

**Voices from the Community: The Social Service Providers' Perspectives on
Community and Community Policing in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside**

by

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ABSTRACT

A substantial body of community policing research speaks to the issue of police entering into partnerships with the public in order to address the problem of crime. However, much of the literature to date has been written from the police perspective and focuses on police priorities and needs. There is little research addressing the role the community could or should play, and even less that is conducted from a community perspective. This thesis explores the concepts of community, inner city community and community policing. The left realist perspective is also examined, particularly the perspective's critique of community policing. Issues of police accountability, control, and cooperation with the communities they serve are explored.

The thesis focuses upon the perspectives of social service providers delivering services to the residents of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. These service providers' perspectives, gleaned during interviews, are analysed for their conceptions of community, inner city community, and community policing in the Downtown Eastside. The research participants spoke about people, geography, common ties and social interactions. They saw the Downtown Eastside community as strong, tolerant and unique but viewed it as disadvantaged due to the issues of poverty, drugs, and mental illness.

Police were seen as fitting into the Downtown Eastside well; however, service providers held differing views regarding community expectations of the police.

Partnerships between the police and the community were thought to be important and most respondents spoke favourably about police programmes that emphasized community contact such as beat and bicycle patrols.

Major themes arising from the interviews included “poverty,” “housing,” “the ‘dumping’ of challenging individuals into the community, particularly the mentally ill,” “drugs,” “politics,” and “government funding.” Some of these themes represent the root causes of crime, which police officers are expected to identify and address while simultaneously adhering to the (tolerant) philosophy of community policing. These root causes, however, are complex social problems, the resolution of which is beyond the capacity and role of community police officers.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The focus of much of the literature to date regarding community policing has been on the role of the police (Clairmont, 1992; Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Sunahara, 1991; Sparrow, 1988; Matthews, 1993; Bayley, 1988). Research conducted thus far has been prepared primarily by and for police agencies and for the most part discusses police priorities. The issues most often examined are how the police could more efficiently deliver their services to communities and how communities could be utilized most effectively by the police in their efforts to prevent and solve crimes. The police typically treat the problem of crime as exclusively their responsibility and hence retain absolute control over how policing is to be done. The community's role in the fight against crime is confined to enhancing police responses to crime and disorder, or to helping police focus their crime-fighting activities (Buerger, 1994). Little attention has been given to the question of what substantive role the community could or even should be expected to fulfil; in other words, what the community part of community policing might be (Buerger, 1994; Griffiths, *et al.*, 1999).

This is particularly problematic if police agencies are going to truly enter into community partnerships as part of their policing activities.

Community policing is defined by professionals and presented to the citizens. Little space has been created for community participation in either the national or local dialogue. Little thought has been given to the conditions necessary for effective community participation and almost no resources are committed to the community role (Friedman, 1994:263).

According to the left realist perspective, the community rather than the police must decide how police resources ought to be utilized. “It should be the case that the *community consults the police as part of the process of formulating its needs, not that the police consult the community in formulating its strategy*” (emphasis in the original) (Lea and Young, 1993:259-260). To date, the practical implications of this idea have not been thoroughly investigated. There has been little, if any, Canadian research that explores the community’s own perspectives in relation to the policing of their communities. Some research has been conducted in the United States. Both Wesley Skogan’s work (1995) and the work of *the Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium* (2000), which explores the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS), examine the Chicago Police Department’s efforts at involving citizens in community policing in Chicago. It would be difficult, however, to import the results of this research to the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, since the cities are demographically quite different. In particular, Chicago’s inner city communities are divided by race. The American research compares crime and police/community cooperation in white, African-American, and Latino communities and focuses on issues related to organized gangs who contribute to much of the crime. The experience is quite different in the Downtown Eastside where the population is more heterogeneous and organized gangs do not exist.

Some important questions remain. What do communities expect of the police? What do communities expect of police departments that profess to employ community policing principles? For example, should the community be able to

dictate police priorities and must the police then concentrate their endeavours on solving those particular problems? Should the police/community relationship be more of a partnership where the issues are discussed and some mutually agreeable goals are defined? These questions arise from a shift in the focus to a community perspective and form part of the larger debate concerning what constitutes community policing.

In examining the community policing literature, it quickly becomes apparent that community policing is a rather ambiguous and nebulous concept. Academics, community members and the police all continue to debate what it really is. To date, no conclusive definition has ever been established and agreed upon (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Seagrave, 1996; Oliver and Bartgis, 1998). The resulting confusion has unfortunately been exploited by some police chiefs who use the words community policing to denote whatever they want it to mean, usually for some sort of political gain (Murphy, 1988a; Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994). This is problematic, since the police are the front line agents of formal social control in most communities and wield a substantial amount of authority over community members (Greenberg and Rohe, 1986). Apart from the dubious ethics with respect to manipulating community policing for ones own purposes, the practical application of community policing has been fraught with difficulties. Words like “partnership” and “consultation” have been frequently used without examining the countless implications of a genuine sharing of power.

Moreover, emerging from the “partnership discourse” are numerous interconnected and ambiguous terms (collaboration, co-ordination,

interagency, multi-agency) which have become contemporary crime prevention and community safety “speak” within government rhetoric and policy, often arbitrarily applied and producing mixed results (Goris and Walters, 1999:633).

Is it possible to partner with police departments or will the police retain the ability to always make the final decision? Do the police or even the public for that matter truly want to enter into partnerships? Some would argue that the public have no interest in partnering with the police or even becoming involved in any community policing efforts (Grinc, 1994).

In order to begin to address some of the issues related to cooperation and partnerships between the police and the communities they serve, it is necessary to first examine who or what constitutes community. There has been much controversy surrounding the use (or some would say misuse) of the term. It has been used to describe many different groups of people, places and organizations. “In spite of constant usage, community remains an untidy, confusing and difficult term. This is no wonder when it has become a cliché and a rallying cry; an analytic concept and a sociological sample; a geographic location and an emotional state” (Scherer, 1972:1). What community represents, however, is all of these things. Its meaning is quite fluid. While some would see community as a grouping of people with like interests, others would imagine it to be a given space, which is claimed by or assigned to a particular group. Regardless of these differences, the term generally suggests a more natural relation; “matrices of affinity” as described by Nikolas Rose (1996:334). “Communities are living systems. They are created, experienced and transformed by people. Community structures and functions are consequences of interaction between

space and societal values” (Chekki, 1990:9). But how is one to interpret what these social spaces and social values represent and who should be doing the interpreting? “The concepts that seem to have to be invoked (for example, nation, province, region, city, neighbourhood; racial, ethnic, religious, economic or cultural group; linguistic community) beg all questions about definition and the specification of boundaries” (Cotterrell, 1997:77).

Notions of community are also often seen as idealistic and unrealistic (Foster, 1990). A perception of the “ideal” community often prevails in which common goals and purposes are imagined to be clear and uncontroversial. What is put forward here is “the fundamental notion of a group of people inhabiting a prescribed geographical area who have a considerable degree of unity in meeting the more important concerns of life” (North, 1971:103). A homogeneous character is essential in such a community and the image invoked is utopian: a small rural village from some time in the past where it is assumed life was much simpler and the inhabitants shared similar beliefs and ideas. “Elements of that village, such as small population, common culture, natural boundaries isolating the village from other places and different social arrangements, seem to be a necessary part of the concept” (Scherer, 1972:10). This idyllic setting is thought to have perished as society experienced economic growth, industrialization and people moved into urban environments (Nisbet, 1969).

Is it possible that these notions of community could apply in inner city environments, where the problems are quite different from those experienced by suburban dwellers? Severe poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, high rates of HIV and

AIDS and high crime rates plague inner city communities. This is not to say that other communities do not also face these problems; rather, inner cities tend to experience them to a much higher degree. In fact, communities in this type of environment are even found to define themselves along the lines of their particular problem. For example, community members will identify themselves as a member of the AIDS community or the intravenous drug user community. At the same time, they may also categorize themselves as a member of the larger, geographical inner city community in which they live; the Downtown Eastside for example.

The heterogeneous character of the inner city produces many diverse and strong opinions and forces one to take an unconventional approach when trying to understand or deal with the interactions that occur there. Certainly, inner city communities possess differing views and ideologies and not all elements communicate well with one another. There are, however, basic bonds within these communities that unite them. Basic principles of the notion of community appear to come from a sense of neighbourhood attachment. This attachment takes the form of a sentimental bond to “neighbours, local establishments, and local traditions to the exclusion of other persons, establishments and traditions” (Suttles, 1972:35). The shape that these neighbourhoods take, and the rules and behaviours that are accepted as norms, however, often differ from those which the rest of society considers “normal.” Nonetheless, they establish necessary links that help to keep their community intact.

Some would argue that unity of thought is not necessary in order for community to exist. They would say that unity of existence is sufficient. City life may just be a form of social relations that involves the “being together of strangers” (Young, 1986:21; Frug, 1996:1049). The inner city defies commonly held notions of what constitutes a “good” place to live and outsiders are often baffled by what they see as an hostile environment. How could “those people” live in such squalor, is a prevalent sentiment. Cockroach infested and run-down buildings, garbage strewn about the streets, “undesirables” such as drug addicts, drug dealers, prostitutes and other “dangerous” people dominate the outsider’s perception. “That people live in the same ecological space and possess the same racial and class backgrounds is by no means an indication that they define values and problems in the same way” (Grinc, 1994:459). “There are ‘community members,’ for example, who would welcome gentrification and revitalization, given their feeling that anything is preferable to the daily barrage of drugs and destitution” (Blomley, 1996:22). The reality is, nevertheless, that many people do indeed choose to live in these environments and do not wish to live anywhere else. They are able to feel comfortable in surroundings where others would not. In these neighbourhoods, marginalized populations congregate, most without the resources to cope with the situations in which they find themselves. Is this is a wholesome environment for them to live in? Arguably, the inhabitants would want a healthier life for themselves right there in the inner city if it was possible.

The community policing tenet of community cooperation and participation is particularly problematic in inner city neighbourhoods, where traditionally there has been much animosity between citizens and the police (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Buerger, 1994). Regardless of all the difficulties, it has become quite fashionable for police departments to claim to be doing some of their best community policing work in inner city environments (Matthews, 1993; Clarke, 1992; Guyot, 1991).

Nevertheless, most research in the area of community policing tends to show that the opposite is true. Inner city residents describe a very different relationship with their local police, compared to suburban inhabitants. "The literature suggests that the sine qua non of community organization is an already-organized community; that of crime prevention, an area not subject to crime. So too appears to be the case with community policing, which like its predecessors does best in areas that need it least" (Buerger, 1994:411).

Critics have accused the police of reverting to a military policing style in inner cities. This approach is considered to be the antithesis of consensus policing. As the name suggests, military policing is a style, which is likened to that of an occupying army who are in charge of a subject population (Lea and Young, 1993). Cooperation in this environment is quite limited. Consequently, both the community and the police experience a multitude of problems, not the least of which is in relation to communication. Analysts who subscribe to the left realist perspective argue that public support "is the lifeline of effective policing" (Young, 1991:154), yet this support is often lacking in inner city communities. As a result, the police do not

obtain the requisite information to address community needs effectively and the community, therefore, does not receive adequate support from the police. Left realist writers (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986; Lowman and MacLean, 1992; Lea and Young, 1993) have examined in great detail issues related to policing, crime and inner cities and, therefore, provide an appropriate perspective to critically analyze community policing in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Left realists specifically examine the reality of crime, particularly in inner city environments. In contrast to other radical criminological perspectives, left realists see the police as useful in a role that includes true community involvement and accountability to the communities they serve (Lea and Young, 1984; Taylor, 1981). They stress the point that real cooperation is essential and that a police *force* must become a police *service* (Lea and Young, 1984).

Although much of society is content to turn a blind eye to the suffering and terrible living conditions that are a reality of inner city life, there are certain individuals and groups who devote their life's work to trying to help. These are the social service providers. They work and often live in the inner cities and provide much needed services to the people there. Often they characterize themselves as defenders or representatives of the community. Sometimes they, and the organizations for which they work, even claim to *be* the community. They are, nonetheless, often able to give a voice to those who would not otherwise be heard. These groups tend to be quite successful in achieving their goals due to the fact that they have a leadership structure, communication links with city councils, and a particular stake that they want to gain or protect (Chekki, 1990b:196). Politically,

they can be extremely powerful. They often advocate a particular philosophy, ideology or way of thinking and promote it in their work. Is it reasonable to assume that they are the best qualified to determine the community needs? Are they truly the representatives of the community in the inner city? Do they know the community better than anyone else? They are arguably in one of the best positions to assess the community's needs as they exist right there in the inner city, along with the residents.

This thesis is an exploration of the concepts of community, inner city community, and community policing, particularly as they relate to the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. A map and demographics of the Downtown Eastside can be found at Appendix C. The thesis begins with an examination of who or what constitutes community, looking at various interpretations and conceptions of the term. The concept of inner city community is then examined. Similarities and differences between inner city communities and other communities are reviewed. This is followed by an analysis of the various ways that community policing has been represented, used and misused, including how it has been employed in inner city environments. The left realist perspective is then examined, particularly the perspective's critique of community policing. Issues of police accountability, control, and cooperation with the communities they serve are explored using this theoretical trajectory. The thesis then focuses upon the perspectives of social service providers delivering services to the residents of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. These service providers' perspectives, gleaned during interviews, are analysed for their conceptions of community, inner city community, and community policing in the

Downtown Eastside. Major themes arising from the interviews are also examined. The final chapter compares the service providers' perspectives on community, inner city community and community policing with the literature. Conclusions regarding the similarities and differences found are then discussed. Finally, the thesis provides a guide to where future research in the area might be conducted.

Chapter II

Community and Inner City Community

Community

The word community can be heard being used by people in many different situations over the course of the average day. It has been employed to describe many different things and, unfortunately, “like other concepts taken over from common-sense usage, has been used with an abandon reminiscent of poetic licence” (Wirth, 1964:165). As a result, community has become one of those catch all expressions that has been applied so freely that its meaning has arguably become rather hollow. “Almost anything can appear under the heading of ‘community’ and almost anything can be justified if this prefix is used” (Cohen, 1985:116). The conceptualization and measurement of the term remains primarily in the eye of the beholder (Leighton, 1988:351). This is problematic, as it tends to lead to misunderstandings and disagreements, particularly when discussing social issues, including community policing.

The notion of community is central to discussions of social policy and is widely used to characterise and legitimate almost any valued social achievement. ‘Community action’, ‘community development’, ‘community work’, ‘community organization’, ‘community politics’, ‘community care’, ‘community medicine’, ‘community power’, ‘community school’ are all part of the available stock of descriptions for defining and evaluating the social world (Plant, 1996:20).

It is interesting that discussions involving the social world inevitably stir up strong, emotionally charged feelings. People find themselves imagining idyllic circumstances from days past when life was somehow better. “To some this is a

strong yearning to return to a pleasant, less complicated past when most people knew community through personal experience” (Scherer, 1972:2). This blissful image may be something that some people long for, however, it is unlikely that it applies to all circumstances of community, if any. In fact, Cohen (1985) even suggests that it might not really have existed, but that “its mythical qualities are profound” (p.118).

So what is this elusive thing called community? The concept has been studied at length and, as a result, there is voluminous literature on the topic. One writer, George A. Hillary Jr. (1992), conducted an extensive analysis of the definition of community and generated 94 definitions. As if that was not a large enough number, or perhaps in case he missed one, Hillary writes, under the heading *Procedure and Qualifications*; “The ninety-four definitions in this analysis are not all of the definitions of community. However, it is believed that the picture given is a fairly representative one, as indicated by the method of obtaining the definitions” (Hillary, 1982:16). Another author, writing about Hillary’s 94 definitions of community, comments with amazement that Hillary “claimed that the only feature that they had in common was that they all dealt with people!” (Plant, 1996:21). So, at the risk of oversimplifying things, at its fundamental level, community is about people in social settings, personal experience and an affinity for others. It involves the feelings and emotions of individuals within a group. “Although we use the term community in many contexts, to refer to an infinite variety of ideas, we always return to the fundamental theme of man together as opposed to man alone” (Scherer, 1972:1).

“Community is indivisible from human actions, purposes and values” (Minar and Greer, 1969:ix).

Although there is much debate over its meaning, there are three aspects of community that are acknowledged, by many, to be its essential elements. Various authors refer to the elements by slightly different names but in essence they are; (i) a shared area or geography, (ii) a common tie or ties, and (iii) social relations or sociological interaction (Hillary, 1982; Poplin, 1972; Bell and Newby, 1974; Leighton, 1988). This is not to say that in order for something to be considered a community all of these elements must be present, but simply that there is strong agreement amongst those who study community that virtually all communities possess one or more of these aspects.

The first common element of a community is that of a shared area or geography. Although in rating the importance of the elements Hillary (1982) considered area the least important, many people think of this first when they hear the word community. “By customary usage, community often means place. Thus ‘what is your community?’ is usually referenced to a town or neighborhood. We have come to think of community as the physical space where people live” (Minar and Greer, 1969). People will refer to their geographic community in a variety of ways. They may say they live in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver, Kerrisdale, or the Downtown Eastside. In each geographic reference they are providing a locality-based identity for themselves. By distinguishing themselves this way, people establish links to that location. They root themselves there and with others create a social bond or

attachment. “This is historically the fundamental connection between place and community” (Scherer, 1972:13). This notion of place is a very important dimension of human life. Where we live, our place, says a lot about who we are.

Place is necessary for human existence. This goes beyond other basic needs, such as for food and clothing, and indeed beyond the physical occupation of space and of a structure thereon. Our place and sense of geographical space or territory, merges imperceptibly with a broader sense of identity, of who we are, of position in the general scheme of things (Smith, 1994:253).

In deciding where we are going to live and where are going to spend most of our time, we make implicit and explicit statements to those around us. We express who we are in relation to the surrounding world. The human community has always existed and will continue to do so because humans are social creatures, gregarious animals unable to live independently (Park, 1967a; Scherer, 1972). We need a place to call our community that will give us identity.

Within this notion of the geography of community is the idea of territoriality. Not only do people often identify with a place but they do so for a reason (or reasons). The “ecologists” have done considerable research on community in this regard. “The ecologist sees particular populations as being attracted to certain types of territory forming natural areas and this leads to the belief in the crucial role of environment in determining patterns of social behaviour” (Thorns, 1976:15). It makes sense that a farming community will not develop in the middle of the desert where no irrigation exists or a mining community where no minerals or metals exist. People need a reason to locate themselves in a particular locale. There must also be adequate access to and from the place to facilitate both the movement of people and

goods. People usually settle and form communities where they find resources and transportation converging. Communities persist and survive where these elements continue to exist (Poplin, 1972; Thorns, 1976). Our present age of technology has blurred this aspect of community somewhat, particularly in the last few years, as the Internet has become so pervasive and is utilized as a universal tool of both individuals and businesses. The ability of the average person to gather information and communicate on such a global scale has brought communities closer together making the world effectively a much smaller place. Faster trains, airplanes and highways have also contributed to the ability of people to belong to more than one community. People very often live in one community, commute into another to work and travel to another for their entertainment. “Mobility makes choice possible: the person can reject one community in favour of another. As a result, modern communities are not the stable, enduring collectives of the past, rooted to a fixed place, and fixed in both composition and direction” (Scherer, 1972:15). In other words, this aspect of community continues to evolve. The more diverse and far reaching our mobility becomes, the less important the geographic aspect will likely be.

