, where local officers would be greeted and welcomed in the community and be approached by locals with questions and the sharing of knowledge. If the initiative could make such positive encounters the prevailing experience among the youth and families in the neighbourhood, Jamal hoped the spiral would turn.

From a position of belonging to both the community and the social services, Jamal's central concern was to improve the relation between the police and the community, which is why the hope of better youth-police relations, and thus more constructive encounters in the future, led Jamal to be in favour of the initiative. But as he noted in the first quote, not all local parents in Blomsterengen received the announcement with such understanding. Instead, he noted that:

[The parents] blew it up to this huge problem. Actually, one of the parents wrote a long letter of complaint, with a lot of questions on behalf of the local parents. Especially about the club and the police.

3.2 Episode two: mobilising resistance against the initiative

Hassan was a local father in his 50s, unemployed, but actively engaged in local social activities to keep the youth out of trouble, and with sons attending university. He posted the letter around the neighbourhood, mainly at the entrances to the building blocks. The letter (a copy was obtained by the field researcher) mainly consisted of four questions directed at the youth club:

1. Have the members of the club approved of the arrangement?
2. Are the parents aware of the arrangement and have they accepted it?
3. What are the purposes of the arrangement?
4. Why the police? Why not a professional soccer player, or artist, or politician?

When asked why he took the initiative to write and post the letter, Hassan explained:

The club is a place for the children. Pedagogues, professionals, with skills for children, work there. It has a big responsibility to work with the youth. But now, they are working for the police. And the police are not pedagogues, so they don't know what to do. ... So, we wrote a letter, a group of us. About the club. Because why should the police be there, we will call them if we need them. The club is not a place for police, it is a place for pedagogues. The system is that if there is a crime, then you call the police. If it is a social activity, then why is the police there?! Now it is always police.

The perceived blurring of pedagogic and police work threatened what was for Hassan a citizen right to services in a welfare state, where especially the youth deserve support towards engagement in education and employment. This motivated the fourth question in the letter, concerning why the police rather than someone who could inspire the youth towards career paths. Hassan's critique of the dinner initiative was a reaction to an ongoing development where the police increasingly showed up in circumstances where he did not think they belonged:

And today there is a big problem because people think the pedagogues and housing association work for the police. And don't get me wrong, I want the police to be strong and effective, but now it is peace time. We don't need military police; we need social workers and pedagogues, sports activities and jobs. But the police are running everything. They are everywhere.

As a citizen, Hassan was not generally against the police. Rather, as is clear from both quotes, he had a clear idea of when and where the police were needed – in times of conflict, for

instance in times of gang conflicts, when called upon and when crime was taking place. With the development towards the police interfering in the work of other institutions, and working outside of his ideas of proper police work, he described that a general distrust of the police had developed in Blomsterengen:

People here, they don't believe that the police come to help, they believe that the police come to gather information and facts about them, so they can use it against them later. And this is why people hate them. And the police also hate and cheat them. Especially the young people, they don't want to be seen by the police. They are afraid that later, they can be registered.

Being convinced about the surveillance agenda of the police, it became further problematic for Hassan to accept what he perceived as their dominance over other institutions in the neighbourhood. He believed that this dominance exchanged care and concern for the youth with a control and punishment objective, which only served to distance local youth further from engaging with the broader society. He thus believed that the police exacerbated social issues in the neighbourhood through their community engagement. Past experiences with the police interfering in what Hassan perceived to be social and pedagogical concerns thus led him to be suspicious of the police visiting the youth club, since he feared that such visits would be used to prosecute local youth in the future and alienate the community further from the broader society.

Other parents also questioned the purpose of the police going to the club. Rizwana for example, a local mother in her 30s, employed in the healthcare system, noted about the dinner initiative:

There were also some months ago a letter about that now the police wanted to go to the youth club, to some dinners or something. And why should they do that?! Again, there is nothing criminal going on there. But it's probably because they want to observe who the young people are and such. But it's the police's task to protect, not to be cozy. So, what is their agenda? To show that they are always there – because they aren't! There are incidents where they weren't here and they should have been, like when there were shootings last year.

