



BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHEENT
MEMBER OF GRIFFIN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

BALANCING OVER- AND UNDERPOLICING IN DEALING WITH MULTIPLE COMMUNITIES

Marleen Easton

Easton, M., Ponsaers, P. (2010). *The view of the police on community policing in Belgian multicultural Neighbourhoods. New Empirical Data, Theories and Analyses on Safety, Societal Problems and Citizens' Perceptions, Governance of Security Research Papers Series, Volume 3, p. 161-182.*

Codirector GdS - Prof. dr. Marleen Easton - Director GdPS (www.gdps.ugent.be)
Knowledge Transfer Session 2/2011
Scottish Police College, Tulliallan, Scotland 7th-8th September 2011

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MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How does Community Policing does (not) take shape in everyday interactions between the police and ethnic minorities?
How interactions are perceived by both parties (police & ethnic minorities), which expectations they have & to what extent these are congruent with CP, which possibilities and problems they see concerning CP in this context?

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

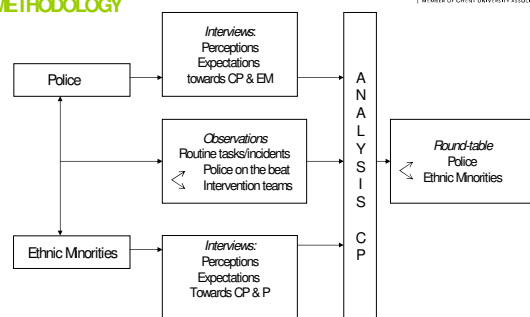
Social constructionism: looking at who calls 'something' a (social) problem and how they define (and explain) this problem (Burr, 2003, Clarke, 2006). Assumption that this construction manifests itself in practice and affects social (inter)action.
Reformulating our research question:
How (& Why) police officers build up their view of the world & people and categorise & label on the basis of these constructions? How does this meaning attribution affects social action?

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METHODOLOGY





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    graph LR
      Police[Police] --> I1[Interviews: Perceptions Expectations towards CP & EM]
      Police --> O[Observations: Routine tasks/incidents Police on the beat Intervention teams]
      Ethnic[Ethnic Minorities] --> I2[Interviews: Perceptions Expectations Towards CP & P]
      I1 --> ANALYSIS[ANALYSIS]
      O --> ANALYSIS
      I2 --> ANALYSIS
      ANALYSIS --> RT[Round-table: Police Ethnic Minorities]
  
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CP= Community Policing; EM= Ethnic Minorities ; P= Police

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SELECTED SITES

5 x 1 case study in 1 neighbourhood in 1 police zone

Criteria for the selection of 5 neighbourhoods:

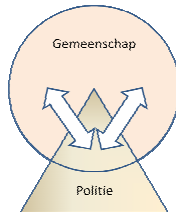
1. Police zones in both the Flemish (2) and the French (2) part of Belgium + Brussels (1)
2. Degree of urbanization of the police zones meaning big (approx. 200.000 Inhabitants) versus smaller cities (approx. 50.000 Inhabitants)
3. Agreement of the Police Chief to do the research
4. Neighbourhoods with different migration flows (short versus long residence history)
5. Is it researchable? Analysis of the context taking into account the work area of the policemen on the beat, the heterogenous nature of the neighbourhoods & the social sector being active in the neighbourhood.

> Impression of the neighbourhoods being studied...



MAIN FINDING

Visual representation of COP –
Poor relationship of police / community



IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

1. 'Over and under policing' of groups, not neighbourhoods
2. 'Over policing' of regular (tough) costumers and not along ethnic boundaries
3. 'Over and under policing' are two sides of the same coin
4. Aversion to the COP discours, yet policemen/women are still acting in accordance with it
5. There is a complex relationship between internal representation and approach in the field



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'IMAGES STREETCOPS on GROUPS' as IDEALTYPES on a CONTINUUM

	← OVERPOLICING	UNDERPOLICING →
Contacts with?	*Known groups *Tangible	*Unknown groups in the neighbourhood *Distance, less 'tangible'
Images?	*labeling, categories *Context information	*Lack of context information *Clichés *Pessimism, suspicious, dominant negative perception
Way of acting?	*Choice out of different practices *Differentiated approach	*Fall back on consensus approach, leans closely to underlying perceptions *Less differentiation

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THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Visual representation of COP –
Poor relationship of police / community

Overpolicing & Underpolicing of certain groups,
not according to ethnic lines!

**Challenge
for the future!**

→

Visual representation of COP –
Optimal relationship of police / community

Police and community build up their images
breathways, no distortion = Idealtyp

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SUPPORT FOR DECISION MAKING

1. *Validating knowledge & approaches in the field of **known** problematic communities.*
2. *Facilitating and stimulating knowledge on **lesser known** (problematic) communities.*
3. ***Two-way communication** between communities and the police*
4. *Reconsidering community policing.*

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