The next common aspect of community is that of a common tie or ties. At its root, this characteristic of community is inherently personal and includes an identification with other human beings (Minar and Greer, 1969; Scherer, 1972). In sharing particular aspects of life in common, people are bound together in solidarity. Family ties, values, religious beliefs, ethnic and cultural affiliations are examples of aspects that unite people in this way. People identify with one another along these

lines and this provides them with a certain level of security. “What finally binds a community together is a state of mind on the part of its members, a sense of interdependence and loyalty” (Minar and Greer, 1969:60). They take comfort in a communion with others and feel a need to have a common bond with people who share a common fate with them. This is sometimes referred to as the psychological aspect of community (Poplin, 1972; Minar and Greer, 1969). Often times, there will be a geographic affiliation that goes along with the psychological part, although it is not always necessarily the case. The Gay community or intravenous drug user community exemplify psychological communities without necessarily involving a geographical element. Chinatown, Japantown, or perhaps a Jewish or Italian area in a city possess both psychological and geographic ties (Park, 1967a).

Another element that is quite central to this aspect of common tie or ties is what has been referred to as a sense of “we-ness.” This involves a series of norms and behavioural expectations that are recognizable to community members, which help to make them think of each other as “we” and of others as “they.” “This suggests that community means something different to participants in it and to observers of it, to ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’: it can be understood subjectively and objectively” (Cotterrell, 1997:79). Inside community there are mutually accepted values, beliefs, practices and goals. Those on the outside should also be able to understand them. Membership in the community, as a result of this identification with others, brings a feeling of psychological security and stability (Poplin, 1972; French, 1969). In relation to religious communities this element could be certain

beliefs, practices or expectations. In a Sikh community, for example, this might be the wearing of turban, or in a Muslim community it could be abstention from the consumption of alcohol. Images of the small rural village of the past also come to mind. In these idyllic circumstances, “a village formed a community chiefly because all its members were brought up to consent and act together as a group” (Nisbet, 1969:83). There is a sense that people knew one another very well and everyone agreed upon the rules.

But what about the person who does not conform to the accepted beliefs, practices and expectations in such a homogeneous setting? What if someone disagrees with the rules? For them, the community would not be a place where they would find security and stability. Rather, it would be a place where they would likely be sanctioned or alternatively expelled. Even the traditional village was not the idyllic place for everyone. “The village in its traditional form, however, whether among primitives or peasants, also has a powerful controlling effect upon the behavior of individual persons” (Greer, 1969). “The Villager had little alternative, in such surroundings, but to subordinate himself and his desires to those of the village group” (Nisbet, 1969:82). Regardless of the community, there are going to be sanctions or restrictions placed on those who do not fit in. A Sikh who questions his faith will face difficulties within his community. “For we must recognize that community contains in itself elements of conflict, of loss of freedom, and of personal strain” (Scherer, 1972). This is informal social control. If the person conforms, he or

she will remain part of the community. If he or she refuses, he or she ceases to be one of the “we” and becomes one of “them.”

The last common aspect of community is that of social relations or social interaction. In Hillary’s 94 definitions of community, all but three “stress social interaction as a necessary element in community life” (Hillary, 1982:23). As a result, Hillary considers it to be the most important of the three common aspects of community found in his research. There is a certain amount of debate in this area. Some believe that the individual is the unit from which society should be measured and that “society” is an artificial construct. They see community as merely a “collection of individuals” (Hillary, 1982:62). Those who advocate this position believe that “a society is nothing more than the individual members of which it is composed, that the behavior of actual individuals constitutes the whole of social life” (Wirth, 1964:4). They further suggest “that groups and institutions are at best mere reflections of the solid and inefaceable fact of the individual” (Nisbet, 1969:226). This conception of individualism is attributed to a liberal ideology, which would reject any idea that imagines that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. “Liberal individualism denies difference by positing the self as a solid, self-sufficient unity, not defined by or in need of anything or anyone other than itself” (Young, 1986:7).

However, if Hillary’s research is correct, this is the minority position. Most believe that social interaction is a dominant aspect of community. They put forward the idea that social interaction is an integral part of human life and that interactions between individuals produce order and give structure to our existence. “Thus the

essential characteristic of social interaction is that the act of each person has meaning to the other person” (Sutherland, 1926:72). This could be in the form of language, religion, customs or traditions. Individuals seek out others who share these things in common. “The structure or system of their interrelations when seen collectively constitutes the society which may be regarded as the bearer of a culture” (Wirth, 1964:5). This typifies an Italian or a Jewish community. People will seek out others who share commonalities and interact with them. Social interaction comes from an interdependence between individuals in society. The greater the interdependence between individuals, the stronger the interactions will be inside the community (Minar and Greer, 1969). Individuals will recognize when the interactions are strong within a community. As a result, they will conform to the acknowledged norm for that community. This will lead to powerful informal social control within, and a resultant stronger community.

Inner City Community

Whether or not inner cities are seen as genuine communities really depends on how community is defined and by whom. Many have excluded inner cities from the definition, simply because they are perceived as fragmented and disorganized (North, 1971). A commonly held belief about most (if not all) inner cities is that they have fallen victim to the ravages of our modern industrial society and are in a state of anomie. Durkheim envisaged this anomie occurring as a result of a breakdown in the common or collective conscience of society within the city. Increased individualism,

along with the city's heterogeneous nature, was seen to exacerbate the problem (Wirth, 1964; Lunden, 1973).

As metaphor and social fact, the city became identified with crime, radicalism, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, violence and insecurity. The city was a mnemonic not for order, but for the separate parts of a collective cultural nightmare (Cohen, 1985:212).

Traditionally accepted attributes of urban communities such as heterogeneity, anonymity, bureaucracy, and impersonality are thought to promote this discord. Racial-ethnic and class conflicts only add to the dilemma (Chekki, 1990a). These "social cleavages" are thought to compound within the inner city (Suttles, 1972). But, is this necessarily the case? Are the inner cities, in fact, fundamentally disorganized and, even if they are, does this mean they are not truly communities? Undoubtedly inner city communities are filled with people who hold differing philosophies and beliefs. This heterogeneity is arguably the reason why certain people choose to live in the city in the first place. "Heterogeneous communities promote tolerance for cultural diversity" (Frug, 1996:1061). Individuals are able to express themselves freely and to live their lives in ways that they may be prevented from doing outside of this environment. "The small community often tolerates eccentricity. The city, on the contrary, rewards it" (Park, 1967a:41). People find a genuine tolerance within inner city communities for differences in attitudes and behaviours. This does not, however, necessarily equate with approval. "It suggests instead a capacity to put up with people who seem undesirable, unpleasant, even repugnant" (Frug, 1996:1061).

So what is this thing called inner city community? Is it really a community in the traditional sense of the word? At its most basic level, and as with other communities, it involves human beings living together. Often people's attachment to a neighbourhood takes on the form of a kind of reverse snobbery. Residents are proud of the fact that they live in a "tough" area and think of it as a sign of their fortitude that "outsiders" could never understand. The differences and troubles pictured by outsiders help to set the boundaries of the area and differentiates their community from other's "in affirmation of a proud identity" (Clark, 1979:107). Thus, inner city community can quite easily be recognized from both the inside and the outside. Although those outside may not truly understand a resident's motivations or attachments to a particular place, they do realize that the community is a distinct entity. "Everyone knows which parts of the metropolitan area are nice and which are dangerous. Everyone knows where they don't belong" (Frug, 1996:1047).

In order to determine, however, whether traditional notions of community apply in inner cities, comparisons need to be made. The similarities and differences between inner cities and other communities need to be explored. An analysis of three aspects acknowledged to be essential elements of community; (i) a shared area or geography, (ii) a common tie or ties and (iii) social relations or sociological interaction (Hillary, 1982; Poplin, 1972; Bell and Newby, 1974; Leighton, 1988) mentioned earlier, is a logical starting point. Since there is strong agreement amongst those who study community that virtually all communities will possess one or more of these elements, inner cities should also possess them.

The geographic elements of inner city communities are different from other communities in many ways. Along with separating “residential areas from business districts, commercial uses from industrial uses, high-income shopping from low-income shopping” boundaries have “also divided residents of metropolitan areas along class and ethnic lines” (Frug, 1996:1067-1068). The crucial part of this dimension of community relates to who sets these boundaries and how they come to their decisions. Inner city boundaries are generally created by outsiders who seek to contain certain populations, whereas other community boundaries are set by insiders who wish to pursue their common interests (Scherer, 1972).

This depiction of community outside the inner city – people pursuing their common goals and interests – is far more constructive than the portrayal of a community subject to a set of boundaries imposed upon them. Geographic boundaries, set through zoning practices, are believed to insulate suburban community residents from inner city ones. In the zoning of suburbia, certain populations, “the wrong kind of people,” are excluded in order to help further the suburban economy and promote investment (Frug, 1996:1084).

One might inquire as to whether this boundary setting is truly this purposefully done or whether it is the outcome of some “natural” patterning of social disorganization and consequent deviance as the Chicago School writers would have us believe (Cohen, 1985). Regardless of how the geographic aspect plays out, it is important to note the distinct imbalance of power here. The poor, marginalized and unwanted in society have less control over where their own community space is

located. They are often confined to particular geographic areas where containment is achieved through socio-economic exclusion. “We try to locate the community of the poor via economic walls, believing these are what surrounds residents and restrains them within the boundaries” (Scherer, 1972:51). Inner cities are places where housing is the most affordable and where many other social services are concentrated. These features are of particular importance to the poor, disenfranchised and dependent persons in society. Whether the image is of “zones of neglect” or areas of “separation and exclusion,” the dominant theme is that of “an increasing ecological separation into ‘deviant ghettos’, ‘sewers of human misery’, garbage dumps for ‘social junk’ lost in the interstices of the city” (Cohen, 1985:227). None of these are positive images.

Inner cities do appear to possess some of the traditionally recognized characteristics of a shared area or geography. The typical urban community is a complicated area that can be geographically located and spatially defined (Park, 1925). Geographic boundaries are extremely important to the understanding of inner city communities, as the defining of space is a political activity. Many different ones can be found to criss-cross over the same geographical area. One can envisage municipal, provincial and federal, as well as neighbourhood, ward, and district political boundaries. They delineate what is and what is not an official community space within the inner city. As well, city planners decide the general location and character and what official use a particular space should have and what may be constructed there (Park, 1925; Frug, 1996). But are these official boundaries the most

important ones for inhabitants of inner city communities? Certainly they are significant; however, inner city residents also find many and varied borders and spaces within their community, each with its own unique offering. “The city as a network of sedimentation of discretely understood places, such as particular buildings, parks, neighbourhoods, and as a physical environment offers changes and surprises in transition from one place to another” (Young, 1986:20). There is an understanding amongst residents of the inner city of what certain spaces and boundaries represent. This is very much the same as it is in other communities.

But is there a common tie or ties that bond inner city inhabitants to their communities? There is a commonly held belief that there is not. The sense is that people in inner cities see themselves as individuals rather than as tied to a particular social group or groups. City people, it is thought, are “selfish,” “detached,” “competitive,” “without sentimental or social ties,” “and they are not tied by common values or common ideas about social order” (Brower, 1996:5). City inhabitants are presumed to act as individuals rather than a part of a whole. This view of the inner city has a rather negative connotation. The norm of city life is thought to consist of strangers with little or nothing in common other than the space they occupy together. The resultant heterogeneity of inner city communities provides an atmosphere where common objectives are not very clear. “The city is too variegated and heterogeneous to provide a single normative order which is shared consensually and is sufficient to maintain order” (Suttles, 1972:30). These notions have considerable history to them.

Individuals were imagined, in Durkheim's concept of anomie, to be "living in proximity but in a social vacuum" (Lunden, 1973:394). The loneliness and desperation that resulted from this state, along with a breakdown in their adherence to social norms, was imagined to be the cause of crime in the city. Similarly, Park (1967a) believed that in the urban environment, local attachments broke down and this contributed greatly to the increase of vice and crime in the great cities. Wirth (1964) likewise felt that with city inhabitants, bonds of kinship and of neighbourliness were likely to be absent or relatively weak and that formal control mechanisms were, as a result, needed to hold society together. Is this necessarily the case? Are inner city populations too fractured to form common ties or bonds? And, does it, therefore, follow that they cannot be properly identified as a community?

Some would argue that inner cities do possess the aspect of a common tie or ties and that those who would say otherwise do not understand the character of the urban milieu. The crux of the debate revolves around the traditional notion that inner cities are not homogenous entities. Chicago School writers such as Wirth and Park argued that the heterogeneity contributes to a fragmentation of social bonds and that deviant behaviour or criminal activity is a product of this disorganization (Cohen, 1985). The Chicago School's traditional view of inner city community, however, appears to be fraught with moral pronouncements. The inner city is seen as having a "schizoid personality" according to Wirth (1964:71). Park (1967a) imagined "moral regions" where persons associated "with others of their own ilk;" and "the poor, the

vicious and the delinquent, crushed together in an unhealthy and contagious intimacy” (p.45). But is this truly the case?

More recent sociologists have focussed on how heterogeneous cities cultivate not simply individual eccentricity but the formation of groups that help expand the ways in which one can shape a life. Cities’ intensification and multiplication of subcultures provides a basis for developing what are popularly called “alternative lifestyles” (Frug, 1996:1063).

These “alternative lifestyles” could include gays, lesbians, intravenous drug users, prostitutes and many others who are often labelled as deviants and who frequently call the inner city their home. These people find solace within their groups inside the inner city in the same way that others find comfort within their homogeneous communities. The difference appears to be that, with the vast number of people who live in the inner city, there is a potential for a multitude of communities existing within the larger geographic community. “The city consists in a great diversity of people and groups, with a multitude of subcultures and differentiated activities and functions, whose lives and movements mingle and overlap in public spaces” (Young, 1986:21). The contact that occurs within this public space, it is suggested, is positive in nature rather than negative as had been previously believed. There is a sort of “live-and-let-live attitude” that seems to prevail in the inner cities (Frug, 1996:1061). Recent research also provides considerable evidence to support the notion that rumours of the decline of urban community “have been greatly exaggerated” (Leighton, 1988:345).

In the analysis of inner city communities, the final aspect of social relations or social interactions is also a source of much debate. In relation to this aspect of community, inner cities have traditionally been seen to be quite dysfunctional.

The sociological aspect of these relationships is, therefore, best defined as one of social proximity and social distance. They are merely the transitory meetings of strangers, in which the individual uniqueness of the participants remains hidden behind a shield of formal objectivity, aloofness, and indifference (Spykman, 1926:58).

Similarly, Wirth (1964) believed that “the contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental”

(p.71). City life, according to Park (1967a) is seen to have “a superficial and adventitious character” which “tends to complicate social relationships” (p.41).

These negative characterizations were a product of increased individuality, a lack of moral order and the heterogeneity of urban environments. Individuals were perceived to be unable to effectively interact with their neighbours in the inner city due to their many differences. Their lack of common bonds, it was thought, barred any “real” social relations or interactions. Real relations or interactions were thought to only occur in homogeneous, rural communities, which were envisioned as more acceptable, stable environments in which to live.

The iconography is, of course, as old as sociology itself. Every first-year sociology student is introduced via the work of Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Tonnies and Simmel to the classic set of contrasts between the face-to-face, *Gemeinschaft* traditional community and the impersonal, urban, mass society dominated by the cash nexus (Cohen, 1985:118).

This subjective view of life in the inner city fails to recognize that meaningful social relations and inner city communities are not mutually exclusive concepts

Rather than imagining inner city community as some type of deviant form of the “real” thing, one might imagine the structure of the city as giving its inhabitants more freedom to engage in alternative forms of association. New and divergent individual types of communities emerge and develop as a result, in this mosaic of little worlds (Scherer, 1972; Park, 1967a). In this vision of social relations or social interactions in the inner city, individuals are thought to be much more tolerant and accommodating. It is a very positive conception. Instead of picturing the classic images of inner cities as centres for vice and corruption, view them as facilitating the expansion of the freedom of individuals to live other lifestyles (Frug, 1996). Some may characterize this view as a naïve conception of what is truly a disorganized, chaotic environment. However, it may also properly be seen as an alternate view of the same milieu. The point is that individuals do involve themselves in social relations and interactions in inner cities. The form that these interactions take is what is different. Living in a heterogeneous city “promotes tolerance for social and cultural diversity,” “provides people with a broader range of life experiences” and cultivates “not simply individual eccentricity but the formation of groups that help expand the ways in which one can shape a life” (Frug, 1996:1061-1063).

Chapter III

Community Policing

“If the community concept is generally problematic, then its definitional problem is further compounded when it is applied to the equally ambiguous concept of policing” (Murphy, 1988b:393). This conceptual ambiguity has not, however, prevented academics and police practitioners alike from embracing the concept, despite the fact that in many cases they imagine it to be different things. Community policing has been described by its advocates as; “the new orthodoxy for cops” (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994:3), “the new philosophy of professional law enforcement” (Bayley, 1988:225), “the dominant ideology and organizational model of progressive policing in Canada” (Murphy, 1988a:177) and as “relatively abstract *organizational strategies* for policing” (Webb, 1999:328). Along with these various conceptions come a variety of different names: “community oriented policing;” “community based policing;” “problem oriented policing;” and “neighbourhood oriented policing.” Given the sheer number of conceptions and names, it is not surprising that defining community policing has proven to be quite problematic. As a result, there has been considerable debate regarding what community policing really is, who defines it and whether or not it differs substantively from other types of policing.

Critics of community policing see the concept as complicated for several reasons. Cohen (1985), for example, argues that community policing is aimed at general image building. He asserts that informal surveillance and increased crime reporting occur as a result of improved citizen cooperation. Although many would

say that community policing is a distinct and improved policing approach, Cohen (1985) alleges that “new structures are being created rather than old ones being replaced” (p.69). He sees this as merely an attempt at widening the social control net in order to catch more people. Left realist writers have also questioned community policing. From their perspective, the police are not giving proper consideration to the views of the public, particularly in relation to crime prevention. The public are viewed as merely a source of *information*, like any other agency, rather than a source of *demands* (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986; Young and Matthews, 1992). Left realists believe that the police must become truly accountable to the public. They believe one of the best ways of achieving this is by compelling police agencies to deliver services based on needs identified by the public. “For it is only through the accountability of the police to the local political system that public confidence can be increased, and with it, the flow of information” (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986).

Some have argued that community policing has developed differently and for different reasons in Canada (Murphy, 1988a; Rosenbaum, 1998; Leighton, 1994), in Britain (Weatheritt, 1988) and in the United States of America (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994). As the development of community policing is quite specific to the location where it is practiced, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full historical account of how community policing has developed throughout the world. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to explore the concept of community policing in more general terms. It starts with a brief overview of the professional model of policing which preceded community policing. Next, an attempt is made to

explain generally why the community policing model developed. Common dimensions, assumptions and propositions are then examined, in an effort to develop a framework, which can be used to understand the concept. Finally the left realist perspective is examined, particularly with respect to its critique of community policing.

Prior to the 1980's, the police saw their role in society as primarily one of controlling crime through law enforcement (Kelling and Moore, 1988). They fulfilled this role largely by focussing their efforts on random motorized patrols, criminal investigations, arrests and a rapid response to a variety of calls for emergency services (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Chacko and Nancoo, 1993; Rosenbaum, 1998). This was the face of policing as it had been practiced for decades. It is thought that advancements in technology such as two way car radios, 911 phone lines and, later, computer aided dispatch, led to the focus on the speed of police response to calls for service from the public (Chacko and Nancoo, 1993; Rosenbaum, 1998). Police efficiency was calculated to the second in response times.

