UNDER CONSTRUCTION: EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP IN POLICING AS A CONTEXTUALIZED, ORGANIZATION-LEVEL APPROACH

A dissertation presented

by

Russell S. Wolff

to
The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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In the field of
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

“Partnership” is nearly ubiquitous in policing but remains poorly understood and under theorized. Emerging as the centerpiece of reform efforts following the criticism of “professional” policing, partnership is an expected practice in contemporary law enforcement agencies. However, there are many strategic approaches to policing, each with different implications for how partnership is understood and practiced. Adding to this complexity, institutional theory predicts multiple approaches are expected to exist within agencies, and the variety of internal roles and cultures also anticipates heterogeneity of understandings. This dissertation explored how partnership is understood in policing, using a qualitative case study design to examine this concept in the context of a specific police department in New England, USA. The overall question has three components: how did police leadership conceptualize and frame partnership, how was partnership understood by agency personnel, and how was partnership understood by police and non-police participants in “partnerships” involving the focal agency.

Using a conceptual model based on neo-institutional theory and organizational sensemaking, the study examined a police department highly engaged in the pursuit of a collaborative approach to public safety. This appeared to be the result of a decades-long process in which city leadership and police organizational changes allowed for police leadership to pursue a more expansive idea of police work. Non-police participants generally perceived the department as attempting a new approach to community engagement, not simply rebranding enforcement-oriented practices. Even so, a partnership-oriented culture was not pervasive. Although the priority on partnership was communicated throughout the organization, it was not clearly operationalized across the agency, growing particularly diffuse further down the organizational hierarchy. It was widely recognized that partnership work was primarily focused
at the leadership level and within special units, leaving patrol routines and culture largely untouched. In addition to supportive community voices there existed concerns about the department’s actions in a neighborhood examined during the study, specifically with regard to officers’ treatment of young people of color and unsolved violent crimes. While the department’s partnership work was impressive and likely at the leading edge of the profession, the lack of change to patrol may be contributing to inconsistent messaging in the community.

The stability of patrol in the face of organizational change efforts is well-trodden territory, suggesting that in spite of fifty years of reform efforts in a “community era” the police have yet to fundamentally change the patrol task environment toward a more democratic policing, providing for transparency, participation, and accountability. While more study is certainly needed, the accumulating literature implies that “partnership” may not be the most appropriate rhetoric or vehicle for reform.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I want to express my appreciation and thanks to Dr. Jack Greene, my dissertation chair. Jack’s knowledge of policing and organizations runs both incredibly wide and deep, and I have benefited greatly from his expertise. He worked eagerly with my ideas in the myriad directions they have wandered, trusting that I would eventually corral and harness them to good ends. One could not have asked for a more responsive chair; I was often shocked with how quickly Jack would respond to my drafts with (many) substantive and insightful comments. His support in various administrative matters has also been swift and unwavering.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study is an exploration of partnership in policing. The history of American policing is one of continual reform (Mastrofski & Willis, 2010), and calls for change have been inextricably tied to how the police relate to the world around them. Although the police have always engaged with the community and other agencies and organizations to some degree (Moore, Thacher, Hartman, Coles, & Sheingold, 1999), the extent and nature of this engagement has changed over time. Historically, the police have constructed the “legitimate” community to be served quite narrowly. During the early years of formalized policing in the United States, members of the ethnic group in power were given jobs in the police department, and the department was used to suppress opposition to the current political administration. Until the Civil Rights Era, African Americans were generally excluded, by law in certain states, and systemic processes continue to limit their full embrace within policing as a profession and in the criminal justice system more broadly. Moreover, during the first half of the twentieth century police departments grew increasingly insular, striving to control the narrative of and response to crime and disorder. Only relatively recently—and under intense external pressure—have the police begun to accept a broader idea of community and to acknowledge the important public safety contributions of other agencies and organizations.

Over the last several decades the notion of “partnership” has become nearly ubiquitous within policing (Roth et al., 2000). In the 1960s, claims of professional expertise were undermined by dramatic increases in serious crime rates, and the police had come to be seen by many as an occupying force given highly publicized brutal and biased practices. The police could not sustain their isolation. As laws, social norms, and technology combined to amplify the voices of historically marginalized groups, the police needed a new approach to regain (or
simply build for the first time) their legitimacy as a democratic institution. Partnership emerged as a central focus of these efforts. It was framed as the capacity and willingness of the police to work in good faith with the community (especially minority communities) and outside agencies and organizations in the cause of public safety. Partnership and legitimacy both rested on the police demonstrating the capacity to be inclusive as well as competent.

Although legitimacy research dates back to the 1960s, with theoretical and empirical interest increasing dramatically over the last decade (Worden & McLean, 2017), partnership remains understudied despite its centrality to policing. To be sure, there is no shortage of research involving work between the police and community members, organizations, and government agencies; however, much of this work focuses at the programmatic level examining individual initiatives or types of initiatives and serves evaluative purposes, which assumes a prescriptive idea of partnership that may not characterize how partnership is understood throughout the agency or by its partners or public. Partnership as an organizational-level process, while a powerful rhetorical core of community policing, receives little attention in the research literature.

Partnership is more complex than commonly acknowledged. Here, complexity does not refer (only) to the difficulty of interorganizational work, which is well established in the literature (Gray, 1989; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Rather, it speaks to the idea that partnership’s meaning should be expected to be highly heterogenous. First, implications for partnership differ across approaches to policing. Approaches vary as to their main purpose, expectation for interactions with the community, and the predominant “partners” anticipated to be involved in such interactions. For example, taking four prominent approaches—community, problem-oriented, intelligence-led, and third party policing—one sees some overlap but also clear
distinctions across them. While community policing is focused on supporting community informal social control in highly collaborative ways with a wide range of community partners, problem-oriented policing—a close cousin—more narrowly looks to reduce crime and disorder, engaging community members when they are directly affected by a specific problem. Differences are more apparent when comparing other approaches. Intelligence-led policing is not only even more narrowly focused on terrorism and repeat serious crime, it views community members as either sources of information or groups to be infiltrated through undercover work. Its “partners” are generally law enforcement and emergency management agencies. Third party policing’s purpose is efficiency; it seeks to avoid costs associated with responding to what it the police consider repeat nuisance calls. Expected “partnerships” are coercive in nature, threatening residential and commercial place managers with fines and other sanctions if they do not remedy disorder or crime problems in their apartment complexes or business facilities. Expectations of “partnership” are thus quite contingent upon the approach being invoked. Figure 1.1 summarizes this discussion.

**Figure 1.1 Implications for Meanings of Partnership across Policing Approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Community policing</th>
<th>Problem-oriented policing</th>
<th>Intelligence-led policing</th>
<th>Third party policing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary purpose</strong></td>
<td>Support community informal social control</td>
<td>Reduce crime/disorder</td>
<td>Prevent terrorism, intervene in repeat serious crime</td>
<td>Lower costs to police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction with community</strong></td>
<td>Highly collaborative</td>
<td>Contingent</td>
<td>One-way, invasive</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominant partners</strong></td>
<td>Wide range of partners</td>
<td>Parties to specific issue</td>
<td>Law enforcement, emergency management</td>
<td>Residential and commercial place managers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The situation grows more complicated when one recognizes that multiple strategic approaches likely exist in many police agencies (Greene, 2000). According to an institutional perspective, government agencies like the police are subject to many, often conflicting, demands but have no clear bottom line by which they may be clearly judged. This leads such organizations to demonstrate to powerful stakeholders or “sovereigns” that the organization is legitimate. Legitimacy is based on sovereigns’ expectations for how a police department, for example, is organized and behaves. Packer’s (1964) classic discussion of the competing values underlying approaches to criminal justice (i.e., crime control vs. due process) can be read using an institutional lens through which sovereign’s conflicting views of police organizational behavior can be seen. Departments may experience conflicting pressures from different elected officials and community groups as well as from within the department itself, each suggesting different strategic approaches. Satisfying these various demands can lead police organizations to try to accommodate as many as possible; because there is loose coupling between strategies, actions, and outcomes, it is possible to pursue multiple approaches in the space of a single police department without immediate crisis.

Variation in how partnership is understood is also expected to result from intra-organizational factors, that is, through how personnel make sense of their particular roles. The organizational sensemaking perspective speaks to how people understand their work environments, focusing in particular on identities’ roles in framing what people notice and how they process that information within a social context (Helms Mills, 2003; Helms Mills & Weatherbee, 2006). Departmental actions to accommodate the demands of sovereigns and contextual pressures of specific positions would be expected to shape the construction of organizational roles and influence how they are experienced. Different cultures and role
identities have been observed across organizational components as well as within the same assignment, such as patrol units working in different beats or at different times (Hassell, 2007). How personnel make sense of partnership is thus likely to differ depending on their role. Role identities almost certainly interact with other professional identities. Research has also demonstrated effects of the police occupational culture (Herrington, 2012; Loftus, 2010) as well as differences across police organizations (Cordner, 2017).

These sources of heterogeneity suggest the need to explore partnership organizationally rather than through a narrower programmatic lens. Given the highly structured hierarchical nature of police organizations, it is important to consider how agency leadership conceptualizes and communicates about partnership internally as well as with outside stakeholders. While meaning can be constructed in many ways, police leadership would also be expected to engage in purposeful sensegiving (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Sensegiving refers to intentional efforts to shape others’ sensemaking in particular directions.

In recognition of this complexity, the present study explores how partnership is understood by police and their collaborators. The issue is broken down into three components. First: How is partnership framed at the organization level? This focuses on the top of the organization. How does top leadership—focusing primarily on the chief executive—conceptualize partnership and seek to communicate this vision within the organization and in the larger community? Second: How is partnership understood within the organization? Do understandings reflect the executive’s vision, and what other factors might influence understandings of partnership? Third: How is partnership understood within relationships involving the police? This question explores how police and non-police members of a partnership conceptualize partnership and perceive their experience working together.
The study uses a conceptual framework built upon Crank’s (2003) model merging new institutional theory and Giddens’s model of human action and incorporates organizational sensemaking theory. The framework guided the study by explicitly considering how sensemaking about partnership may be influenced by institutional and local contextual factors, powerful “political” influences (sovereigns), the heterogeneous nature of police personnel roles, leadership’s purposeful communication strategies (sensegiving), organizational structures and processes, and various identities.

Employing a case study methodology, this study examines the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) in Massachusetts. The CPD is located in a city with a progressive, politically vocal populace, which suggested that the department would need to be responsive to community demands. Indeed, the department has a reputation for being actively engaged with its external environment. Along with its size (more than 300 personnel), these features were expected to provide for a department that would be familiar with the notion of partnership and would have a variety of such relationships to discuss and observe.

A qualitative approach was used, primarily involving interviews with CPD personnel and their “partners,” and also including ride-alongs with officers, observations of meetings, and review of various documents (e.g., news articles; reports by the CPD, city, and other parties; and departmental and partnership materials). (The methodology is fully described in Chapter 4.) Data collection began with the department’s chief executive, the police commissioner, to understand his ideas about partnership and his efforts to shape how his personnel and people outside the department would view it. The study next explored how CPD personnel understood partnership, taking particular note of perceptions of the commissioner’s sensegiving, various structural
factors, and the influence of professional identities. Findings from data collection in the department are discussed in Chapter 5.

This phase also provided a wide range of potential partnerships from which to choose for further examination. Three were selected based on their close association with the commissioner’s vision of robust engagement with city agencies, service providers, and the public. It was hoped that they would therefore provide an in-depth empirical example of his approach. These include the assignment of a police liaison to the city’s GLBT Commission; the Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative, a multi-organization case management approach to youth at-risk for or active involvement in unlawful behavior; and the CPD’s relationship with The Port neighborhood, which was explored as an example of a classic community policing approach between a department and its neighborhoods. Each “partnership” is profiled in detail (Chapters 6-8). Chapter 9 looks across the partnerships, grounding the analysis in the findings from the CPD discussed in Chapter 5. Lastly, Chapter 10 addresses the implications of this study for police practitioners and researchers.
CHAPTER 2: PARTNERSHIP IN CONTEXT

Partnership is not a concept limited to policing, of course. Working together is the very nature of social interaction, and the notion of purposeful joint action involving government also has a long history. “Partnership” can evoke idyllic images of people striving in concert toward the common good. Although this is one possible scenario, it is not the only one. A closer look quickly raises questions about the nature of the goals sought and who are expected to benefit; partnership can flow from many ideological springs. Its ability to navigate different waterways is connected to the fluidity of its terminology and its agnosticism regarding its own ends. Democratic principles arguably compel partnership in the American policing context to be highly inclusive and oriented toward providing the widest possible public safety benefits, but partnership has been justified and operationalized in many ways within policing. These meanings and practices have been influenced both by perspectives from outside the profession as well as within it. This broader context must be grappled with to begin to appreciate the complexity embodied by partnership in policing.

This chapter delves into partnership’s complexity, arguing:

- Partnership can accommodate the values of various political and economic perspectives that advocate for different visions of the role of the state in governance;
- In both lay and professional contexts, partnership has many possible meanings and connotations;
- Partnership became prominent in policing in response to pressures for community empowerment and improved agency performance in achieving public safety goals; and

PARTNERSHIP IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historically in the United States numerous rationales have been put forth for public engagement and interorganizational relationships that are often labeled “partnerships.” Since Independence, American political (and related economic) movements have emerged from
ideological disagreements over the appropriate locus of governmental power. While some conceptualizations of partnership are directed toward inclusion, representation, and empowerment, others stem from political ideologies and related economic movements supporting a limited role for government.

Focusing on the last half century in the American context, federalism has been connected to ideological movements concerning the nature of public administration in ways that are important to partnership and policing. Federalism refers to a system of government in which sovereignty is shared between two or more levels of government (Boyd & Fauntroy, 2000, citing Wilson and DiIulio, 1995). The U.S. Constitution describes a governmental structure in which a central government and state authorities have distinct powers as well as certain areas of overlap.¹ This was a compromise reflecting disagreements among the Founders about the appropriate amount of power for a central government, with some wary of empowering a new monarchy by another name. While the Constitution does not mention local governments specifically, states have the power to enable authorities at the local level, making local governments an important level of federalism (Boyd & Fauntroy, 2000). Mistrust of centralized power, Constitutional accommodations to the states, and resulting state actions to further decentralize led to a highly localized manifestation of American policing.

The nature of interaction across levels of government, also known as “intergovernmental relations,” is dynamic, with implications for service provision and partnership. For example, in the early 1900s, the federal government was heavily involved in the provision of direct social services. By mid-century, though, the federal government began to work more closely with non-

¹ The foundational sources of American federalism are Article I, Section 8, which describes various powers given to Congress, and the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which reserves other undelegated powers for the states: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”
governmental and for-profit organizations to address challenging social problems at the local level (Agranoff, 2012). While based in part on a problem orientation (i.e., eschewing organizational or sectoral territoriality to focus on the problem comprehensively), this shift away from the state’s monopoly on service delivery and programming was associated with a political movement seeking a more limited and business-oriented view of government. “The collective empowerment activated by these programs (e.g., demands for safety net programs, voter registration drives among poor minorities) raised the ire of local elites and politicians (Clark & Hopkins, 1969)” (Jurik, Blumenthal, Smith, & Portillos, 2000, p. 296). The next two decades saw partnership reined in once more. Policy makers and funders emphasized local initiatives and control and individual empowerment by one’s own initiative instead of through state assistance. Jurik and her colleagues note that “[s]uch modifications are consistent with conservative agendas of individual responsibility and neoliberal communitarian concerns with the responsibilities rather than rights of citizenship (Etzioni, 1993; Harvey, 1996)” (Jurik et al., 2000, p. 296).

“New Federalism” refers to a dynamic political movement starting with the Nixon administration that over the last half century has reenergized constituencies advocating for primacy of the states in addressing state and local issues. Versions of this movement have encouraged entrepreneurship in local government and cross-sector collaboration (often labeled public-private partnerships). Typically associated with right-leaning political ideologies, federalism and the new federalism intersect with movements to shrink or privatize areas of government. The international “New Public Management” (NPM) movement at its height of popularity two decades ago was translated to some degree in the American context as “reinventing government” or REGO (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), which became the pet policy project of Vice President Al Gore during the Clinton Administration. Most versions of the NPM
sought to introduce to the public sector an ethic of greater competition, the use of private sector managerial techniques, greater focus on results rather than process, explicit performance standards and measures, and an emphasis on reining in resource use (Hood, 1991, pp. 4-5). This fit with ideas promoting devolution from central government control. As local and state governments have had to work with reduced federal assistance—to “do more with less”—local agencies and their managers have been under pressure to problem-solve in creative (read: private sector-oriented) ways.

The purposes of partnerships can differ depending on underlying ideologies that affect meaning and intended outcomes. For example, advocates of the NPM as well as public governance approaches can claim benefits, as assumptions from both ideological camps can be found in public-private partnerships (Bovaird, 2010; Klijn, 2010). Focusing more on the political “right,” Linder (1999) addresses distinctions based on neo-liberal versus neo-conservative arguments about the role of the state. While both privilege the private sector in relationships with government (Linder argues that most free market advocates recognize some legitimate, if minimal, role for the state), the former tends to do so because it views the market as a more efficient mechanism for achieving social goals. In policing, this could be reflected in relationships with private security and technology firms or consultants, who would model a market-driven management style while focusing the police department partner on new technology rather than “softer” community engagement work. On the other hand, the neo-conservative position objects to the reach of government, which distributes too much to the “undeserving” while engaging in too much taxation. Here, the police might be pressured to partner because of budget cuts inspired by the desire for government “to do more with less” (p.
Thus, whether across or within ideological categories, public-private partnerships can be understood and used in diverse ways.