Rizwana questions why the police are spending resources and time on tasks that are not addressing crime specifically. She interprets this as a symbolic act to show the residents that they are always around to protect the residents, which is not true in her experience and she also shares Hassan's fear of a hidden surveillance agenda. Together, Hassan and Rizwana's scepticism shows how community policing can appear unclear and ambiguous to community members. This opens the initiative up to personal interpretations of its purpose and function, interpretations which are based on previous experiences of how the police operate in the neighborhood. In that regard, resistance from some community members seems to be closely linked to these community members' previous experiences and interpretation of a more or less antagonistic relationship between the community and the police.

3.3 Episode three: negotiating and accepting the initiative

Hassan's letter spread unrest among the parents in Blomsterengen. As a consequence of this, Jamal recalled that the youth club was contacted by the parent council, which had been set up by the club, who requested a meeting:

Then we were contacted by the chairperson of the parent council in the club; she called us and asked what our explanation for the initiative was, because many parents asked about it. Many parents were sceptical about it – what was it about? What are they going to talk about? The kids are only 10, 11 years old, why should they sit and talk to the police about crime and such? What is the purpose?

These questions echoed Hassan's letter, showing how others adopted his criticism. The chairperson was Sanaa, a local mother in her 30s. Although she wanted to confront the club with the widespread unrest about the initiative, she did not share Hassan's scepticism. Rather, she was sceptical about his letter:

There were these complaint letters all over, and first of all, I was pretty sure it wasn't written by a parent with kids in the club. And that's not OK, to post a letter like that and sign it as "parents", because it wasn't us who had issues with the municipality and the police. In addition, what is wrong with the police visiting the club for a dinner arrangement? As long as you have yours in order, then why should you fear a visit from the police in the club? ... I'm the chairperson for the parent council in the youth club. So, what I did was to call the club and demand a rush-meeting in the council.

At the meeting, both Sanaa and Jamal recalled that after a simple explanation of the reasons behind the initiative by the club staff, the parent council accepted it and even asked to expand it so that parents also were welcome at the dinners, so as to show the youth that the parents accepted the presence of the police. And Sanaa commented on the decision with:

And if someone doesn't want to participate, then they can just not go to the club that evening.

Sanaa thus expressed a willingness to accept the initiative without concern or apprehension about the police agenda for wanting to visit the club. To Sanaa, accepting the police, and showing the youth this acceptance, was the proper way of being a responsible parent, and her declarations that those who had their things in order had nothing to fear, and those who did not want to participate could simply stay away, was an indirect comment to those parents she deemed irresponsible. She described these parents:

There are some who know nothing about what goes on out here. There are quite many parents who are housebound. Who just sit in front of the TV, and that's all they think about, and what they should be cooking that day. They don't know what is going on around here.

Consequently, Sanaa described that the children of these parents were left to navigate the social dynamics of the public life in Blomsterengen on their own, often resulting in deviant lifestyles. Sanaa and other parents who shared her acceptance of the dinner initiative related stories of stabbings at local playgrounds, of their kids being threatened with guns and of being recruited by gangs. To these parents, the police were seen as a welcome help in managing crime and making Blomsterengen a place for law-abiding residents and a safe place for families – which was the goal for Sanaa's active engagement in the parent council as well as other community activities:

I strive to make my neighbourhood better. I think that there should be room for us and not the criminals. So, if we can get them out, then we better get them out. Blomsterengen is one of the

nicest neighbourhoods. I can't imagine living anywhere else than out here. That is why I want to work to get them out.