This approach has come to be known as the traditional or professional model. It is characterized by a focus on individual incidents; an orientation toward reacting to events as they arise; analysis limited to specific events rather than problems; response strategies limited to law enforcement; and an emphasis on response efficiency rather than effectiveness (Chacko and Nancoo, 1993). During the time of the professional model, improvements to policing primarily took the form of internal, managerial changes focussed on "streamlining the organization, upgrading personnel,

modernizing equipment, and establishing more businesslike procedures” (Goldstein 1979:238). Police departments developed elaborate bureaucracies, which emphasized various types of control and required several layers of middle managers. As with other bureaucracies, instructions flowed downward, and information flowed upward (Kelling and Moore, 1988). This approach fit well within the militaristic structure of the police. However, these bureaucratic, professional organizations ignored the end product of policing, which was how they dealt with problems. They failed to examine what it was they were doing day to day. Goldstein (1979) dubbed this the “means over ends syndrome” (p.238). He explained that “the situation is somewhat like that of a private industry that studies the speed of its assembly line, the productivity of its employees, and the nature of its public relations program, but does not examine the quality of its product” (p.243).

What emerged in the early 1980’s was a response to the professional model of policing. “Community policing developed as a response to increased realization that established forms of policing were far less effective, equitable, and efficient than had been imagined” (Eck and Rosenbaum 1994:5-6). Police departments were also beginning to appreciate that they needed to get closer to the communities they policed. They came to realize that this would put them in a better position to uncover the real problems that those communities face. Whether or not the police would then be able to take action, which would have a real impact on crime is still a matter of debate (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986; Young and Matthews, 1992).

Community policing has grown and developed over the last twenty years. Chris Murphy, a Canadian who has written extensively on the subject, described it this way.

Based on a critique of crime-control policing and modern bureaucratic police organization, community policing is a loosely related body of philosophical principles regarding the role, authority, and mandate of the public police, and the related set of internal organizational and operational reforms. Community policing advocates a broad social role for police and enhanced community responsibility and participation in policing (Murphy, 1988a:177).

Murphy's characterization highlights a number of important points that appear in virtually all of the community policing literature: philosophical principles; organizational and operational reforms; and public participation in policing.

Seagrave (1996) comments that various writers have condensed the key elements and ingredients into different numbers of points (three, four, six, eight and sixteen) (p.8). For the purpose of this thesis, the analysis of community policing will focus on three broad dimensions: the philosophical; the strategic; and the programmatic. These dimensions provide a general framework for the development of a sound understanding of the concept of community policing.

As a philosophy, community policing is a change in the way the police view both their own role and the role of the public. "Community policing does not represent a small, technical shift in policing; it is a paradigmatic change in the way police operate" (Bayley, 1988:236). Philosophically, it is a shift in thinking away from traditional bureaucratic policing practices towards a police function that includes more than just law enforcement. There are several components to this

philosophy. The first is an organizational change. Community policing is a change in the way police organizations view their role in society. Police officers respond to the citizen's definitions of problems, rather than their own. "Community policing projects are premised on the assumption that the collective concerns or normative standards of the community should determine, authorize or inform policing priorities and activities" (Murphy, 1988b:395).

Another component of the philosophy is a recognition of the abilities and expertise of police officers at the street constable level. This expertise is also effectively utilized when any problem solving initiatives are carried out in the community. The community requires decisions to be made at this level, as these front line constables are in the best position to assess community needs (Kelling and Moore, 1988; Rosenbaum, 1998; Normandeau and Leighton, 1993). These officers are recognized as the closest link between the police organization and the public.

Also included in the philosophical dimension, is a move away from the idea that law enforcement is the *only* appropriate problem solving strategy to be used. This component of the community policing philosophy dictates that a multitude of responses to community problems are to be considered.

Use of the criminal law is always considered, as are civil law enforcement, mediation, referral, collaboration, alteration of the physical environment, public education, and a host of other possibilities. The common sense notion of choosing the tool that best fits the problem, instead of simply grabbing the most convenient or familiar tool in the tool box lies close to the heart of the problem solving method (Cordner, 2001:503).

Another component of the philosophy of community policing is a commitment to true problem solving. The police are encouraged to identify the root causes of problems in communities. It is believed that lasting solutions will only come when the origins of problems are identified and when true problem solving strategies are used to resolve them. “If neighborhood problems are the source of community discontent and contribute to a cycle of urban decline, then effective policing will involve identifying the source and nature of these problems and working towards effective solutions” (Rosenbaum, 1998:13).

Crucial to the success of problem solving is community consultation. Consultation must occur in order to determine what the true problems are and what the appropriate solutions should be. There must be genuine dialogue. Through consultation, the police can become proactive in dealing with local crime and disorder problems (Normandeau and Leighton, 1993; Friedman, 1994). A final component of community policing as a philosophy is cooperative partnerships. The police must partner with the community and other service delivery agencies in order to be truly accountable. Community police officers are seen as taking on a new role as community partners and co-producers of neighbourhood safety and crime prevention. This is seen as a marked departure from the traditional or professional model where the community had little or no role in policing (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986; Grinc, 1994).

As a strategy, community policing involves a translation of the philosophy into action. It represents the link between the philosophical assumptions and the

specific programmes to be implemented (Cordner, 2001). The strategy also has several components. The first is a focus on geography. Police officers are assigned to a certain defined, manageable area and stay there.

Community policing recommends that patrol officers be assigned to the same areas for extended periods of time, to increase their familiarity with the community and the community's familiarity with them. Ideally, this familiarity will build trust, confidence, and cooperation on both sides of the police-citizen interaction (Cordner, 2001:498).

What is of utmost importance is that the area be small enough for a police officer to feel some ownership of it and to them to care about what they do there and how they conduct themselves.

An emphasis on proactive solutions to problems facing the community is the next component. Police officers do not just wait to be dispatched to a call. They regularly analyze information on reported crimes, often utilizing specialty crime analysis sections, in order to identify patterns. Problem areas or "hot spots" are isolated and then strategies are developed to deal with them (Goldstein, 1979; Normandeau and Leighton, 1993; Green, 1998).

Addressing crime and the fear of crime is another component of community policing as a strategy. A variety of tactics are used to solve these issues. Police officers are encouraged to become generalists (rather than specialists) who can address a broad range of problems with the help of the community (Normandeau and Leighton, 1993). The rationale for this is that "every neighborhood and every problem is unique, which means that the community police officer will need

considerable freedom to develop relationships with other agencies and make decisions about appropriate courses of action” (Rosenbaum, 1998:19). In order to facilitate appropriate decision making, the establishment of an interactive dialogue with the community, service agencies and other police departments is necessary. This component of the strategy is achieved using a consultative process. An emphasis is placed on solving both long and short-term problems identified by the community (Normandeau and Leighton, 1993). Out of this may even come strategic planning objectives for the police department.

The final component of community policing as a strategy is an openness to new ideas and a recognition that traditional solutions (i.e. law enforcement) may not always work. “Problem-solving policing works to identify why things are going wrong and to respond with a wide variety of often unconventional approaches” (Kennedy and Moore, 2001). Creative responses to problems are regarded as desirable rather than discouraged as they are in the traditional model of policing.

As a programme, community policing is the translation of the philosophy and the strategy into specific tactics and behaviours involving problem solving techniques and community involvement (Cordner, 2001). Sometimes called operational strategies or tactics, they are the practical aspect of community policing and can take on many different forms (Wycoff, 1988; Bennett, 1994; Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994). The traditional walking beat has always been recognized as a standard community policing tactic and was used as the preferred method of police patrol prior to the use of random, motorized patrol (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Griffiths, *et*

al., 2001). It consists of officers on foot, walking around well-defined geographic areas. The officers get to know everyone in their area from face-to-face encounters. “The rationale for foot patrol is that the highly visible presence of uniformed officers gives residents and businesspeople a feeling of security, and indeed, evaluation research generally supports this contention” (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994). There is also a certain amount of nostalgia associated with this approach, as this was the way in which Sir Robert Peel’s first police constables patrolled the streets of London, England in 1829.

Bicycle patrol has also become a frequently utilized community policing tactic. Its popularity is due largely to the mobility and increased area coverage it offers over foot patrol. Particularly effective in urban environments where traffic is a problem, bicycle police officers are able to patrol silently, get to in-progress crimes much faster and still provide close contact with the public (Griffiths, *et al.*, 2001). Various types of crime prevention techniques are also commonly used as operational, community policing strategies. These include: neighbourhood watch, operation identification, block watch, business watch and other programmes mainly aimed at reducing property crimes. Through these operational strategies, the police enter into partnerships with the community where the public are encouraged to get involved in helping to protect themselves. In these programmes, the public are seen primarily as the “eyes and ears” of the police (Brodeur, 1998; Greene and Pelfrey, 2001).

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is another well accepted community policing tactic. This strategy involves the designing of

buildings, placing of shrubs and benches and other modifications to the features of a physical environment in order to deter crime. The intent of this environmental design is to decrease the risk of offences occurring “by enhancing the defensible space characteristics of the area” (Lab, 1992:19). The use of mini police stations is also an established community policing tactic. Although the stations come in a variety of forms, they are generally self-contained police offices situated in neighbourhoods and as such are sometimes called precinct offices. They normally handle all but emergency calls and have the ability to take reports even when the assigned officer is not present and the officer does any follow-up work that is needed. “Ministations can be used in various ways to help lessen the physical and psychological distance between police officers and neighborhood residents” (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994:306). The stations are a recognizable contact point where the community can easily access the police. The fact that the stations are situated within the community and generally have community members working in them tends to make them a more approachable place than large centralized police stations.

Consultative committees are another frequently used community policing operational strategy. Often referred to as advisory committees, they are generally made up of community members and the police.

Some police officials meet regularly with citizen advisory boards, ministry alliances, minority group representatives, business leaders, and other formal groups. These techniques have been used by police chief executives, district commanders, and ordinary patrol officers; they can be focussed as widely as the entire jurisdiction or as narrow as a beat or a single neighborhood (Cordner, 2001).

The function of these meetings is to provide recurring, structured opportunities for face-to-face encounters between the police and the community in order to assist the police in setting priorities. Another community policing tactic is the satisfaction survey, also known as the community survey. These surveys are used in an effort to “feel the pulse” of the community; to determine if certain strategies are working or not; to ascertain what problems the community is actually facing; to identify public concerns in relation to crime and fear of crime; and to assist in identifying of unreported crime (Peak and Glensor, 1996; Griffiths, *et al.*, 2001).

The final community policing operational tactic is problem oriented policing (POP). This tactic is a proactive method of dealing with community problems. “Problem-oriented policing provides a process for identifying and responding to problems that are often beyond the purview of traditional police resources and activities” (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994:308). As with all community policing tactics, POP involves working with the public to ascertain what the local problems are and then develop appropriate solutions. The four stages of the POP process are often referred to by the acronym SARA: scanning, analysis, response and assessment. In the scanning stage, police officers identify problems in the community and then determine if the problems are truly problems or not. During the analysis stage, the officer must develop an understanding of the nature, scope and causes of the problems. In order to accomplish this, they must collect information from any available source. The response stage entails examining possible solutions and implementing them. This is often accomplished with the assistance of other agencies,

organizations and police units. Finally, in the assessment stage, the officer must determine if the response was effective. If not, then the officer must gather more information, often returning to the scanning stage to do so (Eck and Spellman, 2001).

Although community policing is criticized as being ambiguous (Murphy, 1988b; Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994), used as justification for any police activity (Murphy, 1988a), and really doing nothing different (Bayley, 1988), it has some fundamental dimensions that distinguish it from previous policing models. At its core, community policing is a way of looking at the police role in society and recognizes that police officers cannot do their work in isolation. It emphasizes a need for the police to appreciate that community support plays a vital role in determining whether they will be successful in resolving crime and disorder issues. The community policing philosophy, strategy and programme dimensions form a complex structure that allows police agencies to tailor their policing to fit individual community needs. Although the components of the philosophy and the dimensions of the strategy are crucial for community policing, utilization of all the programme components is not necessary. The components are best employed selectively, to address specific problems in communities.

Before exploring the left realist critique of community policing, it is important to note that left realists and community policing advocates share some common views about policing. Left realists, for example, see crime as a real problem for people in the least powerful segments of society. As a result, they believe that the police are a necessary community organization (MacLean, 1991; Lea and Young, 1993). This

view is in contrast with other radical criminological perspectives that criticize left realism for taking crime and the fear of crime seriously, and for being conservative in their view of police accountability (Lowman and MacLean, 1992). Along the same lines, community policing activists also acknowledge that inner city neighbourhoods experience high rates of crime and disorder and stress that the police play an important role in dealing with the problem (Buerger, 1994; Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Grinc, 1994).

The proper function of police and the effective delivery of their services is also of interest to left realists (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986). This sets them apart from other police critics who are usually only interested in studying “police malpractice” (Reiner, 1998:58). Similarly, the efficient and effective delivery of police services is a crucial element in community policing theory (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994; Leighton, 1994). It assumes even greater significance as police responsibilities in relation to the community change and evolve. The importance of community based crime prevention initiatives is also propounded by the left realists, who see the “accompanying background of police accountability and community organization” as essential (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986:104).

Community based crime prevention is also a cornerstone of community policing.

Consistently, these programs have emphasized the consensual nature of citizen-government relations; the collaborative role of citizens and the police in crime prevention, social control and order maintenance; as well as the respective responsibilities of each (police and community) (Greene and Pelfrey, 2001).

Left realists also believe there has been a breakdown in police-community relations that impairs the ability of the police to have an impact on crime (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 1996). “We have created in this country a criminal justice system which alienates precisely that section of the population which would otherwise be the main source of information about crime and the public bedrock of successful policing” (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986:48). Community policing advocates agree. They maintain that the professional model of policing that preceded community policing isolated the police from the communities they were supposed to serve in the name of efficiency. The police have come to realize that they needed the active assistance of the public in order to solve crime (Kelling and Moore, 1988; Kratcoski and Dukes, 1995).

Community policing advocates and left realist analysts do, however, diverge in many ways. Although they agree that the police encounter many complex social problems, the question of how to address these problems is where they disagree. One solution, according to some left realist, is the concept of “minimal policing.” It represents a synthesis of the left realist critique of policing and examines numerous issues that are central to the community policing philosophy and strategy. Community police advocates and left realist analysts, for example, disagree in relation to the area of police powers. In the community policing model, police power and legitimacy comes from several sources. “Certainly, law continues to be a major source of justification, but it is not sufficient to authorize police actions to maintain order, negotiate conflicts, and solve problems. Neighborhood or community support and involvement are required to accomplish those tasks” (Kelling and Moore,

1988:19). Minimal policing goes one step further. “Minimal policing entails a strict limit on police powers, working from the premise that it is for the police to cooperate with and respond to the demands of the public, rather than vice versa” (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986:192). Left realists promote the idea of limiting police powers through legislative means to conform to this ideal. Kinsey, *et al.* (1986) emphasize that police power “by its very nature is coercive” (p.193) and therefore they stress that this necessitates “the provision of firm but fair limits” (p.75). This would involve doing such things as limiting police discretion, a standard policing tool that community policing practitioners use on a daily basis.

Another point of contention is in relation to the role of the police. Community policing advocates, for example, see a very broad role for the police in society. In contrast to the professional model that considered criminal apprehension the primary function of the police, community policing “includes order maintenance, conflict resolution, provisions of services through problem solving as well as other activities” (Kelling and Moore, 1988:20). “Community policing advocates and legitimates a broader social and political role for police than the legally constrained crime control model of conventional policing” (Murphy, 1988a:187). Left realists, however, believe that the police role ought to be restricted to one of crime control. “Minimal policing emphasizes that policing is and should be about crime and law enforcement, and restricts police activity to this clearly defined area” (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986:208).

Other police activities, common to community policing, are seen as an intrusion into people’s lives. In order to limit the police role, left realists argue for

democratic control that would compel police officers to investigate actual offences rather than potential offenders (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986; Young, 1991). Minimalist policing is a radical form of policing by consent (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986:192). Left realists argue against the police involving themselves in order maintenance activities but instead fulfilling a limited role in the fight against crime. “The [minimal policing] strategy rests on a series of interrelated propositions: namely, maximum public initiation of police action and maximum access to the police, and minimal police initiated action and minimum use of coercion” (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986:189).

One way to test conceptions of community, inner city community and community policing found in the literature, is to conduct research with individuals. Empirical evidence, which either supports or challenges the findings of those who have analyzed both “community” and “community policing,” can be obtained through such research and this was one of the goals of the thesis. Social service providers, who deliver services to people in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, were interviewed for this thesis research, and their perceptions of community, inner city community and community policing can be found in the following chapters.

Chapter IV

The Social Service Providers' Perspectives

The data gathered for this thesis was derived from answers given to questions posed to 40 social service providers in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. A comprehensive discussion of the research methods can be found in Appendix A and the questions asked can be found in Appendix B. The social service providers were chosen as participants for several reasons. They are, arguably, extremely close to the community, working, interacting with and sometimes living amongst the inhabitants of the Downtown Eastside. Although they all provide social services, they come from many different backgrounds and deliver a wide variety of services to a broad cross section of the population. They know and understand the views of the community in relation to community, inner city community and community policing since they closely interact with their clients daily, talking, getting to know, and often counselling them. They are undoubtedly able to provide the community perspective needed for the thesis. From a purely practical point of view, the service providers are a relatively stable, accessible group and are a group of people with whom the Vancouver Police Department could enter into partnerships while practising community policing.

The following pages contain the results of the analysis of the data. Several important questions are explored and various themes that emerged are discussed.

What is a community?

As a starting point, the participants were asked their views on the general concept of community and, interestingly, their responses reflected the literature on the subject. In particular, major themes of shared area or geography, common tie or ties, and social relations or social interactions figured prominently in the respondents' narratives.

The first question asked was, "when I mention the word community what thoughts come to your mind?" Some respondents immediately began speaking about the Downtown Eastside. One participant explained that for her "a community is like the Downtown Eastside."¹ Another felt that, the Downtown Eastside, where he is working, *is* a community.² They both identify themselves as a part of the Downtown Eastside and, as a consequence, instinctively thought of that community. All but four of the 40 participants spoke about people as an element of community. This reflects the views expressed by Hillary (1982) in his work on the definitions of community. "When all the definitions are viewed, beyond the concept that people are involved in community, there is no complete agreement as to the nature of community" (p.24).

More than two thirds of the respondents mentioned area or geography as an element of community. They typically used the words "neighbourhood," "geography," "area," and "place." One respondent felt that community could be a neighbourhood, a common geographic area, or a bond that makes people feel they belong to a group.³ Another thought that, in addition to being a neighbourhood, a community was a place where people felt comfortable with each other and that it

involved groups, individuals, and buildings.⁴ A third respondent saw community as the stakeholders; having an investment in and being affected by “quality of life issues” in a certain geographic area, including the residents, businesses, and service people.⁵ This notion of an area or geography being part of community is certainly a prominent feature of the community literature. “Indeed community has been referred to as a spatial unit, a cluster of people living within a specific geographic area, or as simply ‘a place’ ” (Poplin, 1972:10). Park (1967b) remarks that, “the simplest possible description of a community is this: a collection of people occupying a more or less clearly defined area” (p.115).