The same dynamics are seen when looking to criminal justice more narrowly. Taking a page from social movement and organizational change literatures, Jurik et al. (2000, p. 294) argue that “change agendas of partnerships may be progressive, reactionary, or some combination of the two. Change goals may involve their own contradictions from the outset.” They “suggest that partnerships in general, and criminal justice partnerships in particular, often entail contradictory goals aimed simultaneously at empowering and reinforcing domination (Crawford, 1999)” (p. 294, emphasis added). For example, working closely with a particular neighborhood group that represents the interests of a more organized group with higher social status might be seen as accomplishing both community engagement and further marginalization of groups historically receiving biased treatment. This complexity of partnership suggested here will be crucial to remember as we now look to the variety of conceptualizations of partnership in policing.

**PARSING PARTNERSHIP: DEFINITIONAL CONCERNS**

Partnership is not an idea or practice limited to policing, nor is it new. It is, however, a widely inclusive and elastic term. A central challenge of studying partnership, whether involving the police or other organizations and sectors, is defining it. There is no consensus on a definition (P. Williams, 2012), and a multitude of related terms (e.g., collaboration, cooperation, coordination, alliance, network, coalition) are often used either interchangeably with partnership and with insufficient clarity (Crawford, 1997; Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008; Drew, 2011; Huxham, 1996; Rosenbaum, 2002). The study of partnership is therefore complicated by the different labels associated with it and the variety of meanings.
Let us first step back to consider partnership at a basic level. It can be used as different forms of speech (noun, verb, adjective) allowing for variation in the term’s referents: an individual (a partner), a group (partners, partnership), an approach (partnership), or an action or process (partnering, partnership). It can therefore represent both state and process. The term also exudes a multitude of connotations in addition to more formal definitions in both lay and professional contexts. Dictionaries generally provide a minimal explanation suggesting an association or relationship of some sort (“the state or condition of being a partner; participation; association; joint interest”\(^2\), “the state of being a partner: PARTICIPATION”\(^3\)) and a minimal legal definition (“a legal relation existing between two or more persons contractually associated as joint principals in a business”\(^4\)). Looking at “partner” more closely, in noun form, it refers to a wide range of identities, including “a person who takes part in an undertaking with another or others, especially in a business or company with shared risks and profits,” a participant in a dance couple or game, one of the people in a married or established unmarried couple, a person with whom one has sex, and an outdated dialect-based way to greet someone (i.e., “Howdy, partner!”).\(^6\) The verb form (to partner or partnering) tends to turn these identities into processes of association. It can, of course, refer also to the police officer with whom another officer regularly rides, walks, or works on patrol or other assignments.

Considering the coming discussion of the extent of partnership’s ambiguity, it is useful to acknowledge the existence of a negative case (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013), a context in

\(^4\) Ibid fn (merriam-webster) \\
\(^5\) Suggesting just how diverse are the meanings of this term, one source noted partnership also refers to an event in cricket: “The number of runs added by a pair of batsmen before one of them is dismissed or the innings ends: ‘their 176-run third-wicket partnership’” [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/partnership](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/partnership) accessed 11/28/17 \\
\(^6\) [https://www.google.com/search?q=online+dictionary&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-1#dobs=partner](https://www.google.com/search?q=online+dictionary&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-1#dobs=partner) accessed 11/28/17
which partnership does possess a much higher degree of clarity and solidity. In the parlance of
business and law, “partnership” describes a specific type of relationship with financial and legal
obligations attached. Matters related to formation, governance, liability, and dissolution are
relatively fixed by state and civil case law (Balouziyeh, 2013). A “general partnership” denotes
two or more owners with equal control over operations and profit sharing, as well as personal
responsibility for debts incurred by the business. “Limited partnerships” involve at least one
general partner but also at least one “silent” partner who contributes financially without
responsibility for daily operations, the advantage being that limited partners do not then face
personal exposure to debt or other liabilities of the business. Finally, “limited liability
partnerships,” commonly referred to as LLPs, do not have general partners at all—every partner
is a limited partner. This is a structure often used by professionals (e.g., lawyers, doctors) to
shield themselves from the debt or other obligations (e.g., malpractice suits) taken on by other
partners. In the U.S. context, states require certain forms of paperwork, record-keeping, and
processes associated with these designations.

Partnership in the business context is perhaps the most highly specified of the
organization-based uses of this construct. While “partners” may come from diverse backgrounds
and fields, law and finance serve as the lingua franca. The purposes and informal dynamics of
such partnerships are also wide ranging, but the rules governing the basic relationship are clearly
explicated and often guided by lawyers who possess this specific expertise and are fluent in this
tongue. These arrangements are highly regimented in terms of legal requirements and have
tangible repercussions for violating terms of these agreements. The formal structures and rules
are thus closely specified, while also subject to change over time. The law treats these
partnerships as contracts, without explicit reference to vaguer social dynamics like trust or
quality of communication that are seen as critical factors in other conceptions of partnership. Outside of business organization partnerships, the basis of expectations of partnership shifts from legal to less formal normative concerns, depending on the context.7

Relationships between the state and private industry—now typically called “public-private partnerships”—have ancient origins, dating back to “pharaonic Egypt, Imperial China and Rome, both imperial and republican, and . . . carried over to the developing European states” (Wettenhall, 2010, pp. 18-19). Moreover, cross-sector efforts to shape social policy are not limited to relationships involving the state. “Social partnership” is a term that has been used to denote such endeavors (Waddock, 1991). Whatever the scope or combination of sectors, partnership is an international phenomenon, particularly during the last half century. Although conceptually public-private partnerships could apply to any interaction between state and non-state entities, generally the term is used to refer to infrastructure projects and are therefore akin to the business partnerships discussed above in that they are formalized and contract based.8 In the United States, there is federal and state-level policy and regulation of public-private partnership that cover transportation and construction-related projects. As of early 2017, thirty-six states and the District of Columbia had legislation enabling either “horizontal” projects (i.e., highways or similar transportation), “vertical” projects (e.g., hospitals, schools, other “social infrastructure”), or both (R. H. Edwards, Jr. et al., 2017, p. 246). The Federal Highway Administration in U.S. Department of Transportation provides, among other supports, a non-binding “P3 toolkit” containing exemplary procedures and recommendations for public entities.

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7 Since 1998, the United Kingdom has legislated mandated partnership between police and local government agencies through the Crime and Disorder Act. However, this is an unusual situation, as most countries do not have legal requirements for local police to engage in partnerships (Hipple, 2017).

8 Although Wettenhall (2010) does argue that the “partnership” in P3 should still be expected to reflect some emergent character. He notes that for many P3s, “the degree of collaboration may fall short of real partnership” and suggests that the more general term “mix” be used for intersectoral projects, reserving partnership for relationships that specifically warrant the label (p. 21).
modelled around highway projects” (R. H. Edwards, Jr. et al., 2017, p. 254). Because this term tends to be use more frequently for such projects, it is not used here as a general descriptor of relationships between the police and private entities.

It is helpful at this point to ground the discussion by looking at an example of a definition that brings us closer to how partnership is likely to be commonly understood. The example provided below includes elements frequently cited in descriptions or definitions of collaboration and partnership. Guiding their compilation of the collaboration literature, Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001, p. 4, italics removed) offer the following:

Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

Furthermore:

The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

The relationship and group itself are distinguished from one another, with “collaboration” referring to the “dynamic relationship defined above” and “collaborative group” referring to “the set of organizations that joins together in collaboration.” “Partners” or “members” refer to “the individuals who represent collaborating organizations” (p. 5).

Mattessich and colleagues reviewed the collaboration literature with the goal of identifying “What factors influence the success of collaborative efforts among organizations in the human services, government, and other nonprofit fields?” (p. 63, italics removed). Their meta-analysis led them to identify twenty factors grouped into six categories that were reported

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9 Although some writers do use the term in the policing context (cf. Desmond & Valdez, 2012), it is avoided here for the sake of clarity.
to positively influence a collaborative effort’s success. These are displayed in Figure 2.1 and discussed below.

**Figure 2.1 Factors Associated with Collaborative Success, by Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental characteristics</td>
<td>• History of collaboration or cooperation in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Favorable political and social climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership characteristics</td>
<td>• Mutual respect, understanding, and trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appropriate cross section of members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Members see collaboration as in their self-interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ability to compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process and structure</td>
<td>• Members have a stake in both process and outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multiple layers of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appropriate pace of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>• Open and frequent communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Established informal relationships and communication links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>• Concrete, attainable goals and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unique purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>• Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Skilled leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Mattessich et al. (2001, pp. 8-10).

The first of the six categories, “*Environmental characteristics* consist of the geographic location and social context within which a collaborative group exists. The group may be able to influence or affect these elements in some way, but it does not have control over them” (the information in this paragraph is from Mattessich et al., 2001, pp. 12-28). The individual factors (history of collaboration or cooperation in the community, collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community, and favorable political social climate) speak to the idea that partnership work does not take place in a vacuum.

“*Membership characteristics* consist of skills, attitudes, and opinions of the individuals in a collaborative group, as well as the culture and capacity of the organizations that form
collaborative groups.” This group of factors (mutual respect, understanding, and trust, appropriate cross section of members, members see collaboration as in their self-interest, and ability to compromise) conveys the importance of having the right people “at the table” for the right reasons with a certain degree of flexibility. Adequate time and effort must be put forth to learn about each other to develop strong relationships.

“Process and structure refers (sic) to the management, decision-making, and operational systems of a collaborative effort.” The factors in this group (members share a stake in both process and outcome, multiple layers of participation, flexibility, development of clear roles and policy guidelines, and adaptability) focus on members’ sense of “ownership” for the partnership at multiple levels of participating organizations and a clarity of roles and rules with the ability to change these as needed over the course of the partnership’s life.

“Communication refers to the channels used by collaborative partners to send and receive information, keep one another informed, and convey opinions to influence the group’s actions.” Open and frequent communication and established informal relationships and communication links speak to the need for all voices to be heard and members to be able to relate to one another on a personal level.

“Purpose refers to the reasons for the development of a collaborative effort, the result or vision the collaborative group seeks, and the specific tasks or projects the collaborative group defines as necessary to accomplish. It is driven by a need, crisis, or opportunity.” Having concrete, attainable goals and objectives, a shared vision, and a unique purpose are important to being able to address the issue or problem bringing the group together.

Lastly, “Resources include financial and human ‘input’ necessary to develop and sustain a collaborative group.” Challenges faced by a partnership are exacerbated if it is operating
without sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time as well as skilled leadership. These factors emphasize that partnership takes energy and requires sufficient fuel to propel it.

The foregoing underscores that much is known about partnering and collaborating across organizations, with research considering a seemingly comprehensive set of topics critical to the operation of interorganizational collaboration. This begs the question: if so much is known about what drives the success of partnership, why don’t we simply apply these lessons to the policing context? First, the definition and success factors described are based on a prescriptive idea of partnership or collaboration. It assumes a relationship that is “mutually beneficial,” that it has “well-defined relationships,” and involves shared vision, commitment, authority, accountability, and rewards. While these features are perhaps quite reasonable and, moreover, found to be predictors of “success,” they reflect a particular outlook and may not reflect the empirical experience of “partnership” or “collaboration” or what police personnel or their partners understand or expect of such relationships. Certainly, they may reflect these experiences and understandings, but this cannot be assumed a priori, as partnership exhibits a high degree of versatility.

A related and perhaps distinct concern is the question of whether “successful” partnerships represent “successful” policing in a democracy. The salience of this issue is highlighted when we recognize that several policing approaches, each with different views of partnership, may be present within a single department. Would all forms of partnership require or benefit from attention to the framework presented above? Moreover, would they conflict, perhaps leading one partnership’s success to impinge upon that of another? The policing literature is mostly silent on how multiple approaches operate within an individual organization.
Partnership’s complexity is demonstrated by its capacity to be understood along a spectrum from a stand-alone, apolitical tool, one among many options to use in the service of problem-solving, to a philosophical or strategic organizational approach. As a tool, partnership may be used to simply denote people from two or more organizations working together for some purpose. However, such a view may be problematic. Even when more formally regulated as in the business climate, partnerships are inherently loaded with values. The act of people or groups working together speaks to foundational legal statuses allowing for such relationships (Jim Crow is just one of many examples of law prohibiting such relationships). Even within more democratic environments, the specific participants and what they are working toward are statements about who is considered a legitimate partner and what is a legitimate topic for discussion, especially when the state is a participant.

Further, partnership, and its cousin collaboration, is argued by many to be more than a series of transactions or a simple work-group. Kagan (1991, p. 1), for example, argues that one of the common “misuses” of the term collaboration is the tendency to “confuse collaboration with strategies used to achieve it.” In other words, in this view, the group often labeled as a “partnership” or a “collaboration” is only a means to pursue a kind of special relationship among organizations that is characterized by emergent properties such as trust. Misuse of these terms can be purposeful when a participant’s goals are co-opted and efforts to address the original concerns are redirected. However, it may reflect an easy shorthand or convey a hopeful optimism about the group’s chances for success.

But even if understood as possessing particular values and as a process reflecting emergent qualities among members, partnership can remain disconnected from other organizational processes. Another way of looking at partnership is to extend a process-based
understanding to the organizational level, where an idea of partnership guides organizational strategy and practice. For example, rather than treating partnership primarily as a way to solve a particular problem through a grouping of relevant organizations, the organization may consider how other organizations and actors may be affected by its actions, engage outside entities in planning and decision making as a matter of standard practice, work to establish a cultural expectation of collaboration, and cultivate skill among its personnel related to functioning effectively in such an environment. In this scenario, partnership becomes a lens through which to view and assess organizational structure and behavior. In essence, this is what has been demanded by external advocates of police reform since the 1960s and gained more widespread rhetorical support by police leadership in the 1990s. Despite these pressures and the embrace of community policing, partnership is overwhelmingly treated programmatically rather than strategically.

In a rare example of partnership being considered holistically, Wood and Bradley (2009) report on the Nexus policing project being implemented in New South Wales, Australia. They describe an attempt to infuse policing with the ethic of partnership:

[A] commitment to policing through partnerships firmly expresses a commitment to engaging in new, more meaningful and more democratic forms of interface with others. As well, a commitment to partnerships is surely a commitment to continuous learning, involving more than the application of previously designed best practice, but also the application of “best thinking” that enables police officers and their partners to exhaust the opportunities for what is thinkable and what is doable. Normatively, partnerships are surely about increasing deliberative processes among those who can make a difference, and most importantly, among those whose knowledge and capabilities have been previously unrecognised or untapped. (Wood & Bradley, 2009, p. 142)

This conceptualization of partnership is theoretically and empirically grounded in the collaboration literature and embodies the ideals of community engagement. Unlike many
initiatives, this is not focused on a narrow public safety issue but on developing a systemic approach to policing that is grounded in public engagement.

**PARTNERSHIP IN POLICING**

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the police existed in a less formalized municipal and service provision environment. Police departments provided a wide variety of services (e.g., running soup kitchens, housing the homeless, finding immigrants jobs, inspecting buildings, fighting fires, etc.) that were only later reallocated to other agencies and were, therefore, quite intimately connected with the community (Miller, 1999; Walker, 1998). However, the police’s immersion in their communities was typically in ways better characterized as crooked than collaborative. They explicitly carried out the orders of powerful political constituencies; the array of services provided was oriented toward pleasing particular clients rather than for the benefit of public safety (Carte & Carte, 1975).

Policing was “hopelessly unprofessional, inefficient, and corrupt” (Walker, 1998, p. 54), performed in ethnically parochial and ethically compromised ways, due to entanglement with local politics. Elected officials staffed departments with members of their own ethnic group as spoils, and personnel typically turned over with the election of a new politician. Police services were delivered in ways that favored the group in political power. Votes were also secured through blunter means, as the police were deployed directly by political bosses to engage in vote rigging, including suppression of opposition votes through violence (Walker, 1998). Moreover, distrust and hostility were common even between the police and members of their own ethnic group (Walker, 1984). The police were also critical to the oppression of African Americans before and after then Civil War. In the South before the abolition of slavery, policing was generally the province of “slave patrols,” directly focused on apprehending and returning African
Americans that had tried to leave bondage and empowered to do so with a wide mandate by the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. After Emancipation they propped up shameful Jim Crow policies. It is important to emphasize that, even after slavery, the periodic benefits of machine politics for various ethnic enclaves did not reach African Americans. Not only did they not share in this political largesse but continued to be the target of racist violence, often by or with the imprimatur of the police (Equal Justice Initiative, 2015; H. Williams & Murphy, 1990).

During this period, the purpose and value of the police served narrow swaths of the public very much at the expense of other groups not in power at the time, and African Americans in particular were actively victimized and typically left without recourse to official government resources in response to victimization or related to other public safety concerns. In response to local political corruption, if not recognition of the need to afford African Americans equal treatment, the police were swept up in the Progressive movement to reform government by striving to hermetically seal the police from overt political control.

**Progressive Era Policing**

The Progressive agenda sought to rein in the perceived excesses of government administration. This movement “began the pivotal process of transforming the administrative arms of government around the norms of professionalism, efficiency, scientific management, and administrative management” (Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006, p. 77). Progressives helped establish processes—the referendum, recall, and initiative—intended to make elected officials more accountable while keeping the citizenry at arms-length once they were in office. “In the Progressive program of reform, citizens were expected to vote for representatives, use the three new mechanisms for changing laws and elected representatives, but otherwise leave the administration of government services to the professional experts” (Cooper et al., 2006, p. 77).
Similarly, policing sought community participation in the form of making crime prevention, detection, and investigation easier for the police, not by involving the public in strategic or operational decisions (Moore & Trojanowicz, 1988).