This attitude did not mean that Sanaa was unconcerned with the deviant youth and their families. She often took the initiative to arrange social activities in Blomsterengen and invited parents to attend. Thus, according to her, she did what she could in order to support those families who lived secluded lives. Nevertheless, she also believed that the sensible thing to do to manage crime and deviance was to call the authorities so the social services could get involved in helping the families and the youth, saving them from spiralling further into a deviant lifestyle. Her notion of getting the criminals out to make room for the law-abiding residents became more relevant during the fieldwork, when the third ghetto strategy was announced, bringing news of the possible demolition of apartment blocks in neighbourhoods that did not make it off the list before 2030. For several parents, this announcement marked a change in attitudes towards the troublemakers in the neighbourhood because the ghetto policies suddenly had the potential to affect the law-abiding residents in a very tangible way. In that regard, Laila, a local mother in her early 40s and a good friend of Sanaa's, seemed to change her stance towards troublemakers following the threat of demolitions. Previously, she had been engaged in a 'mothers patrol group' to informally manage crime and deviance in the neighborhood – avoiding formal reporting of local youth. Following the announcement of possible demolitions, her attitude towards the troublemakers seemed more resolute:

It isn't supposed to be us who have to leave, and them being allowed to stay so they can scare the elderly. Then it's better that they should leave, and we can stay. Also, because it is a place where we grew up. I know it's a ghetto area, and it might not be the best place to live when you have children. But we fight for our neighbourhood, because it is a nice area, and they shouldn't ruin it.

Together, these examples show how the acceptance or rejection of community policing might have less to do with the initiative itself and instead originates in a broader context of political and social circumstances, such as the ghetto policies which importantly frame the activities of the police in 'ghetto neighbourhoods'.

4. Discussion

This case illustrates that community support for community policing initiatives depends on the ability of the police to inscribe themselves positively into the socio-historical dynamics within a targeted community. This includes taking the pre-existing relation between community and police into consideration. Based on the empirical case presented, we wish to highlight two important contextual factors here that community policing initiatives should take into consideration: previous policing of communities and intra-community relations.

4.1 Previous policing of communities

The previous policing of a community constitutes the basis for what community members might expect from the police presence in their neighbourhood. This is evident in Hassan's critique of the dinner initiative, which he bases on experiences of policing practices that echo Loader's (2006) cautions against the consequences of what he terms "ambient policing". In line with Loader's theory, Hassan describes a development where police and other security operatives increasingly rely on visibility, involvement with local organisations and

institutions, and proactive measures, while being guided by public sentiments and demands for security work. Loader describes how this goal of visibility, cooperation and proactiveness risks giving the police a pervasive presence in neighbourhoods and that the police can potentially colonise other areas of public life, such as housing, education, and youth work, through these community-police partnerships. This aligns with Hassan's grievances about the involvement of the police in the youth club and his interpretation of this as a surveillance initiative. According to Thacher (2001b), different social functions are nested within different organisations exactly because the values they pursue cannot always be reconciled, and, by segregating them, they can be pursued simultaneously. In that regard, the fear about the agenda of the police potentially 'colonising' other social institutions corresponds with Thacher's (2001b) point, that even though other social institutions might share some goals with the police, they generally have other main concerns, like pedagogical work, which are not and cannot be entirely identical to those of the police. Overlapping with a widespread fear of having social services remove the children from the families, as also described by Johansen & Jensen (2012), many parents became even more fearful of such surveillance. Loader warns that such ambient policing can end up affecting the sense of belonging to the national democratic community within the policed population groups, who are often already marginalised and disadvantaged (Loader, 2006). This threat to the sense of belonging relates to a fear of being denied basic liberal democratic rights. Hassan expresses such a concern for basic liberal rights, echoed by Rizwana, since the police seem to them to be concerned with fuzzy objectives not fitting with an institution of the law. Hassan's resistance also aligns with such a fear on behalf of the local youth, since he fears that unjust experiences with the police together with the downplaying of pedagogical initiatives to guide youth into education and employment will alienate the youth from mainstream society. In that regard, Hassan and Rizwana's expectations of the police correspond to Loader's ideal of police institutions as "constrained, reactive, rights-regarding agencies of minimal interference and last resort" (Loader, 2006, p. 215).