The participants also made numerous references to a common tie or ties as an element of community. More than half of the participants used words like “common bonds,” “goals,” “interests” and “values.” One participant felt that people in a community could be linked via a common goal, such as being a person of colour and a member of the aboriginal community, rather than by geography.⁶ Similarly, another participant referred to the gay community as a form of community, which could be characterized as “people living or organized together with either a common purpose or goal or with several other factors in common.”⁷ Someone else answered by simply saying, “I think it’s a group of people with a common bond.”⁸ This aspect of community can also be found throughout the literature. Minar and Greer (1969) write that community, “expresses our vague yearnings for a commonality of desire, a communion with those around us, an extension of the bonds of kin and friend to all

those who share a common fate with us” (p.ix). Poplin (1972) and Cotterrell (1997) speak of this component as the psychological or mental aspect of community.

More than half of the participants also mentioned social relations or social interaction. These 22 participants saw community members interacting, coming together, working together and networking in order to establish a community. One participant saw the community as not only a number of definable groups that interacted with each other but also as groups that formed, informally, in the community.⁹ Another respondent, speaking about community members, felt that they developed a sense of community and of belonging to that community; hopefully something that was enjoyable.¹⁰ The notion of interactions between people was also seen as an important characteristic of community and that was more than neighbourhood.¹¹ Wirth (1964) saw social interaction or the “reciprocal relations” between individuals, as a significant factor in the formation of social order and society. Poplin (1972) has concurred and felt that people are in interaction with other people within communities, and this implies that communities have what he refers to as “definite patterns of social organization” (p.26).

Is community in the Downtown Eastside different?

As the goal of the thesis research was to examine the service providers’ views on community in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, participants were asked questions about that particular community. They were asked if the Downtown Eastside community was different from other communities in Vancouver. If the answer was “yes,” they were then asked, “in what way was the community

different?” Virtually all of the participants saw the Downtown Eastside community as distinct. Most began by using very positive words, describing the community as “unique,” “strong,” “stable,” “cohesive” and “tolerant.” One participant felt that issues such as poverty made the Downtown Eastside stronger than most communities.¹² Another found that, apart from having some negative aspects, the community possessed many positive qualities not present in more affluent neighbourhoods, such as “a profound community sense and spirit.”¹³ A third participant saw the Downtown Eastside as “one of the most tolerant communities” they had ever worked in.¹⁴ Frug (1996) describes this as a “live-and-let-live attitude” where a heterogeneous population learns to tolerate and accept diverse opinions, beliefs and lifestyles. Although critical of the lifestyles of inner city populations, Park (1967a) acknowledges that in the inner city there exists an environment where difference is accepted.

The attraction of the metropolis is due in part, however, to the fact that in the long run every individual finds somewhere among the varied manifestations of city life the sort of environment in which he expands and feels at ease; in short, the moral climate in which his peculiar nature obtains the stimulations that bring his innate dispositions to full and free expression (Park, 1967a:41).

After mentioning a positive aspect of community, the participants usually then went on to talk about the negative aspects: poverty; drug and alcohol abuse; and issues related to the mentally ill. Many spoke about how the high concentration of these social problems in the Downtown Eastside adversely affected the community. Commenting on the many serious issues faced by a community where certain people have been “dumped,” one participant explained that the Downtown Eastside is not

only the drug and T.B. capital of Canada, but also “the poorest postal code in all of Canada.”¹⁵ Another felt that although the community was in many ways different from other communities; “people are poor, fucked up,” there is “that kind of solidarity that people think of as a weird connection.”¹⁶ Another participant remarked that,

it has probably 35 to 40 percent of the people right there self-identify as addicts, to alcohol or drugs and it’s astoundingly devoid of simple amenities. People share a bathroom amongst 20 rooms and stuff. It’s probably pretty shocking for the rest of the Canadian population.¹⁷

Many who write on the subject of community also examine the more negative conceptions of inner city community. In discussing images of cities, Cohen (1985) remarks that the dominant view is that of “whole blocks decayed, taken over by freaks, junkies, drop outs, winos, derelicts of all sorts; the inner city as a whole occupied by minority groups, the poor the disadvantaged the stigmatized” (p.213). Burgess (1967), exploring patterns of modern cities, explains that “in the zone of deterioration encircling the central business section are always to be found the so-called ‘slums’ and ‘bad lands,’ with their submerged regions of poverty, degradation, and disease, and their underworlds of crime and vice” (pp. 54-55).

Is there an ideal community and how does the Downtown Eastside compare?

Questions intended to elicit more specific responses regarding the service provider’s views on the nature of the community were also posed. For example, as idyllic notions of community are commonly found throughout the community literature (Scherer, 1972; Cohen, 1985; Foster, 1990), participants were asked if they

thought there was such a thing as an ideal community, how the Downtown Eastside would compare, and how they respond to the Downtown Eastside being referred to as “skid row.”

Many respondents had difficulties with the concept of an ideal community and questions relating to how the Downtown Eastside compared to such a community. A few people were willing to call the Downtown Eastside community ideal. One respondent felt that the community *was* close to ideal, even though the people on the street are “in pretty rough shape.” The respondent suggested that regardless of where those people lived, they would not look any better.¹⁸ About half of the participants, however, said that there was no such thing as ideal community and about a third said there was. The remainder avoided the question. One person felt they were “a little too bitter to believe that there’s an ideal community,”¹⁹ and another thought the term ideal was “too value laden” to define.²⁰ Another respondent remarked that, “there would be many different types of ideal communities.”²¹

Most participants talked primarily about the community’s problems. They agreed that the living conditions faced by the people of the Downtown Eastside are undeniably less than ideal. The most common sentiment was that the community is prevented from reaching its potential because of the overwhelming drug and alcohol related issues it faces on a daily basis. They seemed to almost reluctantly agree that the Downtown Eastside is not an ideal community. One participant felt that the elements of ideal community were not there, because the inhabitants were “just

struggling day by day” with their addictions and therefore did not have the time or energy to devote to interacting in a positive way.²²

In comparing traditional views of ideal community, one respondent explained that the ideal community that some people visualize, where there are “white picket fences, and the leafy, tree lined boulevard, and the kids riding their bikes,” does not exist in the Downtown Eastside.²³ Another remarked,

you look at Kitsilano, it’s so clean, it’s so fresh, whereas the Downtown Eastside, I mean, I don’t know if you noticed walking in here, even out there somebody took a *shit* right in our doorway. And it’s like, you know, you would never see that in another place.²⁴

Close to one third of the participants were reluctant to commit to whether they thought the community was ideal or not. One participant, pointing out that the community is not ideal for *her*, explained that it might, however, be ideal for the people who live there.²⁵ Another remarked that although the community must cope with “quality of life issues” like other communities, the politics of the Downtown Eastside make it different because “poverty is an industry.”²⁶ Images of “good” communities versus “bad” communities can be found throughout the community literature. Much of it evokes images of the good rural community, contrasted against the evil city (Scherer, 1972; Cohen, 1985).

Inner cities like the Downtown Eastside are often described as “skid row,” the place where those who “fall short of existing standards” or those who are thought to be “suspicious” are relegated (Suttles, 1968:5). More than 80 percent of the participants felt that this expression was derogatory and should not be used to

describe the Downtown Eastside community. Whether describing it as either an offensive or a legitimate phrase, almost half of the participants also made reference to the historical significance of the term. There were various interpretations of the meaning of skid row, however, the most common image was that of the early days when Vancouver was a logging town. The area now known as the Downtown Eastside was the place where the logs were skidded down to the water, gathered, and taken to the mill. The negative connotation of skid row, as one person explained, is a rather recent phenomenon.

Skid row didn't come to mean what it did until the planners got hold of it in the 50's, it was in the vernacular. You ask my mother what it means she'll say that's where the loggers were. I'm sure there was a sense of booziness, going down hill, falling off the wagon. There was this sense of being outside of respectability. Once the planners got hold of it and started drawing it on maps it became this awful place.²⁷

Many participants described the negative aspects of the term skid row as an outsider's perspective, often fuelled by the media. One respondent described a depressing version of the Downtown Eastside, created by the media, where the community is portrayed as a "war zone" or an "enemy state."²⁸ Another, remarking on how damaging negative labels are, explained that "skid row" was a "self-fulfilling prophecy" that leaves "no room for progress."²⁹ Along the same lines another participant related,

I think it is an appalling statement and it really indicates a total lack of real genuine understanding. And it fuels the mentality that allows the kind of scapegoating that goes on regarding members of our population. It's kind of like, it's something put forward by a culture that *wants* to live with an underbelly or an underclass where people can be abused, murdered, killed, raped,

plundered, addicted and if your not good you'll end up down there, like "the boogie man."³⁰

No one suggested that the term skid row was used to convey any sort of positive characterization of the area. However, a few respondents did say that they did not *personally* take offence to it. The overall sentiment though, was that it is a term used by outsiders, particularly the media, to belittle the people of the Downtown Eastside. It was seen as a pejorative term, used to remind the community that it does not measure up to a certain ideal.

Who are the people of the Downtown Eastside community?

Problems experienced by inner city communities are believed, by some, to result from the heterogeneity of such places. Discord results from a lack of common bonds that more homogeneous populations are thought to share (Wirth, 1964; Chekki, 1990a). Others imagine the heterogeneity to be a more positive aspect of inner city communities, which promotes tolerance and allows individuals more freedom (Frug, 1996). To explore this idea in relation to the Downtown Eastside, the participants were asked to identify the constituents of the community, whether they thought there is more than one community there and, if so, how well the communities get along.

About one third of the participants made reference to the single, elderly, male population, who were once engaged in the resource industries and who have lived in the Downtown Eastside for many years. One participant felt that this group was the "original community," made up of older men from the mining, logging, fishing industry.³¹ Another described a lifestyle that they thought no longer exists. Men

from the resource industry that worked up the coast of British Columbia, for months at a time, would arrive in Vancouver, get a room at a hotel in the Downtown Eastside, “blow out their wages on a good drunk,” then rest up for a while before heading back up the coast again.³² Another respondent commented that,

you’ve got about 5,000 senior citizens down here that come from various backgrounds; logging, mining. A lot of them were injured on the job and end up down here for a variety of reasons; alcohol, you know, poverty. So that to me is the sort of real community behind the scenes, you don’t see them. Most of them are sort of stuck away in senior citizen lodges like Oppenheimer Lodge.³³

Overall, however, there was a strong sense that the Downtown Eastside community is very diverse. The participants described many different cultural, ethnic and interest groups. First Nations people were viewed as making up a large part of the community. Chinese people were mentioned almost as frequently, along with those referred to as “recent immigrants.” The service providers and their organizations were also discussed including; police, ambulance, fire, nurses, other health care and social workers. The mentally ill were included, with many remarking that individuals were “dumped into” or “sent to” the community. Business people, including shop owners, drug dealers and users, and street people (homeless) were also described as being a part of the community. One participant described the community by saying,

there’s of course First Nations people, there’s Latinos, there’s so many cultures, there’s Iranian, Asians, Afro Canadian, Afro American, Iraqi, Polish. It’s so multicultural, it’s all ages, and of course the business people, most of the people are very poor in this community. There are, however, some who aren’t. There are people from all walks of life.³⁴

Another felt that the Downtown Eastside community was “the typical profile of poverty” having every race, gender, and colour represented in a very multicultural context.³⁵ Someone else explained,

from my experience there are prostitutes, street workers, IV drug users, seniors, families, single people, a lot of mental health patients, a lot of alcoholics, a lot of overall disadvantaged people that are in a cycle of being disadvantaged from family patterns or whatnot. But on the flipside there’s all the service providers, the nurses and doctors that parachute in and are part of that community during the day maybe not so much at night, there’s all the community agencies and from a service provider perspective that’s very evident to me that in whatever part of the community you go into you go into as well.³⁶

Many participants were unsure whether they thought there was more than one community in the Downtown Eastside. Their conclusions seemed to be contingent on how they conceptualized the community. Some thought that the community had segments, while others felt that there were sub-communities of a single community.

As one respondent explained,

oh you can look at your sub-communities, of course. There are 1,200 intravenous drug users in the Downtown Eastside. That would be a community. But in a community of 1,200, lets say intravenous drug users, even within that community there’s the transsexuals, there’s the cocaine users, smokers, injectors, heroin users, the boosters. So even within certain communities, and that’s just an example, there’s all the sub-communities that make it up.³⁷

Another remarked that we would be “bullshitting ourselves” if we did not view the community geographically and picture it as one community with several parts.³⁸ A third respondent observed,

well there are communities within *the* community. I mean, I kinda give the Downtown Eastside as one big community cause

there's a lot of things that help out all over the place. But there's the water street area, Gastown, which is sort of a trendier low income area. I mean there's a lot of trendy people that live there but there's also the homeless people that live in the area. There's the Main and Hastings area. I mean that's a life unto itself, almost a complete organism right there.³⁹

About 25 percent of the participants saw the Downtown Eastside as a single community.

The other 75 percent of the participants felt that there was more than one community. A participant described it as, "many, many, many communities.

Communities within communities within communities."⁴⁰ Another explained,

yes, I guess by the very nature of networks and interests there would probably be numerous communities that work with a high degree of, exclusive of one another, like the business community who has to do business here, but there is not a lot of interaction with the residents. I think there is an overlapping of people.⁴¹

A third participant, having difficulties with the question stated,

well, I don't know how to answer that. All those people, as I said, there are individuals functioning within a whole. Yes I think so. There are different groups within the whole. Like, the Latinos that hang out together, Chinese, white people. So there are individual communities and the challenge is to look for the common thread. What is going to bring them together, because they live geographically in this area and how you are going to bring all of these people to the table, all of these little different communities or cultures or whatever you want to call them.⁴²

Only one person was unable to answer the question.

The participants were almost evenly split over whether they thought the various communities got along with one another. The one thing they did agree upon, however, was that drug use and abuse in the area was the issue that most often

contributed to the discord. A couple of the participants said that it really depended on who you were talking about, if you wanted to know whether groups got along. One participant felt that although some of the groups did not get along with others, to the point that they wanted them out of the community, some did get along quite well.⁴³

As far as conflict goes, however, one participant explained,

I think it is very difficult to get along with somebody that is potentially going to steal from you or harm you in some way. Drug users are generally not responsible people, they're not trustworthy people. They may have a good soul and they may have a good heart and that but when they are being driven by their dependencies they are not responsible or respectable in most people's eyes.⁴⁴

Another stated,

what does the term turf war suggest? Not very well sometimes. I think a natural reaction to the kind of stuff you have to see in this neighbourhood is one of fear. You don't want to get involved, you connect with others, you don't want to deal with it and therefore you try to push it away. We don't, I think, do a very good job of communicating with the different communities.⁴⁵

Similarly, a third participant felt that "turf battles" occurred when the service providers, who compete for resources in the community, did not get along.⁴⁶

In relation to the participants who thought the communities did get along, many said that they thought there was a lot of tolerance in the Downtown Eastside for difference. This view is consistent with Frug (1996) who presents an alternative to the popular notion of heterogeneous communities not getting along. Frug writes that within these communities there is a "tolerance for social and cultural diversity" which "does not entail acceptance or approval" (p.1061). When asked about this issue, one respondent answered,

I think there is a lot of tolerance. Many of the people down here have problems either of the economic sort, the health sort, this kind of stuff and there's a lot of understanding of why people behave the way they do. There's long roots and tolerance. I've always said that this is one of the most tolerant communities I've ever been in and I come from a real redneck town in the north, so I would know.⁴⁷

Another respondent thought that, apart from the individuals who prey on people with mental disabilities or the elderly, most people just tolerate one other, even if they did not get along.⁴⁸ Explaining how he thought the community is dangerous, volatile, and “the bottom rung on the ladder,” a third respondent related how stunned he was that everyone does coexist.⁴⁹

The social service provider's perspectives of themselves

As one of the goals of the thesis was to examine the social service providers' role as partners with police departments practising community policing, a number of questions were asked to obtain the service providers' perspectives on their role in the Downtown Eastside community. They were asked what their role was, whether or not they represented the community, how they got along with each other and how well the government agencies fitted into the community.

Most of the participants said that they saw their role as either delivering a service or helping people. Many described a cooperative atmosphere between the community residents and organizations that helped to empower the residents to help themselves. Clarifying what their role in the community is, one participant saw herself as “a part of an overall network or a coalition of groups,” working with residents to identify community issues and concerns.⁵⁰ Another participant described

their role as, providing “family members and primary care givers support, education, advocacy, and assistance with the mental health system.”⁵¹ Someone else explained,

our mandate is two fold. To serve people. I think there are some people that we are mandated to care for, because of various factors they will never be able to adequately care for themselves. And secondly, to provide structures and support to bring people from a state of dependence to a status of interdependence.⁵²

As the notion of an individual or organization speaking *for* other people could be seen to be controversial, the participants were asked how much of the Downtown Eastside they represented. Approximately 40 percent of the participants stated that they did not represent the community. A number of the participants were quite adamant that they did not represent the community or anyone there. Many emphasized they were there to provide a service. One participant remarked,

that’s another issue. I represent me. I don’t pretend to represent the community, my organization doesn’t represent the community. My organization is a community resource that is used by residents of this community and residents from a lot of other communities. People come here from all over the lower mainland to be involved with the services that are here. So although we participate in a lot of community initiatives and support a lot of community initiatives I don’t think that its correct for me to say that I represent the community, I don’t.⁵³

Another explained,

I don’t think we ever tried to represent the Downtown Eastside community. We try to depict ourself as a place that’s available to the community. And if you would look at our book and you can see the number meetings that are held here in any week. You could say that we’re given that mandate. But I don’t have anybody on my staff who would claim that they represent the community.⁵⁴

Someone else, speaking about their organization’s members related,

I wouldn't say that we represent anybody. We have members. We have about 3,800 members signed up. The board won't take the role of representing anybody. What they will do is they will support projects or ideas but mostly what they do is support community involvement and the right of people to be involved in community decision making.⁵⁵

The other 60 percent of the participants felt that they did represent a certain percentage of the community. They saw their role as advocates. Sometimes they would mention how many community members there were associated with, or were members of, their organization. A participant felt that they represented the unwanted, those with more addictions, and "the poorest of the poor in downtown."⁵⁶ Another explained that advocacy is another big role for them as their clients are sometimes unable to voice their own opinions.⁵⁷ A third participant felt that their role was to be a voice for the Chinese community, Chinatown, seniors, immigrants, and in particular, to act as a balance in the controversy regarding building safe drug houses in the Downtown Eastside.⁵⁸

As far as the social service agencies working collaboratively and congenially with each other, just over half of the participants said that they did. A respondent felt that even though there are issues that arise and disagreements that occur, everyone simply "agrees to disagree" and they continue on.⁵⁹ Another explained,

I think they get along far better than a lot of people give them credit for and there have been some divisions created in the community quite consciously with goals in mind, splitting organizations one from the other or in groups, camps, whatever.⁶⁰

Similarly, another participant related,

I think that there has been a myth in the community that has been supported by some people from the provincial government that this is a dysfunctional community in terms of the agencies that are here and they say that the agencies are fighting amongst each other on a regular basis and can't work together. I think that's a myth promoted by people that have ulterior motives, to make sure that this community remains divided and has no consistent support and that allows these guys to drop in programmes and people from outside the community when they want to because they don't want to work with anybody else down here.⁶¹

About 25 percent of the participants felt that the organizations did not get along with one another. One person said,

there's competition right. Again it's a systematic issue. When the money pool is coming from one big source it is inherent that you create enemies and those enemies tend to be other organizations. That whole, who's the enemy, and we all do that at a certain level, we create the enemy.⁶²

Another respondent stated,

yea, I think the BC and Federal government contracting policy and practices make it difficult for agencies to work collaboratively if you are concerned about your contract being renewed or not existing because if you have less than X number of dollars you are going to get wiped clean. You're then put in an adversarial role and it makes no sense whatsoever. If dollars were not the issue you would not have the same kind of conflict.⁶³

Along a different line a third participant felt that people's "belief systems," "philosophy of life" and "concepts," create tension between people, and affects what they see in the community.⁶⁴ The remaining participants felt that there were groups and individuals that got along, and those who did not. One person expressed concern saying,

there are certain ones that do. There are some that don't. There are some that want to be their own end all be all, be all end all.