Reformers strove to re-orient the police toward the “professionalism” being driven by Progressives in local government. Professionalization tied policing to the rule of law rather than particular officials or groups and by introducing a merit system of hiring (Kelling & Moore, 1988). It narrowed the police mandate to focus on crime suppression and to do so “objectively and scientifically, free from political influence; and authority within the department should be centralized and rationalized” (Sklansky, 2011, p. 1). Advances in technology helped police develop new methods of response and crime analysis, and new standards were established to enhance officer discipline. By establishing a premise for professional expertise backed by science, the police were able to claim that public input was at best irrelevant and at worst a corrupting influence. Not only was partnership with the community or other outside agencies and organizations not prioritized, it was diligently avoided.¹¹

But by the 1950s and early 1960s, it was becoming evident to police leaders and other observers the reform era required its own set of reforms, that “blemishes had begun to appear in that model of perfection” (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990, p. 62). The Progressive approach had failed to address the needs of many people, particularly as society grew increasingly diverse.

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¹⁰ Despite the proactive appearance of the term, “prevention” referred during this time to deterrent effects thought to be produced by enforcement tactics.

¹¹ This was not the professionalism envisioned by the early, pivotal police reformer August Vollmer, lauded as the founder of professional policing. Vollmer focused great energy on attempts to transform the police into independent, educated, science-literate, technologically-skilled crime-fighting experts, insulating them from corrupting political influences. Officers’ cultivation of skills and knowledge would distinguish them and elevate their status while they worked productively in the community. William Parker and Vollmer’s protégé O.W. Wilson would embrace a managerial model of professionalism emphasizing organizational efficiency that minimized aspects of Vollmer’s approach, including the quality of interactions between officers and the community (Carte & Carte, 1975).
This was particularly evident in departments’ relationships with African Americans.\textsuperscript{12} Indeed, going back to the 1940s,\textsuperscript{13} the outrage caused by police violence led to many urban riots, which further highlighted problems with contemporary law enforcement efforts. As H. Williams and Murphy (1990) observe,

\begin{quote}
The fact that police actions triggered many of the riots and then could not control them revealed to everyone the price of having a police department backed only by the power of the law, but not by the consent, much less active support, of those being policed. (H. Williams & Murphy, 1990, p. 3)
\end{quote}

The need for greater engagement of minority communities took center stage, as “[f]ears that strained race relations could mean new riots meant much of the attention focused on ways the police could reach out to minorities” (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990, p. 337).

Nationally, the policing environment grew more unstable, as highly publicized incidents of police brutality horrified many in the public and rising serious crime rates led to doubts regarding police claims of crime fighting prowess. “Demonstrations, protests, civil disorder (sometimes involving widespread violence), and litigation combined to create a turbulent and uncertain environment” (Cooper et al., 2006, p. 77). During this time, the Civil Rights Movement was growing, and the U.S. Supreme Court was issuing controversial decisions related to police procedure (e.g., \textit{Mapp v. Ohio} in 1961, which addressed unconstitutional search and seizure practices by police). Additionally, crime rates were rising dramatically (Walker, 1992). Police

\textsuperscript{12} This should not be viewed as a new problem, however. H. Williams and Murphy (1990) argue that, just as they had been excluded from the benefits of political era policing, African Americans saw few benefits from the Progressive’s reforms starting in the late nineteenth century. Just as African Americans were achieving some measure of political clout during Reconstruction, the field shifted to embrace other sources of influence. Their argument may focus too much on Progressive reforms than on the backlash to Reconstruction that resulted in African Americans losing their short-lived political power; whatever the cause, their observation that developments in modern policing continually failed to provide public safety benefits to African American is an important insight. As discussed later, it connects to the idea that how “community” is defined has significant effects on who is viewed as a legitimate partner.

\textsuperscript{13} Although civil unrest was nothing new in that period. Walker (1998, pp. 148-149) describes 1919 as a “Year of Crisis” and reports that there were major race riots in Chicago, Omaha, Knoxville, and Washington, D.C., with “lesser incidents in at least seventeen other cities.”
assertions of technical law enforcement and crime fighting expertise as well as their claim to legitimate authority were increasingly questioned. Change was needed.

A Paradigm Shift

In the midst of this growing turbulence, the American Bar Foundation (ABF) undertook a major exploratory study of the daily functioning of criminal justice agencies with an eye to their reform. Its work, which would influence the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (hereafter, the President’s Commission) commissioned in 1965 and publishing its report in 1967, changed how criminal justice and policing were conceptualized, with important implications for partnership. The study came about in 1953 as the result of the suggestion of Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson, who in a speech to the American Bar Association “reminded his audience that effective law enforcement was only one of the two goals of the criminal justice system; protection of individual rights was equally important” (Walker, 1992, p. 50).

Critically, Jackson had proposed an observational examination of agencies’ behavior. Perhaps nearly unimaginable to current social scientific sensibilities, most knowledge of the administration of justice at the time was based on almost no direct observation of practice. Earlier blue-ribbon commission studies (e.g., Wickersham) serving as the foundation for the Progressive Era criminal justice project had relied on administrative records and assumptions that substantive law was an effective guide for agency action, and this continued to be customary practice. What agencies and their personnel actually did was simply unknown to many researchers and others not employed by these agencies (Walker, 1992).

The ABF’s findings were revelatory and have bearing on the emergence of interest in partnership. The researchers observed the widespread use of personal discretion that was
unbound by law or other formal standards. Until that time, the assumption was that justice personnel simply followed the law to guide their actions.

The Progressive Era paradigm of the justice system posited a series of semiautonomous agencies where officials administered the law in an impersonal, “ministerial” fashion: that is, they did what the law required. Any exercise of discretion was an unwarranted and probably illegal departure from an official's legal mandate. (Walker, 1992, p. 54)

As long as “good people” were doing the work and were protected from undue influence, there was no reason to question arrests or other actions—officers were simply applying the law. What the ABF researchers saw, however, was quite different from this pristine model. Misconduct of many stripes was commonplace. Moreover, researchers observed that “[t]he willful mistreatment of Black citizens was pervasive” (Walker, 1992, p. 58). The immoral and illegal conduct uncovered by the ABF study had been largely invisible to researchers within a paradigm that assumed officers to be merely exercising their legal authority in service of the law. Performance measures focused exclusively on counting arrests and other organizational outputs. There was no meaningful opportunity in such a model for consideration of the public’s feedback on their experience. The ABF study helped to document biased policing as well as other disturbing practices.

The idea that police agencies of different sizes, characteristics, and historical circumstances could simply look to state and local law while eschewing other factors reflected prevailing but waning notions of organizational structure and behavior. Like many types of organizations, the police had sought to identify the “one best way” of operating. This approach was characteristic of a “closed model” of organizations that assumed general principles of efficiency and effectiveness could be identified and replicated in other organizations of that type no matter the context (Van de Ven, Ganco, & Hinings, 2013). In such a model, context was irrelevant; rather, management theorists emphasized basic principles that could be controlled by
good management and internal decision making. Ignoring information and input from outside sources may now seem naïve, but in light of the recent experience of machine politics, theoretical and practical attention to organizations’ internal workings rather than the messy, corrupting environment was not only understandable but, for a time perhaps, necessary (Rainey, 2014).

Samuel Walker emphasizes that although the problems identified by the ABF study could have been seen within the existing paradigm as a failure to adhere to its standards of professionalism (e.g., the wrong people had been hired) they were characterized in a fundamentally different light. Walker (1992) documents how Frank J. Remington, the study’s director of research, and Lloyd Ohlin, who served as a consultant, consciously strove to avoid being caught in the existing paradigm’s web. They were able to consider the pervasiveness of discretion and decision-making as fundamental features of a system, rather than characterizing them as failures of individual officials or personnel. Following a systemic perspective led to a “transformation of the survey from a description of the way the system is supposed to work, to a painstakingly detailed analysis of how the elements of the system actually work” (Wellford, 1998, p. 59). The findings and their framing produced a new paradigm focused on how decision-making is carried out within a complex system (Walker, 1992).

The systemic perspective was captured and massively popularized for generations by the President’s Commission report through a visual model of the criminal justice system (Wellford, 1998). However, the Commission’s model was not without its faults. In particular, it was presented as a closed system focused primarily on the need for coordination across justice agencies. Wellford observes that “The failure to recognize the importance of external systems and the interrelationship of criminal justice to these other systems may have contributed to the
slowness with which we approached intersystem coordination in criminal justice” (p. 62). Policing’s insularity had been directly questioned through findings indicating that an agency’s actions had effects on other agencies and observations that empirical policing belied reasonable notions of “professionalism,” as the police regularly engaged in violence particularly targeting African Americans. Still, the notion of system, even a closed one, emphasized that interactions naturally occurred and could not be shut out. And, over time, an open systems perspective grew out of this paradigm shift.

That a closed system was envisioned appears to reflect the observation that the Commission, while arguing for greater public engagement also continued to value the underlying law enforcement techniques that were a hallmark of professional policing. More broadly, the Commission focused much more on connections between race and crime than between race and operations of the criminal justice system, suggesting “that members uncritically accepted that arrest rates reflected criminal involvement” (Fernandes & Crutchfield, 2018, p. 399). The Commission argued for greater efficiency in the application of law enforcement practices while also lamenting the toll such efficiency took on the capacity of the police to engage adequately with community members (Gaffigan, Roth, & Buerger, 2000).

Early responses to the report led many departments to either work toward enhancing their application of the professional model (focusing on proactive patrolling, a swift response to calls for service, and improved investigations) or to follow the commission’s simultaneous call for innovation (Gaffigan et al., 2000). It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that research challenged

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14 The extent to which a closed model or system is truly closed may lie in how extensive the “system” in question is. A very large closed system (e.g., the criminal justice system) may be of sufficient size to be for all intents and purposes open compared to a much more limited entity (e.g., a single organization with its own complex set of iterative processes).
the effectiveness of these key tactics of professional policing and, perhaps for some, truly called into question professionalism as an organizational strategy.

A number of new approaches or organizational strategies\(^\text{15}\) have emerged since the reckoning with professional policing. Each has an express or implied role for partnership, and each treats partnership differently; some are complementary, some conflict. While a bare-bones notion of partnership may require only two or more participants, the expectations for that relationship differ quite widely depending on the approach. Indeed, partnership is an idea brought to life within a particular framework. More specifically, the ways in which these approaches conceptualize the role of technical effectiveness, the appropriate role for the community, and a symbolic legitimacy are manifested partly in their expectations for partnership.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter began exploring partnership’s complexity, focusing on its ideological and practical elasticity. A theme running through the major policing reform movements in the United States is the need for a way to interact with the broader environment that promotes public safety and security while being perceived as possessing legitimate authority. Ethnic-based political control and withdrawal from political and public influence reflect extreme and unsustainable approaches that were neither effective in a technical sense nor widely legitimate. Policing remains in the midst of a convoluted period following the Civil Rights Era. Pressures during that time forced consideration of genuine democratic participation in policing, however, they have also promoted collaborations that harken back to Reform Era policing notions of

\(^{15}\) This usage follows Moore’s (1992) description. While community policing and other approaches have been characterized in myriad ways (philosophy, strategy, program, tactic, etc.), these approaches can be said to speak to organization-level priorities that affect management and other aspects of organizational operation. This is not to imply, however, that only one organizational strategy may apply at once. That possibility is left open.
“professionalism,” even if embracing the external data and information disdained during that earlier period. Partnership thus has many potential meanings to choose from.

The next chapter looks specifically into how the emergent approaches to policing frame partnership, the expectation that agencies employ multiple approaches, and implications for partnership.
CHAPTER 3: CONSTRUCTING PARTNERSHIP IN POLICING

The paradigm shift in the mid-twentieth century involved a greater commitment to democratic ideals by opening up the police and focusing them on external engagement. The President’s Crime Commission indicated that effectiveness cannot be assessed outside of Constitutional constraints (Wellford, 1998); indeed, American policing is situated within a democratic context and questions of performance must be asked within this context (Greene, 2011). Manning (2010) describes the challenges of pinning down “democratic policing,” but for our present purposes, perhaps we can broadly conceptualize it as the pursuit of transparency, engagement, and accountability. These goals, as Greene (2010) points out, direct the police toward communication and relationship building and, ideally, a policing oriented towards human rights. A key implication, then, is that discussions of partnership across policing approaches—especially in the American context—cannot be removed from the question of whether the “partnership” constructed by these approaches is likely to enhance or hinder principles of democracy and human rights. Discussions cannot only consider partnerships’ contributions to reductions of crime and disorder.

Similarly, there are important implications for organizational and professional legitimacy in how policing approaches envision partnership and whether these conceptualizations are compatible or conflicting. Approaches that emerged from the shifting policing paradigm have differing implications, both prescriptive and empirical, for partnership. A select set of these approaches is discussed below. No attempt is made here to comprehensively catalogue these movements; rather, those chosen are used to illustrate the variety of existing conceptualizations of partnership in policing and the potential problems these understandings present in terms of conflicting organizational strategies and prospects for police legitimacy.
IMPLICATIONS OF POLICING APPROACHES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Community Policing and Problem-Oriented Policing

Community policing and problem-oriented policing have been the most prominent approaches that developed in response to the perceived failure of reform era policing. Both emerged together in the early days of this period through a process in which local departments experimented with a wide variety of tactics and strategies that were later promoted by the federal government, professional associations, and researchers (Gaffigan et al., 2000).

The emergence of community policing in the 1980s and its 1970s precursors (e.g., team policing) is directly attributable to a desire among reformers to rebuild police legitimacy and strengthen effectiveness by reestablishing a bond with the community, one that had strong elements of participatory and deliberative democracy. This is captured by the popular characterization of the reformers’ desired relationship between police and community as a “partnership.” (Mastrofski & Willis, 2010, p. 110)

The primordial approaches put partnership at the center and focused clearly on enhancing relations with the community. Along with problem-oriented policing, COP is often credited with making community engagement and partnership normal, even expected, topics in policing (Greene, 2011). Ponsaers (2015, p. 101) states that “COP has brought a lot of useful social side-effects in terms of external orientation, accountability, partnership, empowerment, and democratic weight.”

Later developments in community policing followed suit. The Community Oriented Policing Services Office (COPS) defines community policing as follows:

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014, p. 3)

The COPS definition is important in that the agency has been a prominent force in providing funding, technical assistance, and other supports to American police agencies.
COPS expressly characterizes community policing as a philosophy, which suggests a set of ideas guiding the organization as a whole. This notion is supported by the references to organizational strategies and systematic use of partnership and problem-solving techniques. A focus on proactivity contrasts directly with the reactive nature of professional policing, as do the outcomes of interest. Crime, social disorder, and fear reflect an open organizational model as opposed to the organizational indicators (e.g., arrests, citations, response times) that are the preoccupation of professional policing.

Although the COPS definition is important, it should be remembered that there is no single understanding of community policing. Elasticity is touted as a positive design feature in recognition of the crucial role a jurisdiction’s context plays in tailoring policing strategies.\(^\text{16}\) This also contrasts with the earlier assumption that a singular professional policing model could be developed and applied across the field. Mastrofski and Willis (2010, pp. 117-118) describe the key elements of change introduced by community policing as greater engagement by the public in policy making and service delivery, police engagement in problem-oriented policing, and the decentralization of decision making to middle managers and rank and file officers. There are many lists of features and priorities (Manning, 2010), but the central theme of community policing has been an inclusive orientation toward the public in terms of providing input to police operations and strategic direction.

Cordner (1996) notes that the focus of community policing is on both ideological and practical goals. He describes community policing as comprising philosophical, strategic, tactical, and organizational components. “Citizen input” is considered a core philosophical feature given a democratic society, where the police “like other agencies of government, are supposed to be

\(^\text{16}\) Not all observers are so sanguine. Manning (2010), for example, argues that the lack of a definition undermines attempts to link any accomplishments to community policing.
responsive and accountable” (Cordner, 1996, p. 2). The value is not solely one of principle, as he notes that “law enforcement agencies are most likely to obtain the citizen support and cooperation they need when they display interest in input from citizens” (p. 2). “Partnerships” is the label Cordner gives to one of the key tactical components of community policing.

“Community policing stresses the importance of active partnerships between police, other agencies, and citizens, in which all parties really work together to identify and solve problems. Citizens can take a greater role in public safety than has been typical over the past few decades, and other public and private agencies can leverage their own resources and authority toward the solution of public safety problems” (Cordner, 1996, p. 7). We can see then that both individuals and organizations are thus considered appropriate “partners.” Partnership is thus dyed into the thread of community policing and is particularly focused on the police’s relationship with the community it serves.

Community policing and problem-oriented policing developed together out of the critique of professional policing. Just as the police were viewed as an “occupying force,” they were also pilloried for failing to demonstrate their claimed crime control expertise. The skyrocketing crime rates starting in the 1960s called policing knowledge and methods into question. More specifically, policing research studied the core assumptions of reform era strategy and practice—randomized preventive patrol, rapid response to reported crime, and criminal investigations—and found them wanting (Braga, 2002).

During this time, Herman Goldstein (1979) prominently criticized the longstanding tendency for the police to focus on “means over ends,” where goals such as reduced response times and increased arrests were conflated with the desired goals of public safety. The police fixated on organizational structure and practice without attending to whether these efforts
produced the desired public safety effects. Goldstein developed “problem-oriented policing” (POP) to adjust this myopic focus on internal organizational improvement and the closed system approach more broadly that had pervaded policing. By recontextualizing organizational structure, management, and operations as being in the service of producing actual public safety gains, POP provides a further impetus to engage with the external environment. Information on the nature of problems and resources to mitigate them often lie outside the police department.