4.2 Intra-community relations

The case reveals how neighbourhood stigmatisation influenced the internal social dynamics within the community, leading to tensions and groupings that community policing initiatives have to navigate. This is especially the case if the ambition of the community policing approach is to reach the whole community and deliver services and justice to all groups (Thacher, 2001a). Wacquant's elaborate theory of "strategies for managing stigma" (Wacquant, 2007; 2008, chap. 6) deals with how neighbourhood stigmatisation leads to "internal social differentiation" (Wacquant, 2008, p. 184) through "lateral denigration" (Wacquant, 2007), meaning that community members react to being labelled by pointing out how others within a community fit the stigma and are responsible for it. A similar process can be seen in the case of Sanaa in her distinction between those with their affairs in order and those with something to fear from police scrutiny, who she ultimately wants out of the neighbourhood so that she and those like her can stay. Sanaa, and other parents who shared her perspective, relied on lateral denigration in order to protect the neighbourhood from the stigma imposed upon it – through representing other residents as responsible for the stigma and thus legitimate to exclude from the community. Lateral denigration and social divisions within communities therefore pose a dilemma for community policing: how should the different groups, and the relations between them, be approached in community policing initiatives? In our case, the same initiative simultaneously attracted Sanaa, while Hassan felt alienated. Sanaa suggested that some families might keep their children away from the

youth club while the police were there, which might indicate that the youth most alienated from the police would be excluded from the relational work intended by them. Wanted or not, community policing became enrolled in local disputes related to the stigmatisation of the neighbourhood. If such disputes are not incorporated into the strategy of community policing, easy alliances might end up as barriers to dialogue and trust with exactly those community groups local police officers ought to focus on rather than those who already trust and respect the authorities: the most secluded, distrusting and critical within the communities. Thacher (2001a) similarly argues that it is important that community policing practitioners are mindful about actively seeking out the perspectives and demands of those community members who are less eager to approach and cooperate with the police, otherwise they will risk only responding to some segments of the community while potentially alienating others.

5. Concluding remarks

With this case, we present three episodes where community members react to a community policing initiative. The episodes illustrate how differences between community members lead to varied responses, thus revealing the community to be an incoherent and complex entity (Herbert, 2006). The case illustrates only one example of a community policing initiative. In this case, the initiative was developed in a rather top-down manner, without community involvement prior to the announcement. This indicates that community policing in Denmark is organised in a way where the police have the authority to set initiatives in motion without consulting and including the communities they police. This does, however, not mean that all community policing in Denmark is implemented top-down, and the case is not meant to represent community policing in general in a Danish context.

Even though this is a singular case, we believe the problematics and dynamics extend out to other similar neighbourhoods in Denmark. Similarities with Jamal's concern of a negative spiral amongst local youth, developing from experiences of police humiliation and brutality are found in research on "narratives of police violence" (Haller et al., 2020a). Moreover, Jamal's conviction that better relations between the youth and the police would lead to fewer problematic encounters in the future echo findings from studies on community police officers who rely on 'relationship-building' to minimise the use of force during encounters (Kammersgaard et al., 2021). Hassan's critique of the police's cooperation with other public institutions, and the related concern of being surveilled, strongly correlate with findings documented by Johansen (2012) and Johansen and Jensen (2017). Lateral denigration is also documented in other studies addressing ghetto stigmatisation in Denmark (Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Jensen et al., 2021). Consequently, similar and parallel concerns within ethnic minority communities in other neighbourhoods characterised as ghettos would probably resonate with our findings.

We have found that the extended case study method, where different community perspectives on a singular community policing initiative are explored, represents a suitable method for unravelling complex community responses to community policing. Similar approaches to analysing community police relations might prove useful for researchers engaged in collaborative research with the police, in order to help community policing become a reflexive practice considering the social relations between communities and the police, rather than solely being concerned with evidence-based methods to be implemented and later evaluated with little thought to the community being policed.

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