And they don't want to be apart of other groups and I think that's really sad because I think we should all be here for the same reason. I think it's really sad when the staff of one agency has to fight with the staff of others or refuse to make referrals or that kind of thing I think that's really sad.⁶⁵

Another respondent explained that although some people get along, others get caught up in "marking their territory" and "taking turf" in order to justify their existence.⁶⁶

Someone else stated quite simply,

agencies that like to get along, get along. In a lot of ways where you have agencies that have their own cultural characteristics, and it is very often a personality characteristic of who's running them. If they are insular, they are hard to work with."⁶⁷

More than half of the participants discussed funding problems or competition for the same funding dollars as the primary divisive issue. The other issues that figured prominently were the conflicting agendas or philosophies of the different organizations, and the politics that flows from that.

The participants were evenly split over whether they thought the government agencies fit well into the community. There were a few more who said they did not, compared to those who said they did. One respondent explained that individual government workers fit well into the community and that everyone is trying to help.⁶⁸

Someone else explained,

I think they do very well which is probably a surprising answer since I'm not pro a lot of things. I think that it is never about the workers who are down here. People who can sustain working down here, they're here for the right reasons. If you are not here for the right reasons you don't last, there's too high a burnout. As far as the workers and the work that is being done down here there is no problem.⁶⁹

Another participant observed,

well I guess there are several levels of government; the City, the Province and the Federal government and there are different divisions within them. I mean they seem to fit in. I don't have a good answer for this one. For example the Vancouver Plan which is a series of initiatives ongoing to try to improve the drug situation. My understanding it was a three level initiative, which might indicate cooperation.⁷⁰

Of those who felt that the government agencies did not fit in, one respondent felt that the government objectives for the Downtown Eastside were completely at odds with the goals of the community's members."⁷¹ With a more sympathetic tone another participant stated,

they don't fit in very well. I don't think it is because they aren't trying. The reality is that the community is made up of a lot of people who have been abused and distrust the system so even though the system is trying to change they have got an uphill climb around actually making inroads. So while they are trying to be responsive communicative and develop protocols that are inclusive of the community, the community is very distrustful.⁷²

A third participant explained that the government agencies that cause problems are the ones that just do what they think is best, without any consultation or any understanding of "the history of why things are the way they are now."⁷³ There was a general feeling amongst the participants that they wanted more real consultation. One person explained,

well I think the honesty piece is very important. For instance, you don't come in with a plan and ask people how they feel about it and consider that consultation. Consultation is coming in and saying, what's your plan? And we'll try to use our dollars to incorporate it, develop it and support you guys to develop it.⁷⁴

The other significant issue that was discussed was the fact that individuals within government often made the difference. Individuals were seen to have both positive and negative impacts. As one person observed,

there's been individuals, certainly within each level of government, who have taken the time to get to know people, to come to meetings, to speak out, and to talk to people, and they are frequently very well known and very well liked by people in the area. On the other side of that there are, and I am speaking about individuals now, who people in the community have never even met and when their names are mentioned as being a representative of the community, is usually done as a joke.⁷⁵

The social service providers' perspectives of the police

There is a commonly held belief that the police do not get along well with the citizens in inner cities (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Buerger, 1994). As a result, community policing is thought to not work very well in these areas (Buerger, 1994) and the police consequently revert to a military policing style that exacerbates the problem (Lea and Young, 1993). Proper police involvement in communities and accountability to them is crucial to a police *force* becoming a police *service* (Lea and Young, 1984; Taylor, 1981). In order to explore these ideas as they play out in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, the social service providers were asked questions related to the police and community policing in that location. Sixty percent of the participants said that the police fitted into the community quite well. Many were quite complimentary of the job that the police did in the Downtown Eastside, particularly given the perception that the police were working with very limited resources. One person said,

I think the police do an outstanding job in the Downtown Eastside. Obviously there's not enough personnel to go around. I think a lot of the street officers have good camaraderie with the citizens of the Downtown Eastside. They have an openness to them, they're willing to listen to them, they know the old stories, they've heard them hundreds of times. But they don't patronize people. I think it's a pretty good group of officers that's working there. I think it takes a very special cop to work in the Downtown Eastside. Not everybody can do it. Not everybody should do it.⁷⁶

Making reference to a particular neighbourhood police officer D, another participant related,

I think D fits in very well, thank you. And that certainly was obvious in the way the community cringed when he was removed from the community for a while. But my sense is police that work in the community on a regular basis, understand it. When I find that we have difficulty, it is often when people are new to the community and haven't seemed to grasp the difference between when something is really dangerous and when it isn't.⁷⁷

A third person expressed a more general view saying,

so my overall impression has been that there's, and this is not from any one particular thing, but there are innovative approaches to policing down here. What has come across to me is the way that police officers really care about the community and the people here and are seriously concerned about how to make this a healthier community.⁷⁸

Only a few participants said that they thought the police did not fit in. One respondent explained,

I think that the police have not fit in at all. I mean there's certain officers we meet with a certain level where they're not changing all the time. I don't know what their scheduling problems are like, we have now come to know K, we came to know G, we came to know F, we know S and soon as the relationships develop and they begin on this sort of problem solving, when you're faced with it.⁷⁹

Another said,

for most of the people that I've talked to in the community about that, because I have actually asked that question a number of times, really don't like the police at all. I think its because they feel almost like they were left out, even if people are in the community. I mean, of course drug dealers or that sort of stuff, they are going to dislike the police because the police can potentially arrest them.⁸⁰

The remainder of the participants, about 25 percent, explained that it really all depended upon a variety of factors. Most of them were convinced that it was individual police officers that made the difference. In fact about 60 percent of all the participants said that individuals were the most important determining factor in whether the police fit in or not. One candid participant said,

depends on the cop, really does. We've had great cops that you think have fucking done a grad degree in community development and then we've had fucking dunces. They'll come down, play with everybody, then pretty soon they are up to City Hall and that's the only people they are talking to.⁸¹

Someone else stated,

some fit in really well, some don't. I think that the policy around policing is changing, which is good. They used to change the police officers down here really quickly and this community takes a long time to really trust. We've got our one police officer that everybody knows, D, and D grown in leaps and bounds in the eleven years that I've known him down here and the community trusts him because he's always been honest. It's not that he hasn't been a police officer, but he's always been honest and up front.⁸²

Another participant acknowledged,

I guess police acceptance has been high and low at different times. I think the way we operate can certainly improve our acceptance. I think we have always been accepted an acknowledged as a necessity but we can certainly improve our popularity and still function effectively. I think actually by improving our popularity, of course, we function better because reporting goes up, cooperation goes up. So I think the police

have always fit in but we can fit in better of course and have been making efforts to do that.⁸³

Many of the social service providers expressed the belief that the police had come a long way in their efforts to fit into and work with the community in the Downtown Eastside.

In terms of the relationship between the police and the community, the service providers had much to say. There were a variety of perspectives regarding the community expectations of the police. A few said that they thought that the police should be a part of the community and a few talked about being treated fairly. One person said,

but if there was one thing that you could probably ask one hundred people on the street, I think they'd probably say just treat us fairly, treat us like individuals, I've heard people say that, treat us as individuals, don't lump us all together. We're not all drug users. We're not all drug dealers.⁸⁴

By far, however, the greatest consensus was around making the streets safe. About 60 percent of the participants stated that they expected that the police would ensure the community was safe by responding quickly when called, keeping the peace, enforcing the laws and often just showing a presence in the community. One participant expressed this view by saying,

personally I think that the police are here to protect the people that live and work in this community, maintain order and ensure that a level of safety for all of the residents is there and I expect the police are going to be there when I call them. If I have an emergency situation, that the police will respond as quickly as possible.⁸⁵

Another explained,

so it is very difficult because there's incredible diversity of people down here. 25 percent of the addict population have mental illness. So it is difficult but all of these people are deserving. And one of the things that happens is in the midst of all these groups of needy people they create vulnerability so there's a real need not for us to be protected from you certainly but groups down here often they are addicted they are dysfunctional need as much or more protection as anybody else.⁸⁶

A third participant felt that responding to situations quickly and keeping the community safe defined community's expectations of the police.⁸⁷

About one third of the participants, felt that expectations really depended on whom you talked to. As one respondent stated,

different people expect different things. One we should expect is equitable protection and services of an equitable nature for everybody. So everybody is deserving of protection in an equitable fashion whether you are a drug user, a sex trade worker, a retired miner, fisherman you know, somebody with disabilities, everybody.⁸⁸

Another participant explained that it

depends on who you talk to. If you talk to the businesses they expect you to be their own little mini force and to basically get rid of all the undesirables. If you talk to community residents there are varying levels of expectations. I guess everybody on a personal level expects when they need help they'll probably get held, and get the kind of help that they want, sensitized help, and to have the problem go away.⁸⁹

Another related,

I suppose it would depend on which group you would talk to. For example women's groups would say the police could do a better job of working with prostitutes not harassing them and providing a safer environment like looking to bust johns. I don't know if you recall there was the disappearance of a number of women in recent years and there was frustration that the police weren't doing enough about that. I think if you spoke to the merchants and some of the residents they would say that the police should

be dealing more with the open drug use, which they find objectionable.⁹⁰

A few people mentioned that it was important that the police connect or partner with the various organizations. Others saw it as important that they become a part of the community.

Police/community cooperation

Cooperative partnerships are a component of community policing that is often discussed by community and police members alike (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986; Grinc, 1994; Goris and Walters, 1999). There is much debate about what form those partnerships should take and whether real partnerships are possible. Specific questions about police/community cooperation in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside were, therefore, asked of the participants. More than half of the participants expressed the view that there was sufficient cooperation between the police and the community in the Downtown Eastside. One respondent stated,

I think there's a variety of communities down here so I think there is a lot of cooperation between the police and the social agency community, the police and the business community. We go to meetings, the police will sit in as a part of the meeting and have input into what is going on down here. As far as the community as the people who live down here, I think so.⁹¹

Explaining how some groups just cannot cooperate and are "anti everything," another respondent related that, "for the most part most of the community gets along quite well."⁹² Alluding to poor cooperation in the past, a participant related,

oh I think for sure yeah. It's better. It's a lot better. You think about what it was maybe eight or ten years ago. I mean right now the bicycle police make a difference. There's a lot of the people,

didn't even think the police had legs. But now they are out there."⁹³

The other half of the participants were equally divided between saying that there was insufficient cooperation and those who could not answer the question because either they did not know, or they said that it depended upon who you talked to. A participant answered,

no. When I ask them, well how many police are on the street I think they think I'm Ma Barker and I'm arranging a bank job or something. So they don't want me to find out what the shifts are and how many are on them. I just think come on you guys. So I find that very odd that they don't trust me.⁹⁴

Someone else, sounding a bit more optimistic said,

no. It's growing but it's not sufficient. For example trying to get the beat cops to meet with and identify the Latin American workers in the community that are doing the work, that are trying to do the advocacy piece, it's like pulling teeth to try to get the two groups together. That should be something that should be a priority as far as I am concerned. I think there is movement but it's not sufficient.⁹⁵

Of those who had mixed feelings on the issue, one said,

I guess it depends on who you ask. In some cases there is and in others you don't know. My sense is that there is a presence. They have been involved in the discussions around harm reduction. They have had liaison meetings. There can always be more cooperation.⁹⁶

Community policing

The service providers' views regarding community policing was explored next. Participants were asked what came to their minds when they heard the words "community policing," whether they thought it was practised in the Downtown Eastside, if they had any involvement with it and what they thought the community

role should be in community policing. The results are particularly valuable since the service providers' perspective is, arguably, a good mirror of the community's perspective. Most of the research to date has been from the police perspective and has focussed on police priorities (Buerger, 1994; Friedman, 1994; Griffiths, *et al.*, 1999).

The participants had many differing views about community policing. One common view was that the police should be a visible presence, employing such strategies as beat or foot patrol officers or bicycle patrol officers. One participant saw community policing as a less official type of policing. The police officers are much more present in the community, either on foot or on bikes, and their office was a place that you could walk right into and feel relaxed.⁹⁷ Someone else mused,

police on bikes, that's the first thing. I think friendly, maybe shops with a volunteer person handing out pamphlets. I guess I think of the softer, gentler side of policing. Maybe I'm totally skewed but I think of efforts by the police to be seen by the public as acceptable. You know, Stanley Park, police officers on horses, a friendly presence, maybe something nostalgic about it, something like Norman Rockwellian about it, back to the days when everyone knew the beat cop.⁹⁸

The next most common image was that of an accessible police officer who is trusted and was willing to work with people on an individual level. A participant related,

accessible police officers, police systems that are located in the community that are highly visible, that are open twenty-four hours a day and people feel are part of their community fabric, they are not afraid to go there, where children are encouraged to go there, that you don't mind dogs coming in the door with the kids and lets say members are there to do things other than just

chase criminals. So they rescue a kid's cat or talk to teenagers, promote policing as a possible career in schools.⁹⁹

Another respondent felt that it would be tough for a police officer to do community policing in a place where they were not known. The respondent thought that in order to be accepted and trusted, the officer should stay in the community for a long time, walk around and generally get to know the people who are there.¹⁰⁰

The participants were evenly split over whether they thought community policing was practised in the Downtown Eastside. A few explained that although they thought that it was being practised it was done minimally, sporadically or only by some people. A participant, who said that community policing *was* practised in the Downtown Eastside, felt that there were not enough police officers in the community. They explained that this was just another funding issue for the Downtown Eastside, caused by a disproportionate number of people and problems, for the size of the neighbourhood.¹⁰¹ Another respondent related,

I think it's practised by some people. I think we have a new officer in S and her name is M and she's actually new and she is really good cause people are able to mould her and she's not buying into this business of their private cop. She's actually working in the community. You need to have people with those skills and who are just willing to be open.¹⁰²

Those who thought that community policing was not practised in the Downtown Eastside were quite a bit more adamant about their position. One participant stated,

no, not really. I mean we have the community policing office but to me it's a bit of a token thing right now. It's there and people are welcome to go in there but if you have an emergency. Well I

have to say, I don't know if it quite fits here but, you have an emergency, a lot of people here don't have phones, and we've heard more than once the story of somebody going in to the police headquarters to make a complaint, I've just been wronged or something and being told by the front desk, there's a phone outside, use it. It doesn't sound too much like community policing to me.¹⁰³

Someone else expressed frustration saying,

no, and I think what I've noticed though is that when community policing breaks out anywhere there is somebody who notices and they are very powerful in the police and they have the person moved. And I don't know if they still call it going native but fuck that, going native is good. Everyone should go native, go native in Kerrisdale if you want but go native. That's what community policing is.¹⁰⁴

The question regarding the community role in community policing seemed to take many participants by surprise. Some had apparently never really given it much, or any, thought. This may be the case because, as some analysts have suggested, few resources and little thought has been given to what effective community participation might be and how it could be achieved (Buerger, 1994; Friedman, 1994; Griffiths, *et al.*, 1999). Some saw the community role as being experts in their community, sharing information with the police and others, and being the eyes and ears for the police. One participant felt that the community should "be the eyes for the police," aware of community issues and problems, then provide feedback to the police in order to help them more effectively serve the community.¹⁰⁵ Another explained,

if there is a problem whether it is a person a building, a home, I mean, you sit down and meet about it and everybody shares information. You have different things in place now, the N.I.S.T., Problem Oriented Policing. Instead of going to two hundred calls in a year to the same premises you deal with it

effectively and get rid of it. And that's where the community comes in, the sharing of information.¹⁰⁶

The majority of the participants, however, spoke about the community taking responsibility for itself, taking action and getting involved. One respondent said,

I guess just plain old participation, just get off your butt, get out to a meeting, learn something and tell what your opinion is. Educate yourself a bit, be open minded to understanding these things and not be as directed by your emotional or political leanings. So tolerance and an open mind and really getting involved. That's the biggest problem with these sorts of things is you just can't get the community out. They all sit on their duff and they complain about this system and that system and very few people actually decide I guess I'm going to attend the community meeting.¹⁰⁷

Another stated,

you know, people have got to be told phoning 911 isn't good enough. If you really want to tackle these issues then there needs to be a commitment from you as well. The police can't solve the problems by themselves and nor should they. So their needs to be a real commitment from the community itself and what can you contribute to making the changes that are necessary.¹⁰⁸

A third participant explained,

this is idealistic but the community has a role to learn about policing particularly in the Downtown Eastside. So I guess sort of I don't know how many of these go on but public meetings, forums, they should come to the table as open minded. It goes both ways. If police are going to go into a process and they're just going to say they are just a bunch of useless junkies and we are not going to get anywhere, then the same way is if people come in and say they're just a bunch of pigs.¹⁰⁹

Many saw a significant lack of cooperation and collaboration with the police.

During the analysis of the respondents' answers, a number of significant themes emerged. The themes related to either prominent characteristics of the

Downtown Eastside, or the problems faced on a daily basis by that community. The following chapter provides an analysis of the themes and their relationship to the Downtown Eastside community, the social service providers, the police, and the implications for community policing.

Chapter IV Endnotes

1. Participant number 01
2. Participant number 35
3. Participant number 19
4. Participant number 02
5. Participant number 10
6. Participant number 02
7. Participant number 03
8. Participant number 24
9. Participant number 05
10. Participant number 07
11. Participant number 37
12. Participant number 04
13. Participant number 15
14. Participant number 05
15. Participant number 12
16. Participant number 30
17. Participant number 17
18. Participant number 30
19. Participant number 02
20. Participant number 29
21. Participant number 07
22. Participant number 34
23. Participant number 15
24. Participant number 06
25. Participant number 16
26. Participant number 10
27. Participant number 30
28. Participant number 24
29. Participant number 03

30. Participant number 10
31. Participant number 03
32. Participant number 38
33. Participant number 04
34. Participant number 26
35. Participant number 10
36. Participant number 40
37. Participant number 10
38. Participant number 17
39. Participant number 20
40. Participant number 11
41. Participant number 18
42. Participant number 26
43. Participant number 26
44. Participant number 33
45. Participant number 15
46. Participant number 13
47. Participant number 27
48. Participant number 05
49. Participant number 10
50. Participant number 05
51. Participant number 11
52. Participant number 18
53. Participant number 33
54. Participant number 14
55. Participant number 12
56. Participant number 16
57. Participant number 22
58. Participant number 19
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60. Participant number 28
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67. Participant number 38
68. Participant number 07
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70. Participant number 31
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72. Participant number 22
73. Participant number 27
74. Participant number 22
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95. Participant number 22
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97. Participant number 36
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99. Participant number 33
100. Participant number 04
101. Participant number 11
102. Participant number 12
103. Participant number 27
104. Participant number 17
105. Participant number 18
106. Participant number 04
107. Participant number 39
108. Participant number 05
109. Participant number 29

Chapter V

Downtown Eastside Characteristics and Social Problems

A number of significant themes emerged in the analysis of the participants' responses to the research questions. The major themes can be broken down into two groups. The first can be categorized as prominent characteristics of the Downtown Eastside community. These characteristics are, "tolerance," "politics," "government funding," "individuals," and the distinction drawn between "outsiders and insiders." The second group of themes reflects particular social problems found in the community, such as "poverty," "housing," "the 'dumping' of challenging individuals into the community, particularly the mentally ill," and "drugs." An analysis of these themes confirms that many of the commonly held images of inner cities are present in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Cohen (1985) describes some of these images as,

decayed zones of the inner city inhabited by the old, confused and ill dumped from their institutions and left to rot in broken down welfare hotels...psychotics wandering the streets...barely able to cash their welfare checks, the prey of street criminals and a source of nuisance and alarm to local residents too poor to leave.
(p.227)

Prominent characteristics

The prominent characteristics of the Downtown Eastside community are specific aspects of the community that the police should be aware of when practising community policing in the area. This first group of themes are "tolerance," "politics," "government funding," "individuals," and the distinction between "outsiders and insiders."