The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, a prominent source of information on POP, provides a definition attributed to Herman Goldstein in 2001.

Problem-oriented policing is an approach to policing in which discrete pieces of police business (each consisting of a cluster of similar incidents, whether crime or acts of disorder, that the police are expected to handle) are subject to microscopic examination (drawing on the especially honed skills of crime analysts and the accumulated experience of operating field personnel) in hopes that what is freshly learned about each problem will lead to discovering a new and more effective strategy for dealing with it. (Goldstein, 2001)

The definition goes on to note the importance of novel preventative responses that do not depend on the criminal justice system. Other government agencies, the community, and the private sector are indicated as important partners “when their involvement has the potential for significantly contributing to the reduction of the problem.” Rigorous evaluation and dissemination of results are also prioritized in order to build “a body of knowledge that supports the further professionalization of the police.” In the case of POP then, partnership is an important tool but not one necessary to address all problems. Its usefulness is contingent rather than assumed.

Community and problem-oriented policing are generally pointed to as the major overlapping paradigms to emerge in the effort to reform policing.17 They are the most

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17 Community policing has also been discussed as subsuming a variety of approaches that ostensibly agree that law enforcement tactics (i.e., arrest) should not be the core function of the police. Mastrofski, Worden, and Snipes
compatible, with the former specifically claiming the latter as a core feature (Mastrofski & Willis, 2010; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014). This overlap has often led them to be conflated (M. S. Scott, 2000), but as noted above they also have important distinct characteristics. Whereas community policing is fundamentally premised on the need to engage with the public on an ongoing basis for legitimacy and information, POP takes a contingent view of partnership. Working with outside agencies, organizations, and individuals is potentially useful if it fosters mitigation of the specific problem at hand.\(^{18}\)

COP and POP are intended to be organizational strategies rather than individual tactics to be used at the discretion of the officer, but often the latter is found. These labels easily mask “shallow” implementation that skirts the more rigorous and organization-focused aspects (Braga & Bond, 2008). For example, although national surveys of police agencies show widespread engagement in partnership, these cannot adequately demonstrate what is taking place. For example, while findings from the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey (LEMAS) suggest that the practice of partnership is pervasive locally, the data do not explore the nature and “dosage” of these relationships (Maguire & Mastrofski, 2000). They are further limited in that they cannot reveal whether the programs are manifestations of organizational processes. One might argue that this prevalence suggests a core commitment by

\(^{18}\) Some have argued that good-faith problem-oriented or problem-solving policing approaches will tend to see the public, community organizations, and other government agencies as natural partners and come to overlap more fully with community policing (Gaffigan et al., 2000; Moore, 1992). Moore (1992) essentially dismisses questions about the distinction between COP and POP, arguing that it is sharper at the abstract and strategic levels than at the operational. However, this would seem an empirical question that should not be assumed a priori (Buerger, 1994).
these agencies or the field overall, but this may require too great a leap of faith given other findings showing little organization change structures (Maguire, 2003; Maguire, Shin, Zhao, & Hassell, 2003; Zhao, 1996; Zhao, Lovrich, & Robinson, 2001; Zhao, Ren, & Lovrich, 2010).

Like community policing, problem-oriented policing appears to be implemented on an ad hoc or more individual level (Cordner & Biebel, 2005; Manning, 2005), as a “professional style for beat-level officers” rather than the focus of management or administrators (Sparrow, 2000, p. 179).

The popularity of these perspectives should also not obscure the concurrent presence of other, contradictory trends. During the supposed ascendency of community policing, there was an attendant rise in its antithesis. Even in police departments within small jurisdictions (25,000 or more), the creation and deployment of police paramilitary units (PPUs) increased dramatically starting in the 1980s (Kraska & Cubellis, 1997). Kraska and Cubellis found that this could not be explained by an attendant criminal act spurring such action. They found that, in Orwellian fashion, this trend was being embraced by some police practitioners as fitting hand-in-glove with their department’s pursuit of community policing: “At least in their minds, PPU’s do not supplant a CP or POP approach; they operate in harmony” (p. 624).

The normalization of policing militarization also occurred in smaller jurisdictions. Facilitating this trend, the National Defense Authorization Act, passed by Congress in 1997, established the federal “1033 Program,” which made available to police agencies excess military supplies and weapons. As a result, the U.S. Department of Defense transferred “more than $6 billion worth of military equipment, including M-16 assault rifles, grenade launchers, and ‘mine-resistant ambush protected’ armored personnel carriers (MRAPs) to over 8000 local police departments in the United States” (Turner & Fox, 2017, pp. 2-3). The 1033 Program was
highlighted during the civil unrest following the 2014 police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Ferguson and area police were seen by many as resembling an occupying force rather than law enforcement professionals competently handling a public protest (Curry & Martinez, 2014).

This situation underscores how police departments may engage in several approaches with varying degrees of compatibility. What, then, are the implications for partnership? Variation in the nature, style, and participants of partnership is likely to result, particularly as the distance between the approaches widens. The pursuit of multiple approaches would seem to suggest that departments either apply specific approaches distinctly in particular circumstances, try to synthesize approaches, or argue that multiple approaches fit under the roof of a single approach. A department seeking to use specific approaches in distinct situations, for example, might direct a community policing unit to provide high levels of engagement and problem-solving efforts with the public (community partnerships), while unleashing a SWAT unit to handle public “disturbances” in a more militaristic style (law enforcement partnerships).

A department may also try to combine several approaches into a unified mission or style. This is often seen with the overlap between COP and POP, as departments identify themselves as engaged in “community problem solving.” However, combining competing approaches is hard needle to thread. Trying to combine, for example, community policing and zero-tolerance or militarized approaches under the umbrella of COP is likely to result in a rhetorical justification for incompatible practices rather than a true emulsion. A militarized community policing (posing for a moment that such a thing were possible) would seem to privilege a dramatically narrow notion of community, as a militaristic approach fosters an “us-or-them” mentality. What does partnership mean where, as noted by Kraska and Cubellis (1997, p. 624), a police official
could claim their PPU helped them focus on “‘quality of life’ like illegal parking, loud music, bums, [and] neighbor troubles”?

Keeping approaches distinct also potentially raises questions about whether a department has a clear central mission. If “community” is defined narrowly, the police may be able to provide robust engagement with certain groups while justifying harsh tactics targeting other groups. Indeed, critical criminologists have suggested that partnership is a means for coopting the community in order to maintain a standard reactive policing model (Jurik et al., 2000).

**Counterterrorism Policing, Intelligence-Led Policing, and Third Party Policing**

The policing environment has changed considerably over the last two decades, particularly as terrorism and transnational crime have become concerns of local law enforcement (Mastrofski & Willis, 2010; Mazerolle & Ransley, 2005; Ratcliffe, 2008). These changes brought with them important implications for partnership, as justifications for partnership expand or shift from those spurring the community era. The aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks has been characterized as a “homeland security era where the focus continually threatens to shift from everyday crime to terrorism” (Ratcliffe, 2008, p. 5). Counterterrorism policing has increased the salience of interagency partnership (i.e., among law enforcement and emergency services). More than one-hundred regional FBI-coordinated Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) work with the National JTTF (Maguire & King, 2011). Through their planning and training around the prevention of, response to, and investigation of terrorism, JTTFs and other groups have led to a closer coupling of agencies across federal, state, and local levels (Maguire & King, 2004; Mastrofski & Willis, 2010).

Such “vertical” coordination across levels of government is needed given the different but complementary roles each plays in addressing terrorism. Although often overshadowed by federal homeland security agencies, local police shoulder the greatest responsibility (Maguire &
King, 2011). The number of local police far exceeds federal agents and local knowledge is crucial in preventing and responding to terrorist events. Although prevention strategies suggest the need for healthy relationships between the police and community members (so that the public is willing to provide information to the police), such partnerships are oriented toward “high policing” that requires secrecy and intelligence gathering (Mastrofski & Willis, 2010). Maguire and King (2011, p. 341) observe that “[t]he number of interagency and intergovernmental task forces in law enforcement has been increasing over the past two decades, and the escalation of that trend after 9/11 could represent a fundamental shift in the structure of law enforcement” (although see Greene, 2011).

But the policing environment involves a broader array of issues than terrorism. Loader (2000, p. 329) argues that “we need to come to terms with – and seek to make sense of – the transformation of policing from a limited activity of government into a pervasive, dispersed mechanism of governance.” Ransley and Mazerolle (2009) describe the current era of policing as one of “uncertainty,” where the nature of threats increasingly falls outside the traditional police role and the police are often marginalized within networks attempting to prevent and intervene such problems. Risk management calculations are a critical focus in this context.

One of the features of the era of uncertainty is the rolling back of some community-era reforms. Centralised police squads, disbanded in favour of decentralised and matrix-based teams of specialists coming together for special investigations, have been re-established as specialist teams (e.g., counter-terrorism units, child protection teams) and the complex matrix of officers working in seconded policing roles (e.g., peace-keeping) and in close proximity with officers from other law enforcement agencies (e.g., US Fusion Centers). (Ransley & Mazerolle, 2009, p. 377)

The passage indicates a significant movement within law enforcement—beyond counterterrorism—to prioritize partnerships among themselves rather than with the community.
A prominent example of this shift is intelligence-led policing (ILP). While acknowledging the lack of a single definition, D. L. Carter (2009, p. 80) offers the following:

The collection and analysis of information related to crime and conditions that contribute to crime, resulting in an actionable intelligence product intended to aid law enforcement in developing tactical responses to threats and/or strategic planning related to emerging or changing threats.

Originally developed in the United Kingdom by the Kent Constabulary in response to increasing property crime and budget cuts, ILP is now an internationally-recognized approach to both serious crime and terrorism (Peterson, 2005; Ratcliffe, 2008). ILP is based on the use of “crime intelligence,” that is, “analysed information that blends data from crime analysis of crime patterns and criminal intelligence drawn from the behavior of offenders” (Ratcliffe, 2008, p. 87). Crime intelligence, also referred to as criminal or law enforcement intelligence, builds on various often disparate forms of information through an analytic process that renders it into a product that can be used to directly guide leaders’ decisions (D. L. Carter, 2009).

Crime and terrorism “require increased collaboration in information gathering and intelligence sharing” (Peterson, 2005, p. vii). Ratcliffe (2008, p. 6) writes that “the interpretation of intelligence-led policing appears to be broadening in scope and has evolved into a management philosophy that places greater emphasis on information sharing and collaborative, strategic solutions to policing problems at the local and regional level.” Peterson (2005, p. vii) notes that because “[c]ritical community infrastructures such as those related to food, agriculture, public health, telecommunications, energy, transportation, and banking are now seen as potential terrorist targets,” a new set of industries “are now partners in terrorism prevention and crime control.” As with terrorist-oriented policing, partnerships among criminal justice agencies in “fusion centers” and other networks that facilitate information sharing and analysis are
fundamental to ILP. Members of the community are also seen as key partners in their capacity to be vigilant and alert law enforcement agencies about possible threats (D. L. Carter, 2009).

The purposes and expectations of ILP, COP, and POP can be seen as having points of distinction but also some areas of overlap. Intelligence-led policing is often viewed as overlapping with other paradigms, particularly community policing and problem-oriented policing (cf. D. L. Carter, 2009; J. G. Carter & Phillips, 2015; Crank, Kadlec, & Koski, 2010; Peterson, 2005). Those who see similarities between the approaches often cite the importance of community willingness to provide information to the police. These models argue that community and problem-oriented policing are not at odds with policing against terrorism; instead, they are collaborative and complementary approaches.

As one considers them more carefully, however—especially when thinking about them sharing residency in a single police agency—they increasingly diverge, particularly with regard to partnership. Jerry Ratcliffe, a prominent ILP scholar, argues that it is conceptually distinct from other approaches. For example, although ILP is based in part on problem-oriented policing it involves a more proactive, ongoing, and comprehensive cycle of information gathering and analysis (Ratcliffe, 2008). Additionally, ILP “is operationally the antithesis of community policing” (p. 87). Community policing decentralizes decision making and prioritizes transparency and legitimacy, while ILP is at its core a top-down strategic approach focused on high-rate offenders, victims, and places (Ratcliffe, 2008). Indeed, COP and ILP have fundamentally different views concerning the role of the community. The former advocates for an integrated, consultative role where information flows in both directions and public input is incorporated into agency strategic planning. The latter views community partnership as a means to extract information from the public. To the extent that ILP or terrorism-focused policing might
harmoniously co-exist with COP, it would appear to be based on an appreciation of the differences between them and a carefully calibrated balancing act. This willingness requires the trust and relationships built through community-oriented approaches and can be easily undone by heavy-handed tactics that would appear to be incompatible with trust-building efforts (Greene, 2011). This is not always clearly articulated in the literature.

For example, J. G. Carter and Phillips (2015, p. 334) observe that one of the “commonalities” ILP shares with other paradigms is COP’s “reliance on [a] two-way information flow between the police and public.” But it becomes clear that ILP’s ideas of communication (and partnership) are not similar to COP’s, despite multiple attempts to link them rhetorically (e.g., “similarly . . . to community policing”). The “effective communications with the public” (p. 338) cultivated by agencies experienced with COP is ultimately not what ILP is pursuing. The following passage illustrates how references to community policing are used to suggest a greater reciprocal interaction with the community than ILP actually involves:

As one component of its philosophy, *ILP employs community policing principles*, building on tactics and methodologies developed during the years of community policing adoption. From an information management perspective, community policing utilizes information gained from citizens to help define the parameters of community problems *while ILP relies on information input as the essential ingredient for intelligence analysis*. Two-way communication with the public is essential for community policing since information is sought from the public about offenders while disseminating critical information to the public aids in crime prevention and fear reduction (Carter and Carter 2009a). Within the context of ILP, communications *from* the public can provide valuable information for the intelligence process. *Like community policing*, ILP requires an investment of effort by all components of the organisation as well as the community (Maguire 1997). Based on the precepts of the ILP philosophy and the standards of the NCISP, law enforcement intelligence is an organisation-wide *responsibility that relies on a symbiotic relationship with residents*. (J.G. Carter & Phillips, 2015, pp. 338-339, emphasis added)

The italicized segments point to the ways in which the authors are positioning ILP next to COP. This is understandable, given the popularity of *community* as compared to the more insidious
notion of *intelligence* and its gathering by the state. But the comparison falls flat. Despite suggestions of “two-way” communication and connections to community policing, the public is more clearly valued for their ability to “provide valuable information for the intelligence process.” Communication comes *from* the public *to* the police—there is no indication of a “symbiotic” relationship.

An article in the practitioner-oriented publication *Law Enforcement Technology* more directly illustrates the potential for ILP to conflict with more community-centered approaches. Partnership is represented in quite different ways than in community-oriented approaches. The author makes no attempt to cloud the issue, noting that while “[s]ome may say ILP is nothing more than community policing,” ILP is a top-down approach in which

> [t]he street officers gather information which is studied by analysts and is then passed up to the executive level where it is reviewed and a plan is formulated. A decision is made as to how to resolve the problem and what resources to allocate. The solution is send back down to operations for implementation. (Wills, 2017, p. 9)

Presumably, the street offices gather much of this information from members of the community, but once it is collected it seems to disappear into the agency’s maw. “Sharing of information” is identified as occurring with other law enforcement agencies, while references to community partnerships are often diffuse (e.g., “Collaboration with the community being served is necessary”) or depict a one-way relationship (p. 10). Members of the public are expected to “feel invested in the process” through their “direct role in preventing terrorist acts”—by reporting of suspicious activity through tip lines (p. 10). More condescendingly:
We know that community policing heavily involves the neighborhoods in identifying local problems. ILP still seeks that input, but doesn’t necessarily address all of their concerns. They may ignore the community’s wishes if the totality of information gathered indicates a more serious problem exists elsewhere. For example, neighbors may identify a local bar as a noise and loitering problem. However, after collecting information and analyzing the data, the police may discover a robbery ring working in an adjoining neighborhood, prompting them to ignore the noise problem and focus on identifying and arresting the robbery offenders. (Wills, 2017, p. 9, emphasis added)

The interaction depicted in this passage presents a rather shallow and dismissive attitude toward communication and partnership with the community. There is no suggestion that, given differing perspectives on the nature and relative importance of the problems identified, the police might consider discussing the reasons for the gap and seek common purpose. Instead, the police are free to simply “ignore” the community.

Like militaristic approaches, ILP taps into a view of police work as muscular and detached. The article in Law Enforcement Technology frames ILP starkly in terms of the professional model: it uses “trained analysts” (and, also, “trained experienced analyst” and “specially trained analysts”), “is akin to a business model,” uses “a very simple model,” “intelligence is used to formulate an actionable plan,” and “the plan is then transmitted to the street level officer and investigators to put into action” (Wills, 2017, p. 9). To drive the need for “real” policing home, the author notes that “While budgets may be shrinking, crime and terrorist activities are thriving, and in some cases are out of control” (p. 10, emphasis added).