The theme of “tolerance” figured prominently in about 40 percent of the participants’ narratives, particularly when they were speaking about the mentally ill population. Usually they were discussing the incredible tolerance people in the community had for other community members’ lifestyles. Frug (1996) explains that people in inner cities have “a capacity to put up with people who seem undesirable, unpleasant, even repugnant” (p.1061). A participant, speaking about cooperation between communities in the Downtown Eastside said,

people in the Downtown Eastside are not prone to complaining about what’s going on or about each other. They tend to tolerate more than demonstrate. You know that could go back to a marginalization factor, it could go back to a fear factor or it could just go to apathy.¹

Someone else, describing the Downtown Eastside related,

I think it is one of the most tolerant communities that I’ve ever worked in. You know we have a lot of recent people that have worked in the neighbourhood in the last few years that have mental disabilities and by and large I don’t think any other community would have tolerated and coped with it as well as this community has.²

A third person, speaking about the mentally ill explained,

they are able to survive here better because there is a higher tolerance for somewhat abhorrent behaviour down here or there is an enforced tolerance because while tearing your clothes off and dancing on the table will get you a serious arrest in the Cloverdale McDonalds, do it in a shelter at Lookout and you are just told to put your clothes on and go to bed.³

More than half of the participants saw the Downtown Eastside as a politically charged place. The politics were perceived to be a serious impediment to the daily

workings of the community, particularly for the service providers. Two particular aspects of this theme, “empire building” and “turf wars,” also stood out.

The political aspects of any community are quite complex with community members striving for power and looking for influence and control over their environment (Scherer, 1972). Most of the participants who spoke about the politics of the Downtown Eastside, expressed frustration at having to be involved in them. Not speaking about any specific level of government, but about how governments in general fitted into the community, one respondent stated,

well I think actually the government agencies, it seems like if you shmooze with the government and you kiss up big time you get all kinds of dollars. But who has the time to be kissing butt all the time and doing that, I mean there’s not enough time to get your own job done.⁴

Another participant, addressing the issue of whether the Downtown Eastside is different from other communities, explained that there were differences of opinion between interest groups with regard to the management of the problems in the community, that made it a more “politicized environment than other communities.”⁵

Someone else, answering the same question said,

whether you’re a right winger and you want to distribute and cut back or withdraw services, or you’re left wing and you want to add services, increase things, those examples. So there’s all those dynamics that go on and the politicization in the partisan thing can happen very readily down here. I think much more often than in more middle class or economically secure communities, just because most people down here, over 90 percent of them, will be dependant solely on either money from the government or services that are provided by government.⁶

One aspect of the politics in the Downtown Eastside, mentioned by a few respondents, was that a number of individuals and agencies appeared to be building their own little “empires” in the community, and that this was problematic. Speaking about the number of communities in the Downtown Eastside, one respondent related,

there are people who are politically active for different reasons. There are a lot of people down here that are genuinely trying to help people and I think there are other people down here that say they are trying to help people and use that guise to build their own little empires. So there is a real mixed bag of people down here, some who don't get along.⁷

Another aspect of the politics was referred to as “turf wars.” A number of the participants spoke about individuals and agencies vigorously protecting their own interests; their “turf.” The participants described a lack of cooperation between service providers, particularly where they offer similar services to the community. Their disagreements could be ideological, or related to the amount of government funding they need. One participant, speaking about how the organizations in the community get along stated,

traditionally not very well, even as far as some of the service providers. There's been a lot of turf battles down here. I don't know, I think some of the turf battles partially come from those that are competing for resources. So when you hear somebody screaming about something else not being any good, you have to say okay, if it financially helps you by saying that, where are you coming from?⁸

The competition for government funding is another prominent characteristic of the Downtown Eastside. This issue was seen as important by more than half of the participants. The provincial government was often cited as contributing to the

problems of the community by fostering a competitive environment amongst the agencies. As one respondent explained,

I think the BC and Federal government contracting policy and practises make it difficult for agencies to work collaboratively if you are concerned about your contract being renewed or not existing because if you have less than X number of dollars you are going to get wiped clean. You're then put in an adversarial role and it makes no sense whatsoever. If dollars were not the issue you would not have the same kind of conflict.⁹

Another participant, whose organization distributes food to the community related,

so on the scale that we deal with there is a lot of competition because it's all the same grants we are applying for, it's all of the same suppliers we are trying to deal with, it's all the same people. It would almost be better to be centralized, however if it was centralized the fear is that the government would get involved and then it would fail. The reason non-profit societies are doing this is because the government couldn't. It's unfortunate, we'd love it if the government could do what they are supposed to be doing but it can't.¹⁰

A third respondent, speaking about impediments to cooperation amongst the service providers stated,

money, probably almost all money. I mean if you look at it, where we fall down in cooperation amongst us is when we're both chasing the same buck. Governments have almost set up a really, really competitive atmosphere and you've got to prove why you are better than this other agency in order to get \$20,000 help for a \$60,000 nurse to come and do some work, its just ridiculous.¹¹

There was a general consensus amongst the participants that individuals, rather than agencies or groups, made the most difference in the Downtown Eastside community. Almost 80 percent of the participants talked about individuals who had a significant impact, often referring to them by name. Many spoke about individual

police officers, particularly front line constables, who were very effective. This is an important aspect of the community policing philosophy. Decisions regarding problem solving in the community need to be made by these constables, as they are in the best position to assess community needs (Kelling and Moore, 1988; Rosenbaum, 1998; Normandeau and Leighton, 1993).

One participant, responding to the question about how the police fit in the community stated,

the police as an institution on the whole, it's pretty slow and unresponsive but there are people in that institutional system that don't operate that way, that are really effective in the community so you are able to achieve a lot of things at the ground level. But some of the overall systemic changes that need to happen don't always happen because the institution never gets it. But I would say for the most part we have been very lucky in who we've had in community policing.¹²

Another, responding to the same question explained,

You know it almost comes down to an individual police officer for me. I've had good experiences down here with police officers and I've had some really bad experiences. Bad in trying to explain a situation getting brushed aside, almost being threatened with arrest, having identified myself and so forth. I've had other great experiences with some members of the police force who just seem to know what to do in given situations and de-escalate it, took the wind out of a potentially bad situation. So its good and bad so that's why I say it comes down to an individual.¹³

Speaking about impediments to cooperation amongst the various social service agencies, a participant said,

there are some very outspoken people down here and I don't say that in a negative way, there are some very strong voices. They have no fear. It doesn't matter who they are talking to, it could be the Pope himself and they're going to hear their views about that safe injection site. It makes no difference and I admire that. I've

never seen a community where people have the right to do that as much as here. They feel so free to speak out and disagree and they are heard. They are not slapped down by the mayor. So its an impediment but its also a big strength of this community.¹⁴

One police officer with the Vancouver Police Department, constable D, was mentioned by almost 50 percent of the participants. Explaining how the police fit into the community, a participant said,

the police have, through the community policing office, had a very positive presence and again some of that may be personality. We actually lobbied for D not to get transferred because there is a great deal of what he does that doesn't result in a charge, a report but it does result in a landlord and a tenant sorting something out. Or somebody who is being a bit of a pain to other people around him cut out, realize that hey if I get drunk and start bullying people then I might get arrested. OK, there's a lot of things that he solves for the public peace that makes those people's lives a little better that week. Next cheque day might be a different story.¹⁵

When asked if community policing is practised in the Downtown Eastside, one respondent stated,

by some members. I think about D and I think that he practises the brand of community policing that I like. He seems to know a lot of people in the community, he's an active player, he's aware of some of the issues outside of the police issues in the community.¹⁶

Another participant, referring to the same constable, remarked that every service provider and client in the Downtown Eastside knew him by his first name; even the clients who "may run afoul of the law." The participant felt that it was unlikely that one would find this familiarity in any other community.¹⁷

The last prominent characteristic of the Downtown Eastside, is the distinction between “outsiders and insiders.” This characteristic was mentioned by 90 percent of the participants. Much of the discussion revolved around the notion that those on the outside of the community could not have any true understanding of what it is like to be a part of the Downtown Eastside community or even know who is a community member and who is not. Important aspects of this characteristic are “predators,” “the media” and “transients.”

Speaking about the addict population, one participant explained,

now people have to understand that most street involved people don't live here. And that's one of the real misconceptions that's put forth. So a Vancouver intravenous drug users study, 1,400 addicts, they are researched every six months. In one semester 67 percent of their addicts left the Lower Mainland. So that should give you an idea of the kind of, just in that group, the kind of incredible mobility in the street population down here. Which certain political groups would like to portray it as a stable group and a stable resident community. So our agency always seems out of sync because we say that people in the Downtown Eastside often live in communities outside of the Downtown Eastside.¹⁸

Explaining why people inside the community dislike the term “skid row,” another participant said,

so I think to be politically correct, no, in the Downtown Eastside it's not a respected name. They reject and dislike the term skid row. I think it's often referred to outside of this area. People will ask you “So what's it like to work in skid row”. So the general populace out there still sees this as sort of skid row. Not as it being furthered some of us referring to it. I think we're much more cautious in the language now and recognizing that people that live here that want to have their dignity intact and essentially be a part of a respected community and would like think it's not a skid row. It's the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. They can look people in the eye without apologizing for the skids.¹⁹

In discussing how well the government agencies fitted into the community, another respondent related that government agencies cause problems when they come into the Downtown Eastside with the attitude that they know how to do things better, and just do what *they* think is best, without consulting with the community.²⁰

About 15 percent of the participants mentioned “predators” in the community. Many expressed a dislike of these “insiders.” Describing various groups in the community, a participant related,

and one of the things that happens is in the midst of all these groups of needy people they create vulnerability so there’s a real need not for us to be protected from you certainly but groups down here often they are addicted they are dysfunctional need as much or more protection as anybody else. We have a thing over here of people who are administrated. They get their welfare payment twice a week, otherwise they’d blow it all, so they’re administrated. We have predators who just wait at that office and as soon as that person gets their \$32, bang, they get a shot in the head and they don’t go to the police.²¹

Someone else, speaking about conflicting community groups in the Downtown Eastside stated,

so when you take a look at that history of the Downtown Eastside and the people who are sent here and at one point when we were dealing with Riverview people were actually being discharged and told to come to the Downtown Eastside where everybody knows you couldn’t find a more vulnerable group in society and couple them with the most fierce predators down here and we put them together and that makes a lot of sense to me.²²

More than 25 percent of the participants spoke about “the media,” another aspect of “outsiders and insiders.” These “outsiders” were accused of having a slanted view of the Downtown Eastside and perpetuating certain stereotypes for their

own gain. A number of people, when asked about the phrase “skid row,” blamed the media for reinforcing a negative view of the community using this term. One participant felt that in using the term, the media showed not only bias, but also a real lack of understanding of Downtown Eastside issues, including the desire of many people to get out of the community.²³ Another expressed their frustration with the media stating,

if I see the media put one more picture of someone shooting up in an alley down here I’m going to throw up. Not because it doesn’t happen but it just continually reinforces that that is the only thing in this community and that is the only thing in that person’s life and that’s the lie that’s all they do day in and day out.²⁴

Fifty percent of the respondents mentioned the third aspect of “outsiders and insiders,” the “transients.” Many felt that these “outsiders” caused a substantial number of problems for the community and that, unfortunately, most “outsiders” portrayed them as being *the* community. The participants explained that “insiders” did not view these transients as part of the community at all, and that in fact felt they gave the legitimate community a bad name. A participant explained,

I definitely think yes and the main difference is first of all that it has a very large group of transients which are located in the midst of everybody else and this gives the perception that there is no or a low sense of community in the area and that people who live in the area have no stake in the area. I would definitely disagree with that. Oh when I say transients, of course you know I’m talking about the drug dealers, the drug users, who frequently do not live in the Downtown Eastside. The typical no fixed address people.²⁵

Another participant, speaking about whether there is more than one community in the Downtown Eastside said,

I think its one community but I think there's two subsets. I think the one is the residents and the business people and the people that are living here and trying to lead a sort of normal existence, and then there's the people that have the business and do their thing. And then the other subset would be the transients that use the community to pick up their drugs, to pawn their stolen merchandise so that they can pick up their drugs, break into the cars and the businesses around here so that they can hawk their stuff and pick up their drugs. And that's a separate community, I think because a lot of those people don't live in the community, they travel into the community to get their needs met and then go back to Surrey or New West or Coquitlam or Burnaby or wherever it is that they live. And I think that the two communities are mutually exclusive. I think there isn't a nice interface.²⁶

In answer to what the Downtown Eastside expects of the police, a participant, explained that they just want to be treated equally. The respondent stated that,

in no other area of the city would we allow such a large group of transient criminals to congregate and impede other businesses and other regular citizens. It wouldn't be allowed to happen. But it's been accepted now for so long that it goes back to the whole "skids" mentality.²⁷

Social problems

The social problems in the second group of themes represent the root causes of crime and are problems that police officers are expected to identify and address while simultaneously adhering to the philosophy of community policing. These problems are "poverty," "housing," "the 'dumping' of challenging individuals into the community, particularly the mentally ill," and "drugs." These root causes, however, are complex social problems the resolution of which may be beyond the capacity and role of individual community police officers.

Poverty was a significant theme discussed by many of the participants. More than one half of them spoke about the lack of money and resources, and the terrible conditions that people endure in the community. Speaking about how the Downtown Eastside is different from other communities, a participant explained,

the social aspects that they have to face on a daily basis, that makes it quite a different community to live in. The poverty, the alcohol and drug issues. Like I said there's a lot of, 6,700, single occupancy rooms and a lot of rooming houses, a lot of poverty. A lot of it focussed in a fourteen block area down here.²⁸

Some of the participants even expressed a belief that there were government policies, designed to keep the poor in one area, which seemed to exacerbate the problem. One person said,

yeah, the problems in the Downtown Eastside are a lot different from other communities because the people that are in the Downtown Eastside have a lot of social problems that others don't see such as poverty, and drug addiction and it's also compounded by the governments efforts to contain the problem.²⁹

Someone else explained,

well I guess this is one of those types of communities that people chose to live in that has a lot of natural hazards or a lot of human hazards and I don't know why but I think its because of the poverty and because of the many of the, what I believe are containment policies.³⁰

Scherer (1972) discusses the community of the poor, living in a culture of poverty, contained by economic walls where people remain trapped regardless of what they do to try to better their situation.

Related to the issue of poverty was the issue of housing. Inadequate housing was believed to be a substantial problem for the community. As Blomley (1997) has

pointed out, “the Downtown Eastside presently contains a large, low-income population, that struggles to secure often substandard housing in the many residential hotels in the area” (p.193). In fact, 70 percent of the participants mentioned housing as a serious concern for the people of the Downtown Eastside. Speaking about where the most consensus is amongst the communities, a participant explained that most people would agree there is a lack of adequate, proper housing for low income persons, the disabled, and the mentally ill in the Downtown Eastside.³¹ Someone else, who works with the mentally ill in the community stated,

if I had to prioritize what I think was the biggest issue that seems to be a problem for the people that we serve and that’s housing. I’ve seen individuals that have been so ill and I have gotten them into subsidized housing and their mental status has improved from a place where they feel unsafe, there’s no locks on the doors its really dreadful.³²

Another participant, describing something they saw as incredibly obvious said,

we need housing. Gee, I wonder what happens if you try and live on the street? Oh, you get sick, what a shock. Like duh! And there’s no money for housing. Not even one week of health care funding in this province is used for housing, not even one week.³³

One aspect of housing that emerged was “gentrification,”³⁴ an issue mentioned by about one half of the participants. Describing one of the main conflicts they saw between the communities in the Downtown Eastside, one participant stated,

how to clean up the streets and develop this community. And I can understand where that’s coming from, a lot of that, because what we don’t want to have is turn it into a gentrified neighbourhood where there is no possibility of the existing residents being able to afford to live.³⁵

Another respondent, also commenting on conflicts in the community explained,

so you've got a couple of camps. There's one camp that's for the development and the gentrification of the area and you've got another camp that doesn't want to see that occur. They want to preserve what's left of the community and the neighbourhood. They want to ensure that the property values don't go skyrocketing and that people don't get kicked out of the SRO's in order to clean the buildings up and raise the rates so the yuppies can move in. And I don't know how to stop that.³⁶

Speaking about the debate over gentrification, Blomley (1996) relates that there are those who would welcome gentrification rather than their current poor living conditions.

Another aspect of housing mentioned by the participants, was the Single Resident Occupancy hotels – the “SROs” – in the community. About one half of the respondents spoke about this type of housing and there were mixed feelings about these low rent accommodations. The participants were torn between the necessity of keeping this affordable housing for people and the reality that many of these hotels are in extremely poor condition. A participant felt that it was “dreadful” that although some SROs in the Downtown Eastside should be condemned, people still lived there because they could not afford to live anywhere else.³⁷ Another participant, talking about their agency's organizational goals explained,

and the other goal we have is getting more SROs in the neighbourhood for homeless people. I don't know if you have been around the Downtown Eastside but there's been a lot of things that are happening right now with the women's centres, its almost completed. The Sunrise is going to be completed in about four months time, maybe even earlier.³⁸

Another important problem identified by the research participants was the notion that the Downtown Eastside had become a dumping ground for particularly

challenging individuals. Cohen (1985) described this as one of the dominant images of inner cities, “garbage dumps for ‘social junk’ lost in the interstices of the city” (p.227). About 40 percent of the participants mentioned this as a serious issue for the community. Speaking to the question of the Downtown Eastside being referred to as “skid row,” one participant answered,

I think when people say skid row that corresponds to this idea that well, the Downtown Eastside you can just throw all the rubbish there and forget about it and let somebody else look after it and we’ll just drive through it on our way to work and not worry about it other than that, and just make sure we don’t go down there after dark.³⁹

One group of people that was most often seen as being dumped into the community is the mentally ill. One respondent explained that,

it’s been a place where a lot of people have been basically dumped. When they downsized Riverview the only short-term emergency space places were down here. So they got loaded down here. There was no long-term plan so people ended up in the hotel system and now you are looking at one in five persons in the Downtown Eastside that are mentally ill and have a mental illness of some sort.⁴⁰

In fact, 70 percent of the participants discussed the plight of mentally ill people living in the Downtown Eastside. Cohen (1985) remarks that the mentally ill “are left alone, repressively tolerated in restricted zones of the city” (p.104). The service providers, particularly those who work closely with the mentally ill, cited a multitude of problems that they have to contend with while trying to deliver their services to this segment of the community. One participant, discussing the challenges they face trying to help stated,

and speaking for the mentally ill, people don't even, though there are a lot of services down here a lot of our individuals, don't get their needs met because quite often a person with a mental illness is quite disorganized and so they don't get the proper health care that they need. They don't recognize when they need something done for their physical health and then they don't seek the appropriate action.⁴¹

Another participant, speaking about whether their organization's goals are being met related,

I think it's a huge mountain to climb because you have a civil libertarian slant to whether people should be on medication or not. So we have a large proportion of the mentally ill in the Downtown Eastside who are not on psychiatric medication because it is their civil right not to be medicated and we take a strong opposing stance to that.⁴²

Explaining why it is not a simple problem to deal with, a respondent said,

so it is very difficult because there's incredible diversity of people down here. Twenty-five percent of the addict population have a mental illness. So it is difficult but all of these people are deserving. And one of the things that happens is in the midst of all these groups of needy people they create vulnerability so there's a real need not for us to be protected from you certainly but groups down here often they are addicted they are dysfunctional need as much or more protection as anybody else.⁴³

Twenty-five percent of the participants mentioned those who had been "deinstitutionalized," a reference to persons in the community who have been released from mental health facilities like Riverview Hospital, often due to a lack of resources for treatment. Explaining how the government saves money and at the same time can be seen as helping people back into the community, Cohen (1985) writes, "money can be saved and benevolent intentions proclaimed. The state thus

withdraws, leaving various deviant and problem populations to be treated like industrial waste” (p.104).

The mentally ill find their way to the Downtown Eastside in a variety of ways.

A participant explained,

with the downsizing of Riverview it was never adequately, the Downtown Eastside was never adequately prepared for the onslaught of individuals who were going to be coming from Riverview and what made it even worse after that was people were deinstitutionalized out into the Fraser Valley. That’s where the money followed them from Riverview out to the Fraser Valley but eventually those individuals found their way down to the Downtown Eastside. The money, however, stayed out in Langley and Surrey but they ended up in the Downtown Eastside. So we just don’t have the resources to help the number of people there.⁴⁴

A few participants also made reference to a group they called the “never institutionalized.” One respondent described these persons saying,

the deinstitutionalization became part of the picture ten to fifteen years ago. Now what we have on the mental health side, what I call the “never institutionalized.” Use that term in your thesis, some day it’ll get accepted. There’s not a lot of literature out there on them but it’s the person fifteen or twenty years ago would have spent major time in a mental institution and become socialized to cope with a mental illness. They don’t get that. Instead they get involuntarily committed when something outrageous happens. So their experience in the mental health system is an arrest under the mental health act, strapped to a gurney with four point restraint, medicated quickly in a hospital emergency ward, then as soon as the medication takes effect they talk nice to a doctor and are revolving doored.⁴⁵

Virtually every respondent mentioned the impact of illicit drugs on the community. Many people, when asked where the *consensus* is amongst the communities of the Downtown Eastside, replied that it was around the issue of drugs.

When asked where the *conflict* is many again said that it was around the same issue. The most common sentiment was that nearly everyone could overwhelmingly agree that there was a serious problem related to drug use and abuse in the community but they could not agree on the solution. One participant explained that drug users are sick people and there is *consensus* in the Downtown Eastside that there needs to be a programme or system helps them recover from their illness.⁴⁶ When asked where the greatest *conflict* between the various communities is, the participant replied,

well, then again, I would say the most disagreement comes in that as well. Because different parts, the different communities want to use the money or the grants they get for those problems in different areas. So if we're talking about drug problems again, the Hastings Community they would like to see all that money go towards DEYAS and all the other social groups that are helping with those problems. Whereas in Gastown here, I think they'd like to see some resources that would not help the drug users find places for safe-shooting sites, but they would like to use the money to create beds for detox and get them on their feet so they could get them off drugs.⁴⁷

The most prominent aspects of the drug theme that emerged were “the drug addicts,” “open drug use,” “the drug business” and “the strategies needed to address the problem” including the “Vancouver Agreement.”

More than 85 percent of the participants mentioned “drug users” or “addicts” as key problems. There were a wide variety of opinions expressed about these community members. One respondent described the range of views saying,

so I think there is a range of tolerances for those people in the community that range from the people that just want to kill them because they think they are a blight on humanity, to the people who want to force them onto a desert island somewhere, to people at the other end of the scale that feel that they just need a

lot of love and that they just need help in turning their lives around.⁴⁸

Overall, however, the participant's attitudes seemed to be that the addicts needed help rather than punishment. This seemed incredibly obvious to one participant who explained,

people addicted to drugs don't stop using drugs because they're illegal, they don't stop using drugs because they get arrested they don't even stop using drugs cause they got some kind of fucking serious, serious illness, they still don't stop. It's astounding.⁴⁹

Another participant felt that, regardless of their political leaning, 80 percent of the community was supportive of drug treatment on demand.⁵⁰ Speaking about the government's efforts to help addicts, a participant related,

you see them spending a lot of money but I just don't see the effects. When you talk to the street level addict, if I ask him if he noticed any services, if things are any better for him and the answer is no. You know they are still waiting for the same detox and treatment centres. But if you speak to the health board, they say they've spent so much money and done this and this and this but the bottom line is that the services are not improving one iota for the street level addict.⁵¹

Another aspect of drugs – open drug use – was mentioned by just under one half of the participants. Mostly they expressed frustration with the amount of open drug use that is permitted. One participant explained that people in the community were frustrated with the open drug use, and surmised that part of the problem was that the police and Crown counsel were being directed to regard simple possession of drugs as not a high priority.⁵² Another respondent, talking about how different the Downtown Eastside community is from other communities stated,

it definitely has its own culture. You treat certain things that you would probably mention something about in another area, such as somebody in a back alley potentially shooting, doing some drugs or something like that, although I make a practise of telling them to stop or move away or do it or find somewhere else do whatever they are going to be doing, but I know that in other communities that I've lived in its been far less acceptable, you know.⁵³

Sometimes referred to as the “open drug market,” more than 60 percent of the participants spoke about the drug business that goes on in the Downtown Eastside. There were mixed feelings amongst the respondents about what should be done. It is likely that many of the concerns came from a realization that if the dealers all go away, the users will not be able to buy their drugs in the community. As the users need to get drugs they will simply move to another community. The result is that the problem will not be solved, just moved.

In response to the question regarding what the community expects of the police, one participant related,

well there is the Downtown Eastside community that wants you to clean up every last street corner and move it all somewhere else. I think people want some kind of lid on the drug business down here. Not necessarily eradicating it but I think that would probably be the number one issue.⁵⁴

Another explained,

because the drug trade is so much a part of that area I think that it's hard for the different communities to get along. Like I've noticed a lot of young Hispanic men that have started to congregate in that area and have been for the last couple of years. And I think there's a lot of negative energy that goes on around the whole drug trade.⁵⁵

A third participant felt that although 70 percent of the drug users and dealers were not from the Downtown Eastside, they still comprised their own tight knit community. The participant explained that there is tension about “the drug scene” within this really “public neighbourhood.”⁵⁶

The strategies needed to address the drug problem in the Downtown Eastside was a significant issue for the respondents. More than 70 percent spoke about various drug strategies and their efficacy. Explaining how the whole substance abuse problem has to be looked at in a different way one respondent stated,

like you could convince someone to use drugs. Like you could convince someone to stop using drugs. It's not an external thing. I think you could supply a lot of external stuff that makes it more likely for someone to stop using drugs like hope, the chance for a new life, some dignity in their daily life. The more degraded they are the less likely they are to stop and there is this really weird bottoming out thing. As if you could force someone to bottom out. People should just let go of that. Bottoming out could be burning the roast for a lady up in Kerrisdale. She'll never drink again she is so humiliated. And for other people they're told they've got AIDS and they still won't, it's not enough.⁵⁷

Speaking about the conflict between the various communities, another related,

I guess the harm reduction issue, as to whether or not that is a successful strategy to pursue. There's going to be a large group of people that are very much against these treatment centres and I guess the ultimate extension of the treatment centre would be a safe fixing site. There's going to be a lot of conflict around this issue as to whether or not harm reduction is a successful strategy in ultimately getting people away from addiction and is that the right direction for the Downtown Eastside to go.⁵⁸

A third participant spoke of how the community would like the police to go after the drug dealers rather than the users stating,

I think that there would be consensus in the community that the war on drugs hasn't worked and that it doesn't do very much to imprison or arrest the users of it and that attention must be made to the suppliers and the importers of the drugs and the people that are profiting from the drugs. And I think that there is consensus that there are businessmen and politicians, in some way, shape or form are profiting from the illegal trade of drugs.⁵⁹

A number of the participants, who spoke about drug strategies, specifically mentioned the "Vancouver Agreement" or the "Four Pillars Approach" which is currently being debated in Vancouver.⁶⁰ About 25 percent of all the participants spoke about this particular issue. For the most part, everyone was in favour of this drug strategy, although some of the participants were somewhat sceptical in relation to whether the government would be successful or not. Expressing a certain reservation about the plan, one respondent said,

I think that the idea of the Four Pillar approach is not bad and I guess because it is such a political bomb that they want to tread softly. But I think that some of the ideas, one of them being that if a drug user goes to drug court he begins alternatively at a treatment centre or going to jail. We have a problem with safe injection sites in that it's illegal so it's hard for us to condone something that's illegal. We lean more towards supporting all the other factors of the Four Pillar approach that deal with the problems that drug addiction entails and involves treating it up to but excluding the safe injection sites.⁶¹

Another respondent, discussing consensus amongst the communities in the Downtown Eastside stated,

ironically, with the exception of the land owners and business owners, the City's Vancouver Agreement, the Four Pillars Approach, has brought several issues around drugs and having to deal with how community services are dealt with, that has brought more agreement than I have seen and I have lived here all my life, than anything I have ever seen.⁶²

The implications for community policing

The various themes that emerged from the research have numerous implications for the practise of community policing in inner cities, and specifically the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Community policing theorists such as John Eck and Dennis Rosenbaum assert that the police must develop an intimate understanding of the unique characteristics of the community they are serving, in order to be in a better position to uncover the real problems faced by that community. Solutions to the problems, they stress, are more likely to come as a result of this understanding (Rosenbaum, 1998). The issues of “tolerance,” “politics,” “government funding,” “individuals,” and “outsiders and insiders” that come out of this research are some of these community characteristics and therefore need to be understood by Vancouver police officers who wish to practise community policing in the Downtown Eastside.

Community policing practitioners should recognize the tolerance that people in the community of the Downtown Eastside have for one another and their differences, and use greater discretion when dealing with the community (Murphy, 1988b). In this way the community standards truly authorize or inform policing priorities. Police officers must, however, guard against ignoring behaviours and actions where victims refuse to make complaints because of fear or intimidation. By developing an intimate knowledge of the community they police and by being close to its inhabitants, police officers will be less likely to make this mistake. Officers

must deal with every incident they encounter on an individual basis and make their decisions based on *all* the information available to them at the time.

Police officers must also recognize that the politics in the community might be an impediment to the practise of community policing, particularly if they are attempting to establish partnerships with community organizations. The officers might unwittingly be used by an organization seeking to build an “empire” or establish “turf.” This could happen if an organization convinces an officer to partner with them exclusively, rather than the officer remaining unbiased and establishing partnerships with all organizations in the community. The fact that many organizations in the community are competing for limited government funding, may also be an important contributing factor in the “turf wars,” and police officers should be aware of this so they can ensure that they are not showing favouritism or bias, and are drawn into the conflict.

The impact of particular individuals within the Downtown Eastside community is important for community police practitioners to recognize, particularly when the individuals are the police officers who work there. It is necessary to realize that these individuals have a certain connection with the community and, as the literature suggests, are in the best position to assess community needs (Kelling and Moore, 1988; Rosenbaum, 1998; Normandeau and Leighton, 1993). Relying on their expertise is crucial when one is trying to solve community problems.

Understanding community dynamics, including who the “outsiders” and the “insiders” are, is also crucial for police officers practising community policing. Determining who the *legitimate* community members are, in order to establish partnerships and help solve community problems, is one of the most difficult challenges the police have to face. The service providers, for example, have an expectation that the police will address problems caused by the “predators” and “transients” in the Downtown Eastside; that is the “outsiders.” The common sentiment was that the predators and transients causing the problems should be sent out of the community and prevented from returning, using every legal means available. It is possible, however, that the police would be accused of showing favouritism for one group over another, if they did focus their efforts on the “outsiders,” assuming that they could determine who the “outsiders” were. Police officers need to ensure they remain as unbiased as possible in their dealings with community members, while simultaneously trying to address the needs of the community as a whole; a somewhat daunting task.

The second group of themes are the social problems experienced by the people of the Downtown Eastside, “poverty,” “housing,” “the ‘dumping’ of challenging individuals into the community, particularly the mentally ill,” and “drugs.” These problems represent the root causes of crime in inner cities and are the problems that community police officers are supposed to uncover and address in the course of practising community policing. Consequently, these themes have important implications for practitioners.

Unfortunately, the root causes of crime in an area like the Downtown Eastside are complex and deeply rooted social problems and, therefore, unlikely to be easily resolved. Indeed, their resolution is probably beyond the capacity and role of the police. For example, some indigent Downtown Eastside inhabitants may commit theft, robbery and other crimes and therefore become a problem for the police to address. The root cause of the problems may be that the perpetrators are living in extreme poverty and resort to stealing or robbery in order to feed and clothe themselves. Their behaviour will undoubtedly continue until the poverty they are facing is relieved. Although the community expects the police to solve the problem, the solution may be beyond a police officer's capacity and role. Police officers, for example, have no ability to acquire more social assistance for people, or to tackle the social structural and other larger economic causes of indigence.

Similarly, police officers practising community policing must deal with homeless people and others who may suffer from a variety of mental health problems. Many people live on the streets and cause concern to others, either by their unusual appearance, or when they display violent behaviour, engage in public nudity or cause other disturbances. These individuals come to the attention of the police because residents and business people in the community call to report them as a nuisance. Although their behaviour often attracts police attention, criminal charges are seldom appropriate. The root causes of their problems might be a lack of adequate housing or a reduction in the number of beds in a psychiatric hospital. The community may have

an expectation that the police will solve the problems caused by these people; however, the real solutions are complex and beyond the control of the police.

Although the possession and trafficking in illicit drugs is clearly a police issue, the larger social problem of addiction is certainly beyond the capacity and role of the police. Police officers who try problem solving, using a community policing philosophy, may find that the root causes of the addiction are much harder to address than just the enforcement of the criminal law. Involving other social service agencies who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to address complex social issues related to substance abuse may be required. Developing partnerships with these agencies may bring about lasting solutions. This approach is also consistent with the community policing philosophy.

Although there may be some initial frustration on the part of police officers practising community policing, real solutions may come as a result of following community policing principles. Consultation and cooperative partnerships with other agencies is crucial to effective community policing. Rather than treating the problem of crime and disorder as exclusively their responsibility, the police must bring together all interested parties including, the various levels of government, social service providers and community inhabitants in order to facilitate problem solving strategies. By facilitating dialogue and helping to develop solutions the police officers become true community partners and co-producers of neighbourhood safety and crime prevention (Grinc, 1994).

Chapter V Endnotes

1. Participant number 03
2. Participant number 05
3. Participant number 38
4. Participant number 06
5. Participant number 31
6. Participant number 10
7. Participant number 07
8. Participant number 13
9. Participant number 22
10. Participant number 20
11. Participant number 27
12. Participant number 12
13. Participant number 28
14. Participant number 26
15. Participant number 38
16. Participant number 33
17. Participant number 31
18. Participant number 10
19. Participant number 13
20. Participant number 27
21. Participant number 10
22. Participant number 12
23. Participant number 19
24. Participant number 24
25. Participant number 03
26. Participant number 33
27. Participant number 04
28. Participant number 08
29. Participant number 19

30. Participant number 27
31. Participant number 11
32. Participant number 36
33. Participant number 17
34. Gentrification can generally be described as a phenomenon that occurs in lower-income areas of cities where property can be purchased at a relatively low price. The character of the neighbourhood changes when people buy up this property and either build a new house there, or renovate the existing one(s). The once lower-income neighbourhood, as a result, becomes unaffordable for many of the residents, and they are forced to move. Blomley (1997) explains that, for some people, it is “class warfare, and the extermination and erasure of the marginalized (p.189).
35. Participant number 27
36. Participant number 33
37. Participant number 36
38. Participant number 01
39. Participant number 15
40. Participant number 12
41. Participant number 36
42. Participant number 11
43. Participant number 10
44. Participant number 11
45. Participant number 38
46. Participant number 09
47. Participant number 09
48. Participant number 33
49. Participant number 17
50. Participant number 10
51. Participant number 04
52. Participant number 31
53. Participant number 20
54. Participant number 15

55. Participant number 40
56. Participant number 30
57. Participant number 17
58. Participant number 07
59. Participant number 33
60. The Vancouver Agreement or Four Pillars Approach is a coordinated drug strategy, which involves three levels of government, the police, criminal justice system and health care professionals. It is aimed at addressing the problem of substance abuse in the city of Vancouver. The four pillars are prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction.
61. Participant number 34
62. Participant number 38

Chapter VI Conclusion

This thesis differs from most contributions to the community policing literature because it has a community rather than a police focus. It is an examination of the concepts of community, inner city community and community policing from the perspective of the social service providers in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. The impetus for the work was the author's involvement in community policing and a desire to help community members realize a meaningful role in the policing of their own communities. Many have questioned the role that communities have traditionally been relegated to in community policing activities (Buerger, 1994; Griffiths, *et al.*, 1999), as well as whether community members want to partner with, or even get involved in community policing efforts (Grinc, 1994). The issue is further complicated by the fact that there has traditionally been animosity between citizens and the police in inner cities (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Buerger, 1994). Left realists add to the discourse, suggesting that in order for the police to be truly accountable to the communities they serve, they must deliver services that the public *demand*, rather than seeing them as merely a source of *information* (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986; Young and Mathews, 1992).

Community

It has been suggested that "community" is a word that has been overused to a point where it has become almost meaningless. Used as a prefix for a variety of social agencies and issues, including community policing, the word is employed to

legitimize and justify many activities such as community work, community care and community organization (Plant, 1996). The word also evokes many feelings and images, some of which are utopian. It has been argued, however, that this utopian vision of community has no basis in fact (Cohen, 1985).

The views of the research participants, with respect to the general concept of community, reflected the literature on the subject. Many participants mentioned the Downtown Eastside as one of the first images of community that comes to their mind when they hear the word “community.” Since most of them claimed that the Downtown Eastside is *their community*, it is not surprising that this was their primary image of community. The geographical or physical aspect of community, the concept of “place,” is a fundamental image in the community literature. Neighbourhoods, territory, and the physical place where people live are believed to be necessary for human existence and make a statement about who we are in relation to the surrounding world (Minar and Greer, 1969; Scherer, 1972; Smith, 1994).