Given the capacity of current technology, the speed at which its capabilities are advancing, and the degree to which we all produce and are tracked by data through our routine activities, some observers have found the trend toward “big data policing” cause for concern (Ferguson, 2017). Ferguson notes that policing approaches like ILP have come to prominence as police departments are looking for ways to buffer themselves from charges of race-based policing and to improve officer morale during budget cutbacks and public scrutiny. “Data-driven
technology offers a double win—do more with less resources, and do so in a seemingly objective and neutral manner” (Ferguson, 2017, p. 9). The problem, of course, is that data, however generated, are not objective. While subjectivity may be more clearly observed in how data are analyzed and the conclusion drawn from the analysis, it is crucial to remember that “bias” is introduced much earlier. Police generated data are widely recognized as highly manipulatable (Manning, 2010), and artificial intelligence (AI) is also not immune from the bias in human input, as the data available to AI are the result of human decisions (Emspak, 2016). Inherently, choices about what data are to be collected and from whom, how collection is conducted, and to whom data are distributed are just that—choices.

Ferguson cites an example of a Chicago resident put on a “heat list” generated through an algorithm intended to identify those persons most at risk to be the victim or perpetrator of violence. This list was used by the Chicago Police Department in a “focused deterrence” initiative, where a police official, social worker, and member of the community would go to list members’ homes to hand deliver to a “custom notification letter” that conveyed the person being visited could stop offending or be prosecuted to the fullest extent if apprehended. This process was intended to send a literal message of deterrence to the most dangerous people in the city. However, a 22-year old man with a minor record found himself being visited.

[The man] was not a hardened criminal. He had one misdemeanor conviction but had been placed on the heat list anyway. When he inquired about why he ranked high enough to warrant a visit, he was informed that his inclusion stemmed from the shooting death of his best friend a year ago. His personal loss increased his risk of violence, according to the algorithm. (Ferguson, 2017, p. 4)

Risk, rather than simply aggravating factors were part of the algorithm. This man’s risk of being more harshly punished as a result of having received this message had been increased out of

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19 P.9 refers to the digital publication.
20 The quotation was found on page 4 of Chapter 3 in the digital edition.
proportion to his personal legal culpability. Objectivity had not rendered fairness; rather, its use was in some cases narrowing the range of the “legitimate” community and relabeling a minor offender as a serious public safety problem. The police, in their power to define community (Herbert, 2006), had excluded an individual arguably better characterized as having suffered a traumatic loss than as an appropriate focus of deterrence tactics. Partnership was being used against him instead of including him.

“Third party policing” (TPP) includes a particularly wide range of ideas of partnership. Ransley and Mazerolle (2009) argue that the new position of the police in an era of uncertainty promotes this approach. “Third party policing” is a term coined to describe trends witnessed by policing scholars where police rely on various legal “levers” (e.g., threat or application of fines, revocation of permits) to persuade non-criminal individuals, organizations, or agencies to use their influence to prevent or respond to undesirable behavior of individuals or groups (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2005). For example, the police may use nuisance property ordinances to compel property managers to address issues that often result in calls to the police (Buerger & Mazerolle, 1998). If a property has been formally designated as a nuisance, refusal to cooperate with the police can result in fines or other problems for the business. Individuals are compelled to act on the police’s behalf.

Partnership is a defining feature of TPP, although, as Buerger and Mazerolle (1998, p. 302) clearly acknowledge, “partners” in such schemes may not be there of their own volition: “Though frequently accompanied by the appearance and language of voluntary cooperation, third-party policing draws heavily on the implied coercion inherent in police action.” This is viewed as the result of tectonic activity in the policing environment:
The relationship between the police organisation and its environment has shifted from the purely consultative model promoted in the community era, to one that also exercises a considerable degree of coercive force, over third party partners to induce their cooperation in crime and security control efforts. (Ransley & Mazerolle, 2009, p. 377)

Mazerolle and Ransley (2005) indicate that while TPP might be used strategically, it is usually deployed ad hoc in episodic fashion, as a tactical tool used somewhat haphazardly. Although TPP partnerships are often explicitly coercive, they argue that partnerships can originate in gentle, even unconscious attempts at persuasion or reflect some middle ground or combination of approaches.

The foregrounding of coercive interactions as “partnerships” is a departure from other approaches. Such unwanted deputizing (or conscription) presents a shaded version of the idea of the “co-production of public safety,” simultaneously treating community members as both “partners” and potential perpetrators.

To justify assigning policing duties to civilians, the police began implicating them in the crime itself. If “‘the community’ [became] the all-purpose solution to every criminal justice problem” (Garland 2001:123), it was not only because community members could help curtail crime but also because some were found to be responsible for it: the pawnshop owner for gun violence, the absentee landlord for drug houses, the negligent parent for truant students. (Desmond & Valdez, 2012, p. 119)

In this understanding, community involvement is justified less by the democratic imperative for participation in state institutions and more by accusation—that you, the community, have produced the crime we, the police, are overburdened with responding to. Therefore, the public bears an affirmative responsibility for helping the police to address it. In practice, TPP appears to be quite compatible with terrorist-oriented and intelligence-led policing, even though these approaches tend to portray community engagement as more voluntary and reciprocal: the public provides crucial information and cooperation in these partnerships—the reliance on informants...
(partners?), undercover work, and application of questionable algorithms notwithstanding. Third party policing may just be more explicit in these respects.

Fundamental conflicts between third party and problem-oriented policing are also possible. While the operational decision to pressure landlords or bar owners, for example, might follow from a data-driven problem-solving process, the idea that this relationship would be labeled a “partnership” does not necessarily comport well with a problem-oriented approach. A poignant illustration is provided by Desmond and Valdez (2012), who found that police’s use of the city’s nuisance ordinance led landlords to evict victims of domestic violence as a “solution” to calls to police from these residences associated with these incidents. Evictions were also disproportionately used in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of Black residents. This tactic blames the victim while worsening the conditions that could lead an individual to be stuck in such dire circumstances. From a problem-oriented policing perspective, this approach solves a police organizational problem—unwanted costs associated with repeat calls—rather than the community’s problem—violence against women. As in Ferguson’s example, individuals who warranted inclusion in community and partnership were being defined as outsiders. Figure 3.1 summarizes the issues discussed in this section.

In addition to highlighting ways in which different policing approaches may work with or against each other, this discussion suggests that although the police and criminal justice system have ostensibly been working within a “new” paradigm for several decades, the revolution did not eradicate professionalism and the Progressive Era agenda. Although understandings of legitimacy have expanded to more explicitly address perceptions from outside the police, in some quarters legitimacy continues to emphasize law enforcement indicators in ways that may crowd out external concerns, input, and judgments.
### Figure 3.1 Key Features of Policing Approaches Related to Partnership

<table>
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<th>Intelligence-led policing/terrorist-oriented policing</th>
<th>Third party policing</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary purpose of partnership</strong></td>
<td>Creation/maintenance of public legitimacy through participatory model</td>
<td>Crime and disorder prevention and control through analysis of patterns</td>
<td>Predict, prevent, and intervene in terrorism and repeat serious crime</td>
<td>Lowered costs of policing through delegation of enforcement authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominant partners</strong></td>
<td>Wide array: individual community members, community orgs, businesses, other gov’t agencies</td>
<td>Wide array: individual community members, community orgs, businesses, other gov’t agencies</td>
<td>Other law enforcement and emergency management agencies</td>
<td>Residential and commercial place managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected nature of interaction with community</strong></td>
<td>Highly collaborative: consultation and shared decision making</td>
<td>Contingent: potentially high if coupled with COP; low if focused on org-based crime analysis, shallow problem-solving</td>
<td>Low/invasive: public is expected to provide info to police; may involve undercover work in community</td>
<td>Coercive: but is also theoretically inclusive of community collaboration similar to COP</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Public legitimacy concerns</strong></td>
<td>Cooptation by police; emphasis on powerful community interests</td>
<td>Police focus on organizational rather than community problems</td>
<td>“High policing” or “black box” analyses that are not transparent or readily accountable to public, may alienate communities of focus</td>
<td>Alienation of communities of focus; decreased transparency and accountability through delegation of enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected relationship with other approaches</strong></td>
<td>POP: overlapping, core component of COP ILP/TOP: counterproductive if compromises trust TPP: counterproductive if compromises trust; potentially compatible with community input</td>
<td>ILP/TOP: compatible, but POP may be less rigorous, and ILP/TOP may ignore problems of potential interest in POP TPP: incompatible if focused on solving organizational rather than community problems</td>
<td>TPP: potentially compatible, as both can apply coercion; incompatible if TPP is focused on organizational issues rather than substantive concerns</td>
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This has clear implications for what partnership means in the policing context, as these approaches define the community’s role quite differently. While community policing has its own challenges (and has not escaped charges that it is a veneer to justify state action), the other approaches discussed display motivations or goals that connect them to professional era “police-know-best” practices. Terrorist-oriented and intelligence-led approaches focus heavily on analytic and technological tools ostensibly intended to make policing more effective at fighting crime, which harkens back to the professional era. Shallow problem-focused policing may not be integrated into organizational strategy, skip the more difficult steps in the analytical process, and result in standard law enforcement tactics. Third party policing promotes “efficiency” by off-loading certain problems to civilians in ways that may benefit the agency rather than the public and that may pressure third parties into violating the law themselves (Desmond & Valdez, 2012).

Indeed, the allure of “professionalism” has not abated. Manning (2010) is critical of what is considered policing reform, arguing that fundamentally the professional policing paradigm remains. “Reform efforts over the past thirty years, community policing, problem-solving policing, hot-spot policing, and crime analysis and crime mapping have had modest effects at best in part because the ideas are minor variations on current practices and have not altered the basic mandate, strategies, or tactics of policing” (p. 252). He argues that “officially reported crime statistics” have long been the police’s justification and rationalization for what they do, “balanced recently with emphasis on partnerships, improving quality of life, and reducing the social distance between the police and their publics (p. 191). He continues: “Since the latter activities have never been valued internally, there are no conventions for assessing and rewarding such practices” (p. 191).
In recent years some prominent criminologists have even called for a “New Professionalism” in policing (cf. Stone & Travis, 2011; Stone & Travis, 2013), seeing value in connecting with a police-friendly trope. However, Sklansky cautions against its revival:

Stone and Travis are quite clear that their “New Professionalism” should be built around the core goals of accountability, legitimacy and innovation. And backers of intelligence-led policing and predictive policing often claim that these new models build on and can strengthen community policing. But it is not enough to add goals like trust, legitimacy and fairness to a model of police professionalism, or to say that they are part of what the term “professionalism” should convey. Fundamentally, it is a question of emphasis, and you cannot emphasize everything at once. (Sklansky, 2011, p. 10)

He reiterates that policing did not have a public crisis of confidence because departments were not vigorous enough in their pursuit of a rationalist, technology-driven, elite corps of crime fighters. Rather, policing research has shown

that much of what the police do is not crime control; that effective policing requires building trust and legitimacy; that trust and legitimacy depend heavily on fairness and decency; that policing depends heavily and unavoidably on the judgment and discretion exercised by street-level officers; that rigid, top-down management can impede tailored, innovative problem-solving; and that, especially in a democracy, calls for the police to be publicly accountable and publicly controlled are inevitable and fully appropriate. (Sklansky, 2011, p. 11)

This desire for a cleaner, objective, even more exciting policing has implications for the kinds of partnership a paradigm suggests.

It should be clear that there is no single “partnership” in policing, given variation across approaches. Conflicting constructions are expected to be more problematic when they occupy the same organizational space. But why should it be that police agencies are predicted to employ multiple, even apparently incompatible approaches rather than pursue a singular focus? This is discussed next.
SEEKING LEGITIMACY

As noted earlier, the rise of partnership in policing resulted from pressures to change how the police interacted with their organizational environment. Before the 1960s, the police embraced a “closed-system” view that permitted decisions to be made based on internal goals and logics without regard for needs and input from outside voices or circumstances (Cordner, 1978). The police worked to establish legitimacy based on their own criteria, which were easily manipulatable indicators, such as number of arrests. A closed-system perspective was also the dominant view in organization studies until the mid-twentieth century. Organizational scholars and practitioners had worked from the premise that managers could design organizations based solely on a discoverable set of correct principles and thus looked for ideal forms (Demers, 2007). During the period from 1930 through the 1950s, classical management theorists sought to uncover such universals to find the “one best way” of designing and managing organizations (Van de Ven et al., 2013). This thinking was based on a view of organizations as discrete from their settings. If organizational structures and operations could be grounded on such principles, outside influences were irrelevant. Decisions could be based on internal goals and needs, with little if any consideration of the external environment.21

As discussed earlier, however, eschewing outside influences became a problematic strategy. Intense pressures from this neglected world eventually forced a fundamental re-orientation within policing. Early on, this led to “community partnerships” targeting enhanced relations between the police and historically marginalized groups, especially African Americans,

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21 This is not to say that scholars were producing only prescriptive work. In The Functions of the Executive published in 1938, Chester I. Barnard diverged from classical approaches in his focus on leadership, communication, and informal processes as he “sought to describe the empirical reality of organizations” (Rainey, 2014: 29). Herbert Simon attacked the administrative management school as trafficking in “proverbs” that were often contradictory (Rainey, 2014).
and then to partnerships focused on clearly identifying, analyzing, and responding to “problems” that involve not just organizational efficiencies but public safety concerns (ends over means) (Goldstein, 1979). Although still in practice, these first attempts at organizational change in the direction of an “open systems” approach have been joined by others, each with overlapping, complementary, or conflicting notions of partnership.

Most research on police legitimacy involves social psychological inquiry into public perceptions when encountering police officers that comes out of the work of Tom R. Tyler (cf. Tyler, 1990, 2004; Tyler, Goff, & MacCoun, 2015). It focuses especially on the influence of procedurally just treatment by officers on legitimacy and the consequences of perceptions of legitimacy in terms of cooperation with the police (Worden & McLean, 2017). A less prominent area of research, but one with implications for the heterogeneity of policing approaches in a department and meanings of partnership, is concerned with how organizations pursue legitimacy by responding to external demands of a more limited set of stakeholders. Organizational institutionalism, also known as the new institutionalism or neo-institutionalism, argues that perceptions of the general public are less important to determining legitimacy than the expectations and views of “specific publics” with the power to influence operations or the ability to influence those who hold such power (Worden & McLean, 2017, p. 482).

Organizations differ as to the environments in which they operate. They tend to exist in environments that are well-developed technically but weak institutionally, or that are weakly-developed technically but strong institutionally. Manufacturing is characterized by the former type. This industry exists in a well-developed technical environment “where production processes are well-understood and a market establishes the value of the products” (Worden & McLean, 2017, p. 483). The police reflect the latter.
[T]here is a limited understanding of cause-and-effect relationships in the production technology, such that it may be hard to assess the technical performance of an organization or even to say what effective and efficient production is, and a strong institutional environment, with well-developed expectations or requirements for how the organization should be structured. (Worden & McLean, 2017, p. 483)

Police departments are not judged simply on “technical” performance; there is no easily measured bottom line that is tightly coupled to organizational decision making or assessments. Although rates of offending, arrest, and clearance of crime receive considerable attention, policing in a democracy requires a wider range of measures, such as adherence to due process, equitable treatment across social groups, and citizen satisfaction (Moore, Thacher, & Dodge, 2002). But, viewed through a neo-institutional lens, the question of police organizational legitimacy goes beyond an expanded set of indicators. It is not based on achievement of a clear set of goals and objectives but on the expectations of powerful stakeholders or “sovereigns” as well as “myths” (described below) or powerful social rules.

Prominent sovereigns might include a city’s elected officials and other prominent voices in the community, such as religious leaders, well-organized neighborhood associations, and police unions. These expectations and the pressures and demands that follow from them are not necessarily tied to organizational performance and may radically differ from one another. The new institutionalism posits that the primary motivation for organizations is survival rather than high performance, for which a clear set of indicators is challenging to develop. Legitimacy depends on sovereigns’ assessments, which may include reference to performance indicators but are primarily symbolic in nature. How an organization looks and behaves is, therefore, more important to legitimacy than technical effectiveness and efficiency.

New institutional theory is more prominent outside of policing and criminal justice in the field of organization studies. The origins of the new institutionalism are in an “old”
institutionalism. Based in the work of Philip Selznick and his followers starting in the 1940s, this perspective asserts that rational decision making in pursuit of achieving technical goals is not a sufficient explanation of organizational action. Although most researchers at the time assumed managers rationally guided organizational behavior, institutionalists observed that in some cases rational problem-solving actions ceased to be focused on achieving efficient or effective solutions and gained a value of their own beyond their capacity for promoting formal organizational goals. In other words, these actions became “institutionalized.” Moreover, normative or political considerations could infuse decision making. That is, organizational behavior is not always geared toward rationally promoting formal, publicly visible goals. *Institutionalized organizations* are those whose technologies are not clearly linked to outcomes and whose outputs are difficult to evaluate. Early neo-institutional research applied this label to government and nonprofits but later work applied institutional ideas to all organizations, “and technical contexts would be treated as institutional constructions” (Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, & Suddaby, 2008, p. 4).

The beginnings of the new institutionalism is generally traced to Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) seminal article, which represents what Suchman and Edelman (1996) call “cognitive” institutionalism. A key difference from the old (or “normative” institutionalism) is the notion that organizational behavior is not viewed as strategic. Rather, it results from unexamined assumptions about “how things are to be done” (Suchman & Edelman, 1996, p. 911, citing Scott, 1987). Organizational structures are based on deeply institutionalized “myths” about “competence, volition, identity and causation” (p. 911). Meyer and Rowan argue that it is these myths rather than formal organizational structure (i.e., methods of coordination, control, and
decision making) that are responsible for organizational behavior; particularly a tendency for organizations of similar types to grow increasingly similar to one another:

Many of the positions, policies, programs, and procedures of modern organizations are enforced by public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts. Such elements of formal structure are manifestations of powerful institutional rules which function as highly rationalized myths that are binding on particular organizations. (J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 343)

Rules and technical efficiency may conflict, leading conformity to be ceremonial rather than in supportive of formal performance goals. Ceremonial conformity may also result from the need to respond to multiple contexts making inconsistent demands (Greenwood et al., 2008).

In the “behavioral” strand, rational decision making is brought back into neo-institutionalism, albeit in ways that may have little to do with efficiency and performance (Suchman & Edelman, 1996). More concerned with the effects of rules than with the mechanisms bringing out those results, “work in this mold is less committed to a purely cognitive model of human action and is more willing to incorporate rational, normative, and structural factors, as well. Thus, behavioral institutionalists deemphasize internal acceptance of ‘taken-for-granted assumptions’ and focus, instead, on external (often superficial) compliance with specific authoritative mandates—whatever the psychological dynamics underlying such compliance” (Suchman & Edelman, 1996, p. 912).

DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) well-known discussion of why organizations in a field increasingly come to resemble one another in structure and operations is representative of the behavioral strand (Suchman & Edelman, 1996). New institutional research often focuses on the stability of institutions and their effects on social processes, such as organizations, organizational fields, and sectors. Researchers in this tradition have developed conceptual frameworks to
explain the types of institutional forces that often lead organizations within a field to look and behave similarly despite local differences. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) addresses the tendency toward organizational similarity or “institutional isomorphism.” Isomorphism is hypothesized to result from three forms of pressure: coercive, mimetic, and normative. Coercive isomorphism can be informal or formal pressures exerted by organizations upon which an organization depends or on powerful cultural expectations. These pressures can be laws, regulations, and other rules dictating organizational action as well as more informal pressures from other organizations. Mimetic isomorphism refers to a modeling process that organizations engage in when trying to overcome uncertainty. That is, when organizations do not know how to deal with a situation, they look to other organizations’ responses, particularly high-status organizations. Normative isomorphism is due to pressures from the professional field because of common educational experiences and expectations as well extensive professional networks that allow for rapid diffusion of ideas.

Another prominent framework by W. Richard Scott (2008b) builds upon DiMaggio and Powell’s. Scott observes that research on institutions has found three “pillars” supporting their creation and dynamics: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. While the categories appear to overlap those of the earlier typology, Scott’s framework has a different focus. In contrast to DiMaggio and Powell’s attention to isomorphism, the pillars are intended to address organizational behavior and change more broadly—that is, including change in the direction of variety as well as similarity. Isomorphic processes are viewed more narrowly in Scott’s model, as mechanisms underlying stability and change, especially as they influence decisions resulting in greater similarity. The importance of agency in particular has come to be emphasized, whereas

22 Ironically, mimetic processes may at times lead to innovation as a result of imperfect interpretation of other organizations’ actions.
early statements tended toward greater determinism in environments that pressured organizations to become more similar to one another. DiMaggio (1991) and Oliver (1991) argue that agency is involved in shaping institutional environments, that organizations do not automatically acquiesce to institutional pressures—rather, actors respond in different ways, with some responses more likely than others under different conditions (W. R. Scott, 2008a).

Both cognitive and behavior institutional themes can be found in Manning’s (1997) seminal work. In the late 1970s, Manning argued that the police crime fighting mandate is a “myth” because crime represents a small part of officers’ jobs and, in any case, the police are argued to have little if any effect on crime, given the complexity of its causes. The inability of the police to control crime led to the cultivation of presentational strategies that conflate crime control with indicators associated with this goal (e.g., professionalism, crime statistics, technology, rationalization/bureaucracy). Being confronted with a multitude of institutional pressures may lead organizations to adopt some practices ceremonially rather than actually integrate them into the organizational fabric. There is evidence for such decoupling in policing with regard to community policing (cf. Zhao, 1996), problem-oriented policing (cf. Cordner & Biebel), and intelligence-led policing (J. G. Carter & Phillips, 2015), where traditional policing practices continued despite rhetoric and some level of programming supportive of these approaches.

Crank (2003) offers an important refinement to neo-institutionalist thought that builds on the increasing recognition of agency. Pointing neo-institutionalism to the individual level, he fuses the theory with Giddens’s model of human action. This model posits that people act with intentionality, hoping that certain outcomes accompany their decisions and reflecting on the apparent effects following from our actions. But people have only so much capacity to rationally
steer their own behavior. There are complexities of decision making processes and language that result in people not always knowing why they do what they do. We also possess values that are not readily amenable to examination and evoke emotional reactions when challenged. Finally, we act in historically contextualized ways; our choices are framed by the time and place in which we exist, which can result in unintended consequences. In sum, we act intentionally but with limits on our rationality imposed by unexamined values, bounded cognitive processing capacity, and historical context.

Applying this model to policing, Crank locates unexamined values and linguistic styles in the institutional environment. In a departure from earlier theorizing, however, sovereigns are characterized as part of the field of action and intentionality. Political pressures are understood as instrumental forces affecting decision making and action rather than part of the less consciously examined institutional environment. Crank notes, “The strength of the model is that it distinguishes between the municipal environment, which is properly understood as a field of action, and the institutional environment, which carries predispositive values and ways of thinking” (p. 203). Placing sovereigns in this category offers greater support for the notion that the police are not simply buffeted by pressures but can seek to manipulate as well as respond to this environment. Other influences such as research, grants, budgets, and technology are included in the same column, denoting information that more readily enters conscious observation. The structure and processes of the police department are also included under this heading.

Unintended consequences from actions taking place in historical context focus on the history and repercussions of professional policing. Crank’s model “points to the historically unique characteristics of decision making and its consequences. The model is pessimistic towards general theories of police practice” (p. 204). In sum, behavior is boundedly rational, steered
unconsciously through values and communication systems. The place and time in which decisions and actions take place further impact the outcomes in often unpredictable ways.

Taking the features of Crank’s (2003) model, one can envision a situation in which police departments are beset by numerous demands by sovereigns expecting a certain kind of approach to policing. The police will not only respond in some manner but will in many cases also seek to influence sovereigns’ perspectives. Police attempts to do so will be constrained by cultural assumptions that lead to communication problems as well as problematic histories of poor interactions with the community stemming from the era of professional policing. This suggests a complicated process that may involve a variety of strategies and may result in several approaches being used (if to varying degrees) within a single department.

Partnership would be expected to be affected by the police’s institutional and municipal environments and the consequences of having isolated themselves from the public. How partnership is used in a department is likely to depend, on one hand, on the underlying values and communication structures of the department. On the other hand, there will be pressures from sovereigns who vary in their level of influence, whose demands are more easily resourced, and whose demands more readily fit the culture and direction of the department. An example may help to illustrate the connection between them. A department may be subject to pressure from sovereigns for robust community engagement and interagency collaboration for counterterrorism preparedness.

These priorities cannot be addressed simply through decisions about how to allocate agency resources; there is a deeper question about whether it is possible to pursue certain forms of counterterrorism preparedness (e.g., covert intelligence gathering) without alienating various segments of the community, such as immigrants. Depending on how these demands are
addressed, police partnership may be affected in numerous ways. Certain community groups may be less willing to work with the police in either formal “partnerships” or more informally in terms of providing information or cooperation. Organizationally, police departments may invest less in efforts to engage the community in terms of the number of initiatives as well as efforts to integrate a partnership ethos throughout the department. Or, as Katz (2001) showed, a department may respond ceremonially to a particular demand by creating a unit or otherwise implementing change at the fringes of the agency. The choices made reflect in part the cultural priorities of the department. For example, a more traditional enforcement-oriented agency under pressure to engage the community while also enhancing its counterterrorism capacity might well be expected to invest more robustly in the latter while responding ceremonially to the former.

A police agency’s use of multiple and potentially conflicting approaches is further complicated by the heterogeneity of roles and cultures within the organization. These may be connected to specific approaches but may be subject to other influences that affect how policing and partnership are conceptualized. This internal heterogeneity and its implications for understandings of partnership is addressed below.

SEEKING MEANING

Although police organizations engage in many activities and strive to accomplish numerous goals, many if not most agencies boil these down to a core purpose in the form of a mission statement. Police mission statements typically include reference to working with or partnering with the community and to community policing more expansively (DeLone, 2007), which is a rejection of the philosophy underlying traditional bureaucratic policing. This framing presents to the public and to members of the department a singular organizational approach;
however, seen through a neo-institutionalist lens, the variety of pressures on police agencies almost certainly belies this notion. But there is a further complication.

Not only are multiple approaches likely competing for too few seats in a game of Musical Chairs, but there is also great heterogeneity within departments that is expected to affect understandings of partnership. Roles and their expectations can differ considerably. For example, patrol officers may be expected to engage in community policing while detectives or investigators are not (Manning, 2010). Members of special units involved in intelligence gathering and analysis may be focused on problem solving or an intelligence-led agenda that is unconcerned with community input. The purpose, membership, and tactics of partnerships for each would likely differ. Approaches may vary even within different components of the same organizational unit, such as different patrol units, each with its own distinct supervision, collection of officers, and area to patrol, as well as time of shift. These differences shape what personnel find salient to their daily routine and how they frame and understand their worlds. The value of particular policing approaches is likely to vary across these locations, as is the meaning and value of “partnership.” It is of interest then to consider how organizational cultures and identities are involved.

Culture

The literature on police culture has been characterized as falling into two camps, focusing on the coping mechanisms of a monolithic or diverse occupational culture (Terrill, Paoline, & Gau, 2016). While an overarching (if multifaceted) police occupational culture continues to be found in research (cf. Crank, 2004; Loftus, 2010), research has also focused on intra-departmental differences or subcultures (cf. Paoline, 2001). In recent decades, monolithic notions of police culture have been challenged, partly due to recognition of the greater diversity in policing. Cordner (2017, p. 11) argues:
The inclusion of more women, racial and ethnic minorities, and college-educated persons within policing has made it increasingly difficult to justify the assumption that ‘they’re all the same.’ In addition, a series of studies since the late 1960s has identified a variety of styles of police behavior suggesting that socialization and culture, however strong their influence, do not necessarily produce a single way of doing police work or a single vision of the police role. (Cordner, 2017, p. 11)

Cultures differ across agencies (Cordner, 2017; Klockars, Ivković, & Haberfeld, 2004), and organizations can have multiple identities (Albert & Whetten, 1985). In Cordner’s (2017) recent study, in addition to finding significant variation in responses across police departments, officer responses varied quite substantially on several items related to the external environment. For example, in one agency 23 percent of rank-and-file agree or strongly agree that most of the public respects them, compared to 92 percent of officers in another agency. Agreement about whether having a very good police-public relationship ranges from 12 percent in one agency to 100 percent in another (Cordner, 2017, p. 20). In his concluding notes, Cordner states, “These findings can be summarized by saying that police culture is not necessarily problematic, it is not monolithic, and it is substantially organizational, not simply occupational or a matter of individual personal differences” (Cordner, 2017, p. 21).

The extent of difference across a profession like policing highlights the degree of variation in ways of thinking about what it means to be a member of the profession and, therefore, how to do the job and what goals to pursue. Cultural values, methods of communication, and professional priorities and expectations are all implicated (Alpert, Rojek, & Hansen, 2013; Beech & Huxham, 2003; Herrington, 2012). Given the range of sizes, regions, cultures, leadership, and other factors in decentralized American policing, variation in what it means to be a police officer would appear to be unavoidable. Moreover, research has found relative homogeneity within and significant variation across patrol workgroups (Hassell, 2007), suggesting that it may be useful to view culture as a contextualized, multilevel phenomenon.
A contingent notion of culture is associated with different roles and environments. Relevant variation can exist even within functions. This would suggest that we should indeed anticipate variation in the expectations and values associated with partnership across a police agency.

But consistent themes appear to persist. Greene (2010, p. 16) observes that despite many changes to policing, “the police still cling to the notion of crime control as the raison d’être of policing.” In fieldwork involving two parts of an English police department, Loftus (2010) found a culture consistent with earlier ethnographies and resistant to organizational changes toward community policing. Officers viewed themselves foremost as crime fighters, and “[t]he principle of treating members of the public as though they are customers was profoundly inconsistent with the conception of what proper policing was all about” (Loftus, 2010, p. 6). Women tended to be more disposed to service-oriented work, but this was overshadowed by a pervasive masculinized crime control cultural ethos. Classic police cultural tendencies such as cynicism, suspicion, desire for excitement and conflict, and bravado were observed. Loftus also notes the existence of variation across subgroups by personal biography and type of shift.

However, these differences pale into significance when the repeated and embedded aspects of police culture are considered. Officers shared a set of assumptions, beliefs and practices which transcended the contrasting terrains. More importantly, the persistence of a substantially similar set of cultural traits to those identified almost half a century ago by earlier police research underlines the powerful endurance of police culture. (Loftus, 2010, p. 15, original emphasis).

She argues that this culture has persisted because the tensions and pressures encountered by rank-and-file officers have not fundamentally changed and continue to feed this occupational identity.

Miller (1999) observes an ironic twist in the gendering of police practices via occupational culture. She traces a long history of men defining desired police work in
masculinized terms and tapping into the notion of women as a special class with the particular natural skills and disposition for other work. Women often (if not always) embraced their status to establish themselves in the areas relegated to them, which typically involved contact with other women and youth. It was not until the Civil Rights Era when pressures prevailed upon police departments to make sworn officer positions available to women. Miller argues that community policing represents a radical shift for the police identity.

Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of neighborhood officers today are strikingly consistent with those of policewomen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ironically, the stereotypically “feminine” traits once used to exclude women from patrol, or to separate “real” crimefighters from “officer or social worker cops,” are now used to describe valuable community policing skills, albeit no longer in “feminine” terms. (Miller, 1999, p. 89, original emphasis)

But neighborhood (i.e., community) policing in Miller’s “Jackson City” was accomplished through a special unit, and patrol continued to view their own duties as “real” police work and in the typical masculinized terms. Within the neighborhood police officers (NPOs), a different culture was evident, where gender was not as salient to their framing of police work. Thus, even within a department engaging “successfully” in community policing, the more prominent segment of the department (i.e., patrol) may remain, and community partnership may continue to be conceptualized pejoratively by the majority of the organization.

This literature suggests that police personnel are likely to understand partnership in a variety of ways given the particulars of their organizational location (roles, statuses, and needs), the organization itself, and occupational norms. These factors shape key identities that are likely to be involved in how personnel across the organization perceive partnership.

Identity

Identity is a multifaceted construct with serious implications for how partnership is understood. It “involves people’s explicit or implicit responses to the question: ‘Who are you?’”
Vignoles et al. (2011) note that this question includes considerable complexity. The “you” may be singular or plural, referring to individual characteristics as well as group affiliations. The question may also be posed reflexively—Who am I? Who are we?—as attempts are made to grapple with the meaning of our identities introspectively or in social interactions. Thus, not only would sworn personnel identify as “police officers” (and in other ways discussed below), but they would also wrestle with what this means for them individually and as they encounter others.

Identity can be studied at different levels, including the individual, relational, collective, and material (Vignoles et al., 2011). Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas (2008, p. 13) note that several social identity theorists “now study multiple targets of identification, acknowledging that ‘organization’, as a formal, abstract entity, may not be the only interesting object or signifier of affiliation; factory, governance board, subsidiary, profession, product group, division, occupation, or gender and/or race subculture—to name a few—may instead or simultaneously serve as sources of identification.” In other words, “Notions of ‘we’ vary widely by person and context.”

Identities are not simply labels; they are organizing frameworks. As a result, they are expected to shape how personnel perceive their work environment. That police contend with multiple cultural influences suggests that police identity is also multifaceted. While a police occupational identity is important, particularly around being a sworn officer, there also exists variation by organization and by internal role. Organizational research has long recognized internal differentiation. More pointedly, the idea that not only do differences exist between segments of an organization but that different parts of an organization may work at cross-
purposes dates back at least to Gouldner’s critique of functionalism in *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* published in 1954 (Chriss, 2001).

One internal organizational feature highlighted by internal heterogeneity is the notion of permeability, which refers to “an organization’s ability to be open to or sense its environment” (Brinser & King, 2016, p. 390). Just as this would affect organizations as a whole, sub-organizational units may differ in attention to and engagement with their environments. For a long time, police identities were unlikely to embrace a collaborative ethos or a set of non-enforcement activities and in some cases continue to struggle with this new orientation (O'Neill & McCarthy, 2014). Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990, p. 38) note that “Especially in periods of transition, the past, present, and future all inhabit today.” In other words, changes stemming from a broad shift to a “community era” of policing does not mean that “professional era” policing disappeared in agencies attempting to adopt community policing. More broadly, attempts to sustain a more closed-system model may well exist alongside more externally-oriented approaches. There are thus clear implications for the relationship between police identity and perceptions of partnership.

This discussion of culture and identity argues that a variety of police identities exist, interact, and manifest themselves in some complex manner that has important implications for understanding and participating in partnerships. There are three main identities of concern to this study: professional or occupational, organizational, and role. Professional/occupational identity refers to how an understanding of the field in which one is employed affects one’s outlook (“I am a police officer”). Organizational identity, which can overlap with professional/occupational identity but is not identical, involves one’s understanding of what it means to be employed by a particular agency or organization (“I am an officer at Big City Police Department”). There are
numerous sub-organizational identities that can be thought of as role identities. These are associated with one’s “location” within an organization (“I am a police officer in the SWAT unit”). This can quickly become complicated by numerous facets of one’s location (“I am a Latina sergeant in the SWAT unit”), and the extent to which such facets are meaningful is an empirical question.