The participants also mentioned common ties an aspect of community that is referred to in the literature. Using words like “common bonds,” “goals,” “interests,” and “values,” they described the gay community and the aboriginal community as examples of communities that possess these elements. This confirmed the views expressed in the literature about the psychological or mental aspects of community, the notion that we all desire to have a relationship with those who share a common fate with us (Minar and Greer, 1969; Poplin, 1972; Cotterell, 1997). The third aspect of community found in the literature – “social relations” or “social interaction” – was

also referred to by the participants. They saw community members “interacting,” “coming together,” “working together” and “networking” in order to establish a community. Community was seen as more than just a neighbourhood, but also involved groups and individuals regularly interacting with one another. Patterns of social interaction, social organization and reciprocal relations between people are seen as important factors in the formation of social order (Wirth, 1964; Poplin, 1972).

The participants’ views on ideal or utopian communities did diverge from the literature on the subject, which tends to describe utopian communities by using images of rural communities from a time in the past when life was purportedly much less complicated than it is now (Scherer, 1972; Cohen, 1985; Foster 1990). The majority of the respondents were either unwilling or unable to accept the notion that there is such a thing as an ideal community. They saw the image as either too value laden or too difficult to define. Many viewed the notion of an “ideal community” as a relative phenomenon and argued that what may be ideal for one person may not be ideal for another. The respondents’ perspectives may be affected by the nature of their own community, the Downtown Eastside, where the living conditions are undeniably less than utopian.

Inner city community

The literature is divided on the subject of inner city communities. One side suggests that these communities are not *true* communities, as they are too disorganized, fragmented and in a state of anomie. Their heterogeneity, bureaucracy and increased individualism are seen to aggravate this condition (North, 1971; Wirth,

1964; Lunden, 1973). Others suggest that the freedom and acceptance of diversity that occurs in inner cities is what attracts people to such locations and is what makes them a community (Park, 1967; Frug, 1996).

The research participant's views support the notion that the Downtown Eastside – as inner city community – *is* a community. They described the community as quite distinct, using words like “cohesive,” “tolerant,” “unique” and “strong.” Community members were portrayed as sharing a common circumstance, and poverty was considered to be a significant unifying factor. Participants described the community as consisting of a wide variety of people, and its homogeneous character was thought to be one of its major strengths. There was also a consensus that the community possessed a significant amount of tolerance for differences. This view is supported by Young (1986) and by Frug (1996) who suggest that the inner city is a place where many communities subsist and that the resultant diversity actually leads to more open and accepting attitudes.

Although they saw their community as possessing many positive elements, the participants were not naïve. They did not imagine that the community was without problems. Many mentioned serious social problems such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental illness that plague the Downtown Eastside. They posited that it was the magnitude of these problems rather than their mere existence that was significant, and that this led to the community being treated differently because it does not measure up to an ideal. Negative labels like “skid row,” used by ill-informed outsiders like the media, were thought to exacerbate the problem. They

were seen to contribute to the notion that the Downtown Eastside is an acceptable place for unwanted people and society's problems to be dumped, furthering the image of the disorganized and fragmented community discussed in the literature (North, 1971). Even with their knowledge of the poor living conditions and numerous social problems in the community, close to one third of the respondents would not commit to whether they thought the Downtown Eastside community was ideal or not. One participant even expressed the paradoxical view that the Downtown Eastside community was not ideal for *her*, but that it may be ideal for those who lived there.¹

The respondents did confirm that elements, such as geography, common ties and social interaction, normally attributed to traditional communities are present in the Downtown Eastside. This supports the view that it truly *is* a community. The community's geographical aspects were mentioned by many of the respondents who spoke about Gastown, Chinatown, Main and Hastings, and Strathcona as neighbourhoods that formed part of the Downtown Eastside. However, there was debate about whether these were segments of a single community or separate communities. This corroborates Park (1925) and Frug's (1996) assertions that while the inner city is a complicated area, it can nonetheless be geographically defined.

The participants also referred to common ties, which they felt helped to bond community members together. The common ties in this community, however, are quite unlike those found in other communities. For example, poverty was thought to be a common tie in the Downtown Eastside and some even felt that it made the community stronger than most communities. Another bond, which the respondents

indicated occurs within groups such as the mentally ill and substance abusers, was portrayed as a kind of solidarity based upon their common plight in an appalling environment. This type of relationship runs contrary to the commonly held belief that bonds of kinship and neighbourliness were likely to be absent or weak in the inner city (Park, 1967a; Wirth, 1964).

Supporting the notion that social interaction and social relations *do* occur in the Downtown Eastside, the participants described a myriad of interactions that take place there, and involving its heterogeneous population. There was a sense that there was an incredible amount of tolerance for behaviours that would not be permitted in other communities. This view runs contrary to the traditional notion that the heterogeneity of urban environments bars *real* social relations and interactions (Park, 1967a; Wirth, 1964). It does, however, support Frug's (1996) perspective that people living in a heterogeneous city are afforded a setting that promotes alternative and real social interactions.

Community policing

The appropriate role of the community in community policing activities has been the subject of much debate (Buerger, 1994; Griffiths, *et al.*, 1999). Some analysts have also questioned the desire of community members to enter into partnerships with the police, or to engage in community policing activities (Grinc, 1994). The fact that partnerships are complex arrangements that mean different things to different people further complicates the matter. Left realists add to the discussion suggesting that the police need to be held accountable to the communities

they serve, delivering services that the community *demands* rather than seeing them as merely a source of *information* (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986; Young and Mathews, 1992).

The participants were, on the whole, complimentary of the police in the Downtown Eastside. Sixty percent of the respondents thought that the Vancouver police fitted well into the community. They described the officers' willingness to listen, their innovative approaches and their caring attitude toward to the community. Individual police officers, often referred to by name, were given the credit for making a difference in the community. In fact, 60 percent of the respondents said that individual police officers were *the* determining factor in whether the police fitted in or not. This runs contrary to the literature, which suggests that the police do not get along well with the citizens in inner cities (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Buerger, 1994).

There are several possible explanations for why the participants' perspectives differ from the literature on community policing. One reason might be that since the literature was written, police departments have been hiring more educated police officers, as well as supporting current officers who are pursuing a higher education. These better educated officers may have read the literature on poor police/community cooperation in inner cities and, as a result, took steps to rectify the problem. Another explanation could be that police departments have turned to community policing as a serious endeavour and now provide their officers with training in how to communicate more effectively and partner with citizens, regardless of the community they serve. A third reason might be that political pressure, as a result of studies such

as Justice Wallace T. Oppal's *Commission of Inquiry Into Policing in British Columbia*,² may have compelled police departments to adopt community policing, and police chiefs have since ordered that their subordinates practice such policing in all communities, including the Downtown Eastside.

Although some participants spoke about the police being a part of the community and treating people fairly, the consensus was that the role of the police was to make the streets safe for the community. Responding quickly when called and enforcing the laws were also mentioned as important police objectives. The participants referred to order maintenance activities such as "keeping the peace" and "showing a presence in the community," which goes against the left realist concept of "minimal policing." Left realists argue against the police involving themselves in order maintenance activities (Kinsey, et al., 1986).

About one half of the participants felt that community policing *is* practised in the Downtown Eastside. Similar to their feeling about the police generally fitting into the community, the common sentiment on both sides was that individuals rather than the police organization were responsible for making community policing work. Mentioning individual officers by name, the respondents expressed the view that these individuals knew the community and served it well. This view is supported by the community policing literature, which asserts that decisions about what policing response a community needs should be made at the front line constable level, as they know the community intimately (Kelling and Moore, 1988; Rosenbaum, 1998, Normandeau and Leighton, 1993). A concern was expressed that there was a

systemic problem in the Vancouver police organization where a certain powerful person was working internally against community policing, by transferring individuals out who got too close to the community.

In relation to the concept of police/community cooperation, many of the respondents felt that the police had come a long way in their efforts to communicate with the community in the Downtown Eastside. More than one half of the respondents thought there was currently sufficient cooperation between the police and the community. The community policing literature shows that community police officers need to take on the role of community partners and co-producers of neighbourhood safety and crime prevention (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986; Grinc, 1994). Many respondents spoke about the importance of the police being accessible to the community. They felt that this accessibility could be accomplished by utilizing more foot and bike patrols, and police officers generally working in the community at a more individual level.

The community role in community policing was seen by the respondents to be more the traditional “eyes and ears” for the police, than one of partnerships. Some participants felt that the community needed to be more aware of what was happening in their own community and to get involved in doing something to help solve the problems there. Some even felt that the community needed to sit down with the police regularly and discuss strategies to deal with larger community problems. None of the participants expressed the sentiment that the community needed to *demand*

police action rather than merely providing *information* as the left realists assert (Kinsey, *et al.*, 1986).

By far the most difficult issue that comes out of this research is the notion that effective community policing involves police officers identifying the root causes of problems in communities. It is posited that the police can address urban decline by using problem solving strategies to address these community issues (Rosenbaum, 1998). The respondents identified the root causes of crime in the Downtown Eastside as poverty, inadequate housing, the “dumping” of challenging individuals into the community, particularly the mentally ill, and drugs. Arguably, these root causes are complex social problems, the resolution of which is beyond the capacity and role of community police officers. This dilemma is faced by police officers in inner cities around the world, but nowhere in the literature on community policing is the issue of a police based resolution of the problems addressed. What should a police officer who is practising community policing do when he or she finds that the root causes of the community’s problems are beyond his or her abilities and mandate?

One solution might be for police officers to ensure that all levels of their police department are involved with the community in the development of problem solving strategies. Another might be for police officers and their respective departments, to take a leadership role in bringing concerned groups and individuals together to work collaboratively in solving the problems. A third solution might be for the police officers to get involved in larger, community-based projects which involve numerous community members and a variety of interested groups. An

example of this is the “Vancouver Agreement” currently being debated in the Downtown Eastside.

Future research

The Downtown Eastside is an extremely interesting community. An incredibly diverse group of people call it *their* community. Most are very protective of it and have come to resent the fact that their community has become the source of a never-ending stream of research projects. As one participant put it, “We are studied to death. At one point I said in a meeting, I’m tired of being Canada’s social experiment and that’s the way we were being treated again and again.”³ So, at the risk of setting the community up for more study, there are a number of areas where further research into community and community policing could be undertaken.

A study of community and community policing could be conducted where the participants are the inhabitants of the Downtown Eastside community. This would likely involve a larger number of participants and would take a substantial amount of time to complete. Similar to this thesis, purposive sampling from groups would be a good approach to take. Deciding who to include as participants could cause some controversy. The groups might include, ethnic and cultural groups, women, substance users, homeless, elderly males from the resource industry, business owners, prostitutes, and drug dealers. The researcher may encounter difficulties in finding participants willing and *able* to be interviewed from certain groups, namely those involved in illegal activities, or those who suffer with a drug or alcohol dependency.

An attempt could also be made to replicate this study in another inner city area. The researcher could pick either another Canadian city, or one from another country and do an international comparison. The city chosen would have to be similar to Vancouver and the same questions from this research would need to be used. Difficulties might arise, however, in trying to find a city with an area that resembles the Downtown Eastside. There might also be problems in trying to make comparisons with a city in another country, where the social welfare system and the organization of service providers may be different.

Finally, a further exploration of the issues surrounding the root causes of crime in inner cities and their resolution by police could be conducted. An examination of inner city inhabitants' perceptions of the root causes of crime in their community and their solutions versus police perceptions and solutions might be a fruitful research direction. Care would have to be taken in the choice of the inhabitants to be interviewed, and the method of selection. Purposive sampling from selected groups might be the best approach in such a study, however, there may be difficulties in finding participants willing and *able* to be interviewed. In selecting police officers to be interviewed, it would be important for the researcher to ensure that participants were chosen from all levels and from a variety of positions within the department.

Chapter VI Endnotes

1. Participant number 16
2. Justice Wallace T. Oppal's *Commission of Inquiry Into Policing in British Columbia* was a comprehensive inquiry into policing in the province of British Columbia that was completed in 1994. The report recommended, among other things, that all police departments in British Columbia embrace "community-based policing" as the appropriate model of policing for the province.
3. Participant number 27

Appendix A Methods

The primary source of participants for this thesis was the *Directory of Services for the Lower Mainland: The Red Book* (Information Services Vancouver 1999).

This source was utilized to identify social service providers who deliver a substantial proportion of their services to the people of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. A map and demographics of this community can be found at Appendix C. Ninety-four service providers were identified. Two other service providers were found on the Internet, one from a referral, and six from the Vancouver Police Department, who supplied their own list of Downtown Eastside community organizations. As a result, 103 potential participants were identified.

Even though most potential participants' agencies provide multiple services, they were grouped according to the category that best described the primary service they provided, or population to whom they provided services. Sixteen categories were created: government; police; First Nations; counselling; substance abuse; social; health (mental); health (other); church; housing; food; women; employment; legal; education; and miscellaneous.

In order to select participants, purposive sampling from each category was undertaken, starting with service providers from the most established agencies. A greater number of participants were selected from some groupings, such as church and health (mental), where there were more service providers represented. Potential participants were telephoned and asked if they wished to participate in the study, then

interview times were arranged. Once the established service providers were interviewed, others on the list were contacted and interviewed. None of the service providers who were contacted refused to be interviewed. In the end, 40 interviews were conducted between May 4, 2001 and July 24, 2001; one person from government, five from the police, two from First Nations, five from counselling, two from substance abuse, one from social, six from health (mental), one from health (other), six from church, two from housing, two from food, one from women, one from employment, two from legal, one from education, and two from miscellaneous. Each participant was asked 27 questions (see Appendix B for the questions) and each interview took approximately one hour. The interviews were recorded on micro cassettes and later transcribed.

The text of the interviews was qualitatively analyzed the participants' thoughts and ideas were compared and contrasted, and recurring themes were identified.

The thesis does have several limitations. Even though there are a number of organizations that provide services primarily to women in the Downtown Eastside, only one person from that category was interviewed. Unfortunately, this service provider was the only one in this category who would return the author's phone calls. Also, as a group, social service providers may have their own biases and political leanings, which might bring into question their understanding of the community and community policing in the Downtown Eastside. Finally, the research was focussed on a single community. This community is arguably a very unique place, with

problems and issues that may not be experienced in other communities, or in any other inner city community for that matter. This leaves some question then as to the generalizability of the research.

Appendix B

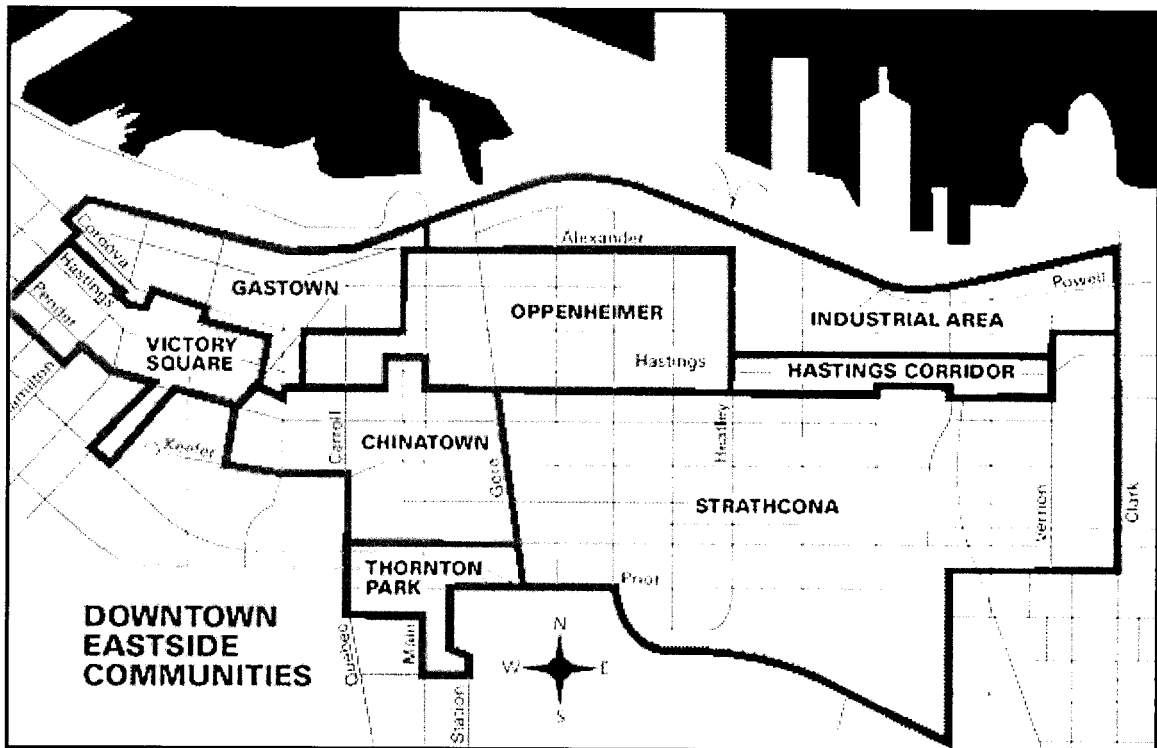
Questions asked of participants

1. When I mention the word community what thoughts come to your mind?
2. Is the downtown eastside community different from other communities in Vancouver? In what way?
3. Is there such a thing as an “ideal community”?
4. How does the downtown eastside compare?
5. How do you respond to the downtown eastside being referred to as “skid row”?
6. Who are the people who make up the community of the downtown eastside?
7. Is there more than one community there?
8. How well do you think the various communities get along?
9. Where do you see the most consensus? The most conflict?
10. What do you see as your organization’s role in the downtown eastside community?
11. How much of the downtown eastside community does your organization represent?
12. Are there persons in the community that you cannot or do not want to represent?
13. What are the goals of your organization in relation to the downtown eastside community?
14. Are these goals being realized? Why or why not?
15. Do the various social service agencies in the community getting along with each other?
16. Are there any impediments to cooperation? What are they?
17. How well do the various government agencies fit into the community?

18. Is there anything you see them doing or not doing in relation to the downtown eastside community that should be changed?
19. How well do the police fit into the community?
20. What does the downtown eastside community expect of the police?
21. Is there sufficient cooperation between the police and the community in the downtown eastside?
22. How could the police foster a better relationship with the community in the downtown eastside?
23. When I mention the word community policing what thoughts come to your mind?
24. Do you feel community policing is currently practiced in the downtown eastside?
25. Do you have any involvement with community policing? How are you involved?
26. What should the community role be in community policing?
27. Do you have any further comments, suggestions or questions for me?

Appendix C Downtown Eastside of Vancouver Profile

The Downtown Eastside of Vancouver is one of the oldest parts of the city and has been described as the poorest postal code in Canada. The City of Vancouver planning department describes it as consisting of eight different communities as depicted in the map below.



(City of Vancouver, 2002a)

The Downtown Eastside constitutes 116 of the city's 11,309 hectares. It has a population of 5,440, 86.9 percent of whom live alone. The average annual household income is \$12,485, with 80.9 percent of the inhabitants classified as low income. 98.8 percent of the population of the Downtown Eastside live in rental accommodations, 64.6 percent of which were built before 1946. English and Chinese

are the two most commonly spoken languages in the community, with 47.4 percent calling English their mother tongue and 22.5 percent Chinese. Other significant linguistic groups represented are French (3.9 percent), Spanish (1.7 percent), Vietnamese (1.5 percent) and Japanese (1.4 percent) (City of Vancouver, 2002b).

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