Research on how police identities relate to an organizational perspective on partnership requires more attention. How does one’s identity as a police officer, a police officer at a particular agency, and a member of a particular unit (at that department) influence one’s understanding and use of “partnership? For example, when police personnel are involved in cross-organizational interactions, to what extent does one’s identity as a sworn officer (or a civilian member of the department, for that matter) shape how one thinks about partnership in general? When working with non-law enforcement organizations, do they feel pressure to “act like cops?”

Research suggests this can vary. O’Neill (2015, p. 82) observes that research on Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) indicates that approaches to these positions can range in their emphasis on enforcement relative to “softer” or relation-based styles, with many officers and their supervisors opting for retaining an enforcement-oriented approaches. Officers’ gender, for example, has been found to moderate cultural influences. D. McCarthy and O’Neill (2014) find that male and female officers involved in partnership work in the U.K. tended to adopt different perspectives. While female officers were more likely to focus on prevention goals, male officers emphasized crime control and intelligence gathering. Organizational and role identities may also influence understandings and approaches to partnership. Does one’s identity as an officer at Big City Police Department generally or as an officer within a specific part of the
department (e.g., patrol, investigations, leadership, etc.) shape one’s ideas of partnership and lead to particular approaches to one’s role in collaborative settings? There may well be differentiation within those statuses and assignments, for example, based on beat characteristics or time of shift (time of day or night).

These questions are inextricably linked to organizational concerns. How are ideas about partnership communicated? Based on different roles, what are the expectations for partnership from the administration as well as from within those units? How do perceptions vary across these organizational sub-groupings? What training should be provided given these expectations? How do these ideas influence behavior when engaged in work with other organizations? Is skill at working across organizational boundaries valued in formal ways (e.g., through recognition, promotion, other opportunities)?

**ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This chapter has argued that there are pressures for myriad and potentially conflicting approaches to policing and associated manners of partnership, as well as various police identities that are expected to frame partnership differently. Based on these observations and the implications of a lack of conceptual clarity around partnership within a police agency, there is a need to examine how organizational leadership frames partnership and how police personnel make sense of partnership. The organizational sensemaking perspective is a useful guide for this exploration, as it is attuned to how people and groups come to construct meanings in the social world, particularly when clarity is lacking. Organizational sensemaking is explained below and applied to the context of partnership.

**Organizational Sensemaking: Constructing Partnership**

Organizational sensemaking seeks to explain how we come to understand our work environments and act in organizational contexts. How do we respond to the ambiguity and
uncertainty that arise? There are innumerable types of events that can interrupt familiar routines or otherwise lead organizational actors to question how they should proceed. They may need to rethink what is happening, their role, or the nature and purpose of their work. Sensemaking research has been used to examine both extraordinary events, such as crises and critical incidents, and more conventional situations and outcomes (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Some situations may be acute and existential, requiring meaning making and reactions to take place very quickly. For example, Weick (1993) describes a breakdown in firefighters’ sensemaking that he argues led to their deaths because of a lack of organizational resilience, in that the team of firefighters were unable to recognize the novelty of their predicament and to respond in ways that would violate key aspects of their professional identities. Other situations are more ordinary: sensemaking research also includes studies of organizational culture, social influence, and strategic change (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

Sensemaking came out of research in the 1960s and 1970s that questioned objectivist, positive science in favor of a social constructionist approach (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). It is a cousin to dissonance theory in that it argues people strive to create meaning out of confusion (Weick, 1995). “Psychologists extended Festinger’s research on cognitive dissonance and examined how people made sense of conflicting beliefs and reconciled (or failed to reconcile) their expectations with their experienced reality. Organizational scholars also explored how acting on beliefs could constrain future choices and possible actions” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, pp. 60-61, citations omitted).

Karl Weick, with whom sensemaking is most closely associated, identifies sensemaking as a process that tends to involve seven characteristics. It is “grounded in identity construction,” “retrospective,” “enactive of sensible environments,” “social,” “ongoing,” “focused on and by
extracted cues,” and “driven by plausibility rather than accuracy” (Weick, 1995, p. 17). These characteristics are widely used as the launch point for discussions of sensemaking. Based on their recent review of the sensemaking literature, Maitlis and Christianson (2014, p. 67) define sensemaking as “a process, prompted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cues can be drawn.” Helms Mills, Thurlow, and Mills (2010, p. 183) state that “At its most basic, sensemaking is about understanding how different meanings are assigned to the same event.” Sensemaking is a process for reconciling discrepant meanings that interfere with social action.

For example, people from different organizations may hold different expectations for “partnership” because their professional outlooks are less or more attuned to interorganizational collaboration. This would also apply to police-community partnership efforts. In conjunction with social identities, past experiences and how these experiences are currently framed also shape these understandings. Herbert’s (2006) observation of police controlling neighborhood meetings suggests an understanding of partnership as interaction with a low level of power sharing and as a burden that distracts from real police work. Community members may be socialized to expect this dynamic, in which case little active sensemaking occurs. If the public finds that by structuring community concerns in ways that are professionally palatable the police are not partnering in good faith or effectively, the conflict of meaning may need to be resolved before police and community partners can work together productively. This is where sensemaking processes would (potentially) be more fully engaged. A new script for both police and community members may be needed, allowing them to construct new expectations for what partnership means and how both parties can participate in ways that are perceived positively.
Weick (1995) notes that the seven properties do not necessarily comprise an organized, coherent theoretical framework in which all must be present or considered in a particular order. Some aspects may be more salient than others given the context. Helms Mills (2003; Helms Mills & Weatherbee, 2006) has argued that identity construction and plausibility are most important to sensemaking. Indeed, these are the main foci of this study as we examine whether and how partnership is made sensible to police personnel—that is, how this concept is made plausible for police personnel given the variety of ideas about partnership and the heterogeneity of police identities. Identity construction is central to our understanding of ourselves and guides what we pay attention to and how we take action. “This makes it pivotal to the sensemaking process and helps to determine what is understood as plausible or not” (Helms Mills & Weatherbee, 2006, p. 270). Each property is at least briefly touched on below to bring the centrality of identity into high relief as it pertains to partnership. As Helms Mills et al. (2010, p. 188) write, “Identity construction is arguably a key component in the process not just because it influences individual sensemaking, but also because it influences how individuals understand the other six ‘properties.’” Retrospection is also addressed in some detail, as it sets the stage for the power of the sensegiving process and the importance of providing organizational structures for sensemaking.

Sensemaking is attuned to threats to identity and the implications for understanding one’s world. Violated expectations that trigger sensemaking are not merely unexpected events. Sensemaking “occurs when the discrepancy between what one expects and what one experiences is great enough, and important enough, to cause individuals or groups to ask what is going on, and what they should do next” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 70). This is a subjective experience influenced by various identities (e.g., personal, organizational). When identity is
threatened, or even when it simply becomes ambiguous, people respond by working to understand the basis for the challenge, and often to alleviate it by enacting and constructing new accounts of themselves and their organizations. An organization’s members have elaborate defense mechanisms that protect their individual and organizational identities from threat and the anxiety and intense discomfort that comes with such threat (Brown & Starkey, 2000).

Sensemaking may thus be understood as an important way of trying to gain control and create predictability when people feel most deeply threatened (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 75).

Partnership would be expected to trigger sensemaking in several ways. It is not a feature of a traditional police occupational identity and is likely to provoke fundamental questions regarding occupation values. (Is this what a police officer does? Is this why I became a police officer?). The extent of an identity crisis will also depend on the nature of the specific agency; some will have more extensive histories of partnership, both in terms of number as well as the array of forms and purposes. A department may pride itself on its progressive approach to community engagement or on being a strict enforcer of the law. Identity-based questions are expected here as well. (Does partnership fit with what it means to be an officer in my agency? How do officers from other agencies view my department? Will officers from other agencies respect me if I do this type of work?) Further, within an agency, identities will be less or more challenged based on the nature of one’s role and the extent to which partnership is seen as an appropriate fit. (Will other officers in my department respect me and respond to me if I do this type of work?)

But there may be conflict even in more supportive locations. Once involved in a partnership, one’s identities may interact with that experience in various ways. For example, an officer working with several non-police partners might experience an activation of their police
occupational identity and feel pressure to represent “the police” or otherwise represent to these members what a “real police officer” is. There is perhaps also a question of how having more or fewer police personnel involved would affect perceptions of such pressure and its behavioral outcomes. Figure 3.2 provides further examples of identity-based sensemaking questions expected to be raised by partnership.

**Figure 3.2 Sensemaking about Partnership by Identity Activated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity activated</th>
<th>Sensemaking questions about partnership</th>
</tr>
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| Occupational        | • What does partnership mean to me as a police officer?  
                      • Is this appropriate to expect of a police officer (i.e., “real police work”)?  
                      • Does this fit with why I became a police officer? |
| Organizational      | • What does partnership mean to me as an officer in the XPD?  
                      • Is this appropriate to expect of an XPD officer?  
                      • Is this department one capable of change? Are changes generally made for good reasons with positive outcomes?  
                      • Does this fit with why I joined this department?  
                      • How do officers from other police agencies perceive the XPD?  
                      • Will officers from other police agencies respect me if I am involved in this type of work? |
| (across police agencies) |                                           |
| Role                | • What does partnership mean to me as an officer in this unit of the XPD?  
                      • Is this appropriate to expect of an officer in this unit?  
                      • Will other officers in my department respect me if I am involved in this type of work?  
                      • Will other officers in my department support and respond to me if I am involved in this type of work? |
| Occupational/organizational |                                           |
| (police vs. non-police agencies) | • What does partnership mean to my partner organizations?  
                      • What do my partner agencies think about “the police”?  
                      • What do my partner agencies think about the XPD?  
                      • What do my partner agencies think about my area of the department (e.g., patrol, SWAT, crime analysis)  
                      • How should I perform my police occupational identity? |

The basis of sensemaking is the idea that meaning is constructed—and, with it, the environment is enacted—through an iterative process of interpretation and action. Organizational actors are confronted with some disruption and need to make sense of it. They take note of certain stimuli, interpret them, act based on this interpretation, see how this is responded to,
revise their interpretation while noticing other cues, and take further action, repeating this loop until meaning has been restored (or until the process has utterly broken down). Weick notes, “human situations are progressively clarified, but this clarification often works in reverse. It is less often the case that an outcome fulfills some prior definition of the situation, and more often the case that an outcome develops that prior definition” (Weick, 1995, p. 11, original emphasis). In other words, “sensemaking is valuable because it highlights the invention that precedes interpretation” (Weick, 1995, p. 14).

This is a social process in which sense is restored through interactions with others—we act, see how others respond, and then attach meaning to our actions. This simple description applies to a broader process of retrospection. As we strive to make sense, we do not act with knowledge of what our actions mean; rather, we interpret our actions (i.e., the past) from our present vantage point. Retrospection takes place by referencing the past; however, what we take from our past and how we see it is shaped by our current perspective. “Whatever is now, at the present moment, under way will determine the meaning of whatever has just occurred” (Weick, 1995, p. 27). Weick is arguing that our understanding of past events or stories is dynamic. How we view them depends not on some innate meaning of actions but our current orientation and context. This applies to the nearly-present/just-passed as well as events perceived as historical. Retrospectivity reflects processes in which we manage information and act on our interpretations. It is intertwined with being “focused on and by extracted cues” and the eventual “enactment of sensible environments” rather than simply a careful reading of an objective environment.

The power of the present moment may seem to contradict the idea that sensemaking is retrospective. But our past has established our various identities, teaching us (randomly and
indirectly as well as through structured learning) what is important in our environments, and thus guiding what we see in the present before sending our minds back to the past for meaning. “In order to give meaning to the ‘present’ we compare it to a similar or familiar event from our past and rely on the past event to make sense” (Helms Mills et al., 2010, p. 184). The meanings assigned to events and, more fundamentally what stimuli are noticed, are closely tied to the number and complexity of identities constructed by the actors involved. One’s past experiences shape these identities and influence what is noticed and how it is perceived. Occupational lore, apocrypha, and the like can serve as methods of curating key features of professional identity. But formal mechanisms can also be applied strategically in the form of training, policy, and the like that work to populate our minds with particular meanings, increasing the likelihood that when we reflect back it is these meanings we retrieve and apply to our actions and situations.

Although sensemaking is an “ongoing” process, Weick’s perspective argues that it is triggered when familiar routines, patterns, or expectations are interrupted. Such interruptions stem the continuous flow of life and lead us to focus our attention on certain features of the situation—but not others—as we try to restore understanding. This extraction of cues is a preliminary act of “creation” that serves as fodder for a larger process of “interpretation.” “The interpretation process involves fleshing out the initial sense generated in the creation process and developing it into a more complete and narratively organized sense of the interrupted situation” (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015, p. S14). Enactment is the key third stage in this process.

The enactment process involves acting on the more complete sense made of the interrupted situation, in order to see to what extent it restores the interrupted activity. As the initial actions already taken by the actors become part of the environment with which they now engage, enactment (i.e., the further actions taken by actors) may lead to further iterations of the three processes, until the interrupted activity is satisfactorily restored—that is, when sense and action are in sync again. (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015, p. S14)
What we take note of as sensemaking grist, how we interpret it, and our enactment of environments do not occur in a vacuum. We are continually rereading and editing the past (which we need to keep remembering is our entire existence outside of the fleeting present moment). This necessarily involves new information and perspectives. We are constructing the environment we generally perceive ourselves to be reacting to.\textsuperscript{23} But again, what cues are extracted in the present depend on and are thus essentially shaped by our identities, which are also dynamic constructs. The past can be changed, our meanings continually recast. Shaping identities is therefore shaping pasts. As discussed in the next section, this is a critical part of an organization’s mission.

\textbf{Sensegiving}

\textit{Sensegiving}, a feature of sensemaking implied by the discussion above, refers to active efforts to shape others’ sensemaking, whether in the present, concerning past events, or going forward. It suggests a strategic use of sensemaking, in which organizational leaders or others driving change initiatives provide a vision of how things might be while connecting this new way with existing cultural values. Future-oriented sensemaking is also tied to institutional concerns about legitimacy (Gephart, Topal, & Zhang, 2010). It is in organizations’ interests to promote sensemaking that legitimizes organizational practices, especially given conflicting pressures from the institutional environment. Sensegiving speaks to the neo-institutional notion mentioned earlier that organizations are not merely acted upon by this environment; they have agency and may try to manipulate or shape their environments. Sensemaking and sensegiving are

\textsuperscript{23} This suggests the need for a longitudinal study design, to capture the larger and more subtle changes in meaning and action over time. However, as will be described in the methods chapter, using a cross-sectional case study approach is less problematic because the study is not intended as a test of sensemaking. Rather, sensemaking is being used as a guide for this exploratory research. We are more interested in the present study in how identity frames understandings of partnership and that organizational processes have the power to shape identity, influence how identity focuses our attention, and provide the retrospective material for sensemaking.
linked to organizational legitimacy and therefore involve the perceptions of not only police personnel but external actors. In the present study, in addition to better understanding sensemaking within a police agency toward partnership, we are also interested in the sensemaking of the police’s partners. Bringing other organizations and their personnel to the table and keeping them there should depend in part on how they understand the police department and what their expectations are for partnership generally and with the police more specifically.

Leadership therefore has an important sensegiving function. “Through evocative language and the construction of narrative, symbols, and other sensegiving devices, leaders help shape the sensemaking processes of organization members toward some intended definition of reality” (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 58). If organizational actions are expected to cause disruption through identity conflict, savvy leaders may seek to guide the ensuing sensemaking by their personnel, perhaps blunting or avoiding the more troubling aspects. It is important to distinguish sensegiving from other forms of influence on employee behavior. Others, such as exchange and coercion, may not seek to affect sensemaking; moreover, sensegiving involves multiple rather than single activities in effort to shape others’ understandings of reality (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Sensegiving may be a critical aspect of strategic change if various parts of the organization need help envisioning a different role or identity. Organizational change initiatives are often challenged by a lack of buy-in from personnel outside of the team working for change.

In their seminal study developing the idea of sensegiving, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) discuss the interplay between sensemaking and sensegiving, emphasizing the importance of a leader’s shaping of a cultural narrative:
In particular, perhaps the key occurrence in this case was the devising of an overarching symbolic vision, expressed in evocative imagery (“a Top-10 public university”). This vision provided an interpretive framework within which thinking and acting could be viewed in terms of their consistency with the requirements for achieving such a vision. The president himself later said that this symbol “took on a life of its own” and became a more powerful guiding image than he ever would have imagined. (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 445)

Gioia and Chittipeddi describe a recursive process during which sense is made by leadership, a sensegiving process is then used to distribute or convey this sense in a strategic manner, organizational personnel and external constituencies grapple with the ideas in this new vision, and these audiences then engage in sensegiving of their own that communicates the meaning of these changes back to leadership.

Organizational leadership has a particularly strong sensegiving influence, especially compared to lower-status organizational personnel, but sensegiving is not the sole province of leadership (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Stakeholders, the ranks of which may include board members, middle managers, and other organizational subordinates, “also play a significant role in organizational sensegiving, through activities such as issue selling, questioning, and the propagation of ideas in consultative committees” (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 58). Moore et al. (1999) implicitly describe such an understanding of sensegiving in the policing context:

It is also worth noting that much of what is important about an organization’s history is the way in which that history has been constructed as part of the development of an organizational culture. What the organization knows about and understands from its history is often a social construction that is used by factions of an organization to advance one vision of the organization over another. It is sometimes even used by leaders of organizations to shape the future culture of the organization. So, it may be that an important part of an organization’s history – the way that the organization understands its lessons and meanings – is also full of conflict and change. To the extent this is true, the organization has more paths to the future than it would have if the organization’s understanding of its own history were more stable and widely shared. (Moore et al., 1999, pp. 7-8, citations omitted)
Attention to sensegiving, then, demonstrates the *agency* involved in the construction and enactment of meaning. These processes can be consciously employed by a variety of actors.

In a related vein, it is also worth noting that, like sensemaking, sensegiving may have particular triggers and may require certain attributes of its intended purveyors beyond merely power. Maitlis and Lawrence (2007) considered the triggers and enablers of sensegiving by organizational leaders and stakeholders of three symphony orchestras. They observed distinctions between the two groups on these processes but also offered some cross-cutting observations. For stakeholders, sensegiving was triggered by issues they felt were important and an assessment that organizational leadership was incompetent on these issues. For leadership, sensegiving was triggered by issues “perceived as ambiguous, unpredictable, and involving numerous diverse stakeholders” (p. 76). Triggers were collectively characterized as a group seeing or anticipating a “sensemaking gap.” This suggests that there are more situations for sensegiving than merely organizational change. Triggers regarding perceptions of leadership competency and environmental complexity convey the political nature of sensegiving.

Sensegiving is a relatively costly process and will be avoided if a less costly or unpredictable method is available. But it may be nearly unavoidable at times: “More direct influence routes may not be available, however, when a sensemaking gap occurs, because actors will lack a shared definition of organizational reality that might provide the foundation for exchange or bargaining” (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 78). Sensegiving is an important strategy that undergirds the ability of more direct forms of influence to work, since at some level actors must have a shared definition of reality.
Beyond occasions for initiating sensegiving, what enabled stakeholders to engage in sensegiving was a level of expertise on the particular issue, legitimacy concerning that issue, and the opportunity to engage in sensegiving with the intended targets.

Although storytelling, for example, has gained prominence as a form of sensegiving (Boje, 1991; Dunford & Jones, 2002; Snell, 2002), our study suggests that the ability to engage in sensegiving goes beyond simply telling a good story: for stakeholders to engage in sensegiving, they must tell sensible stories (drawing on relevant expertise) at the right time and place (opportunity) and occupy a social position that leads others to listen (legitimacy). (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 79).

Leadership sensegiving was enabled by a level of expertise on the issue and/or high organizational performance on this issue. Enablers of sensegiving were characterized across groups as “discursive ability” and “process facilitators.” The former refers to sensegivers’ “ability to construct and articulate persuasive accounts of the world” (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 80). The latter “highlights the organizational nature of sensegiving: its dependence on organizational routines, practices, and structures that can either hinder or enable sensegiving by both stakeholders and leaders.

Research supports the idea that sensegiving relies on a direct approach to communicating meaning (discursive ability) and subtle (symbolic) or foundational (structural or organizational) supports that serve to couch the more straightforward tactics. Individuals attempting sensegiving need the discursive ability to construct persuasive accounts (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Such rhetoric needs to be convincing, but these arguments need to be supported by structural organizational features, “organizational routines, practices, and structures that provide the time and opportunity to engage in sensegiving” (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 58). This connects with Kraft, Sparr, and Peus’s (2018) finding that sensegiving depends on discursive and symbolic strategies. When attempting to direct subordinates’ sensemaking, managers spoke of engaging in specifically targeted communication for explanation or to dispel rumors. Symbolic strategies
refer to communication practices that convey a wider set of meanings than their original purpose. Kraft and colleagues found that practices signaling managers’ availability to subordinates and organizational stability were important symbolic sensegiving strategies and seen as critical to discursive efforts. A similar finding was noted by Smith, Plowman, and Duchon (2010) who found that effective managers’ “everyday sensegiving” efforts focused much more on communicating values and fostering relationships than more tangible or technical issues like schedules or costs.

This research suggests that the ability to provide a clear narrative about partnership by leadership is important but relies heavily on broader organizational processes, both formal and informal. Stirring rhetoric may be less convincing in the absence of policy, training, and advancement opportunities. For example, training curricula convey not only technical information on the topics but professional values, given the courses that are provided and those that are not (Crank, 1996). If training or other organizational mechanisms cover partnership minimally or not at all, leaders’ admonitions to engage in partnership may fall flat. This further highlights the importance of organizational processes in shaping how partnership is understood and used by police personnel.

Exploration of the sensemaking and sensegiving of partnership can take place in several contexts. At the level of the individual partnership, there are questions about the nature of engagement with a particular set of organizations, how the involvement of these particular organizations affects the activation of particular identities, using partnership to address a particular problem, how power is distributed within the partnership, and the language used to describe the partnership and its activities and goals. At the organizational level, one might ask how organizational policy and leadership communicate about partnership, what types of
relationships are engaged in, and the extent to which messaging and practice appear tightly coupled. Additionally, because partnership and sensegiving take place in an open system, we must inquire into the external context. How does the department communicate to external constituencies about partnership? Do external constituencies differ in their perceptions of partnership with the police? What informs this variation?

There are significant consequences if leadership ignores sensegiving or pays it too little heed. Organizational sensemaking is a “social” process in which meanings are developed as we interact with others and try out our interpretations. “[A]n organization’s rules, routines, symbols, and language will all have an impact on an individual’s sensemaking activities and provide routines or scripts for appropriate conduct” (Helms Mills et al., 2010, p. 185). Helms Mills et al. also note that “when routines or scripts do not exist, the individual is left to fall back on his or her own ways of making sense.” As a result, even significant discrepancies may not be sufficient to engage the sensemaking process.

Even when discrepant cues significantly disrupt identity or goals, however, they may still not trigger sensemaking if group norms or the organizational culture mitigate against it. Indeed, the literature offers many examples of situations in which people accommodate, explain away, or normalize discrepant cues, often because they are part of systems, routines, and cultures that inadvertently reduce mindfulness or encourage accommodation in service of production targets. (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 70, citations omitted)

It follows that an absence of sensemaking or a lack of sensegiving is an important consideration, for it implicates organizational process such as leadership, training, and policy that influence how organizations and their personnel understand themselves and their environments. These implications can be significant; as noted earlier, the breakdown or lack of organizational sensemaking has been associated with the loss of life (Weick, 1993).24

24 Notions of when sensemaking occurs (the inherent contradiction of being at once ongoing but also triggered) and its absence or failure are among the more challenging features of this perspective. Indeed, sensemaking is alternatively considered a genuinely continuous process (Gephardt et al, 2010). The idea of failed sensemaking is
A pertinent, if less dire, example relates to the challenge of implementing community policing. DeLeon Granados (1997) argues that its failure may stem from the lack of understanding of its underlying theory and concepts. He points to researchers as well as politicians and practitioners as having a hand in failing to convey these aspects clearly. The result, he posits, may be reversion to business as usual. “With such an ambiguous distinction police probably fall back to their default compliance-based behavioral style and define their own mission. In turn, citizens tend to limit their conceptualization of community policing” (DeLeon Granados, 1997, p. 377). If partnership is similarly cloudy, this suggests it will be ignored or interpreted in line with existing, familiar practices.

**Research Questions**

To distill the study’s arguments to this point:

1. Partnership has many potential meanings. Political and economic movements privilege certain ideas, and within policing different approaches come with different expectations for partnership. Police agencies are likely to use more than one policing approach, bringing with them more than one meaning of partnership. These approaches and meanings may conflict.

2. An important reason for this multiplicity and potential conflict is that police agencies are *institutionalized* organizations. They exist in complex institutional and municipal environments that exert myriad and conflicting pressures and are not easily evaluated on technical performance. Thus, agencies seek their legitimacy from competing symbolic sources.

3. Not only do different approaches to policing come with varying expectations for “partnership,” these notions are expected to interact with numerous policing identities. Police occupational, organizational, and role identities are each likely to lead personnel to make sense of partnership in different ways, some compatibly, others in tension. This study seeks to explore how police personnel come to understand partnership in light of these identities.

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also contested (Helms Mills & Weatherbee, 2006). These issues have important implications within the context of the present study and will be discussed in the final chapter.
4. Police leadership has the potential to shape how personnel make sense of partnership through a variety of strategic choices referred to as sensegiving. This study further seeks to explore how police leadership engages in efforts to guide the sensemaking efforts of agency personnel.

5. Because pressures and legitimacy cannot be understood in the policing context without reference to the external environment, it is also important to consider the expectations for partnership held by those with whom the police partner.

Based on the arguments made above, we are ready to articulate a set of research questions.

Main question: How is partnership understood within police agencies and among their partners?

Research question 1: How is partnership framed at the organization level?
1.1 How does police leadership conceptualize partnership?
1.2 How are the associated meanings of partnership communicated to agency personnel?
1.3 How is the agency and its understanding of partnership conceptualized relative to other police agencies?
1.4 How are the associated meanings of partnership community to agency partners?

Research question 2: How is partnership understood within the organization?
2.1 How do police personnel conceptualize partnership?
2.2 What message do personnel perceive leadership to be communicating about partnership?
2.3 What organizational mechanisms are perceived to support or hinder partnership?
2.4 How do views compare/contrast across the organization?
2.5 How is the agency and its understanding of partnership conceptualized relative to other police agencies?

Research question 3: How is partnership understood within relationships involving the police?
3.1 How do police personnel involved in the relationship perceive partnership?
3.2 How do police personnel involved in the relationship perceive their partners?
3.3 How do non-police personnel involved in the relationship perceive partnership?
3.4 How do non-police personnel involved in the relationship perceive their police partners?
3.5 How do views of partnership compare/contrast across partners?

The next chapter describes the methodological approach used to answer the research questions provided above.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH AND STUDY DESIGN

This study uses an interpretivist framework to explore the meaning of partnership in a police department and among its non-police partners. Interpretivism and case study are described below.

An Interpretivist Approach

This study argues there is no fixed or universal notion of “partnership” to uncover and count. Given the multitude of meanings, potential for conflicting meanings, and diverse nature of police work and associated identities, partnership is likely to be constructed in numerous ways that are context-dependent. Nor is this study’s purpose to engage in an evaluation. While there is a grounding interest in how partnership relates to notions of reform in response to the critique of professional policing, the purpose is to understand how partnership is made sense of. A different epistemology is required that recognizes the subjectivity and fluidity of conceptualizations of partnership and the need for contextualization to frame these understandings.

As contrasted with the positivist paradigm, interpretivism does not demarcate a bright line between the observer/subject and the object of study, since it does not accept the premise that an objective social reality exists. Rather, “we conduct our affairs in accordance with our motives, meanings, life-goals and self-concepts, and we co-create cultures with shared patterns of feeling, thinking, believing and doing” (Humphrey, 2013, p. 7). A result is that people are not separate from the act of meaning construction. “Partnership” exists only as it is built through a literally creative social process. To better understand partnership’s construction, this study sought to work both inductively and deductively. Inductively in that this study sought a fuller understanding of partnership and was not focused on ascertaining how a particular abstracted
version of partnership (e.g., one based in community policing) was understood and practiced (Poole, 2004). Instead, the study was oriented toward learning what partnership meant *in situ*. Deductively in the sense that organization and collaboration theory are rich, informative bodies of work. They have informed the study’s conceptual framework, introduced below. The use of such a framework acknowledges the contributions of previous observers and helps to make sense of the findings generated by the present endeavor.

**A Qualitative Case Study of Perceptions of Partnership**

An interpretive approach emphasizes depth over breadth. This is an exploratory study of a complex and ambiguous idea (partnership) that is put into practice by the police without sufficient clarity of meaning, making it appropriate to seek a greater understanding of its use within a specific place through case study. Case study has no single definition, as it depends on the purpose of the research and its underlying epistemology (Schwandt & Gates, 2017); however, prominent definitions illustrate important common themes. Yin (2009, p. 18) defines the case study method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” The latter part of the definition is in contrast to a controlled experiment, which “deliberately divorces a phenomenon from its context” Yin (2009, p. 18). Other definitions similarly emphasize the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon in context (cf. Crowe et al., 2011; Woodside, 2010). Stake’s (1995) observation that “A case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning” offers a distinctively interpretivist or constructionist perspective. His statement highlights that the present study does not render an objective statement on partnership but more humbly offers interpretations.
Schwandt and Gates (2017, p. 341) argue that identifying the “case” in a case study can be challenging, as “what constitutes a case is disputed.”

A critical question for all researchers employing cases as the basis for their research is, “What is this a case of?” This question focuses researchers’ (and readers’) attention on distinguishing the phenomenon of interest from the studied unit or instance. The instance or unit, for example, may be the horrific explosion of the Challenger space shuttle, but the key question is, “What do we make of this?” or “What is this a case of?” In the hands of the sociologist Diane Vaughan (1996), it was a case of the normalization of deviance in the NASA organization. (Schwandt & Gates, 2017, p. 342)

Based on this understanding, identifying the case is (at least) a two-stage process. A specific instance or unit is required to focus the initial efforts. Only following the completion of the project can one then respond to the question of what to make of “this.” Another way of looking at this is Geertz’s (1973, p. 22, original emphasis) admonition to anthropologists that “The locus of study is not the object of study. Anthropologists don't study villages . . . ; they study in villages.”

In the present study the preliminary focus was how partnership is understood by personnel in a focal police department (described below) and by the department’s “partners.” The ultimate characterization of the case—“what this is a case of”—speaks to the ongoing fight over the nature of policing itself. Policing as a field presents itself as within a community era but has never fully left its traditional insular approach behind. Despite criticism and pressures for a new approach, traditional policing has largely continued under the guise of community policing. If viewed as an organizational approach, community-focused partnership in policing continues to be either an idealized edifice yet to be built or a shield against change. Sincere attempts to build democratic policing on this soggy ground have generally been piecemeal at best, working with incomplete and untested structural designs and with a construction crew lacking commitment to
the project. The present study is, arguably, a case of an attempt to give life to past claims, of constructing a democratic approach that was presented to the public but never truly existed.

The Focal Site

Partnership was explored as it pertains to a specific “focal” police agency (Evan, 1976) in order to understand how partnership was perceived by personnel in the organization and how perceptions of partnership appeared to be shaped through sensegiving efforts. The Cambridge Police Department (CPD)\textsuperscript{25} in Massachusetts was chosen as the focal site of this research, because of its size and reputation as a respected and active department, engaged with community organizations as well as other law enforcement agencies and involved in professional policing circles. These features suggested that the department would be familiar with the notion of partnership and would have a variety of partnerships to discuss and observe. In 2013, when data collection began, the CPD employed 273 sworn officers and 38 civilian personnel (Cambridge Police Department, 2014a). Access to conducting research within the Cambridge Police Department was granted in May 2013.\textsuperscript{26} Prior to data collection efforts, the police commissioner sent a department-wide email alerting all personnel about the study and encouraging participation (see Appendix 1).

Labeled by some as “The People’s Republic of Cambridge” in reference to its ostensibly leftist political orientation, the city can claim progressive bona fides on several counts. The city council elected the nation’s first Black openly gay mayor in 1992 (Friedman, 2006) and Black

\textsuperscript{25} The Cambridge police commissioner at the time of this study gave permission to identify the department in published reports.

\textsuperscript{26} The researcher and his dissertation chair met with the police commissioner, chief administrative officer (the top civilian employee), and superintendent for support services to present the proposed project. The group was receptive to the idea and the police commissioner indicated the project could go forward. Soon after, the researcher defended his dissertation proposal, sought and obtained Institutional Review Board approval for the project and its associated materials (recruitment messages, consent form), and began making further preparations to commence data collection.
openly lesbian mayor in 2008 (Handy, 2016). In May 2004 the city was the first to issue marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples in the first state in the nation to legalize gay marriage. In the 2012 presidential election, Cambridge was dark blue. Although Democrats beat Republicans by 23 percent in the state overall, in Cambridge the Democratic ticket won by over 75 percent (86.1% vs. 10.9%) (Boston Globe, 2012). These events and others suggest a city that expects a police department that is responsive to community input.

The hierarchy of the CPD has six levels. The department is headed by a police commissioner, and at the time of data collection the rank hierarchy further comprised 2 superintendents, 7 deputy superintendents, 17 lieutenants, 31 sergeants, and 176 patrol officers. There were also 36 detectives and 36 civilian staff. Figure 4.1 displays the allocation of personnel at the CPD. Superintendents command the two major sides of the department. One superintendent runs the Operations Division, which primarily comprises Patrol (including the Traffic Enforcement Unit and the Community Services Unit); the second is in charge of the Support Services Division, which includes the Criminal Investigation Section (including the Crime Analysis Unit), and the Administrative Services Section.

**Figure 4.1 CPD Personnel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank/designation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police commissioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy superintendents</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenants</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeants</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol officers</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detectives</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian personnel</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sworn personnel</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total personnel</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CPD Sworn Officers & Civilian Personnel Allocation, as of August 3, 2014

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27 Also higher-than-average percentages for Green (1.9% vs. 0.6%) and Libertarian (1.1% vs. 0.1%) candidates.
28 Detectives are sworn personnel who also hold a rank in the department’s hierarchy, but the document from which these figures came did identify such personnel only as “detectives.”
Partnerships Examined

Because there is no set definition of partnership in general, in policing, or in Cambridge specifically, it was not possible to select “partnerships”\textsuperscript{29} a priori. It was necessary to use initial data collection efforts to explore the range and depth of relationships in the CPD in order to identify and select instances for in-depth study. Three\textsuperscript{30} current partnerships were chosen to explore different types of relationships. These were selected because, after interviewing the police commissioner, they seemed to be closely associated with his vision of robust engagement with city agencies, service providers, and the public. It was hoped that they would therefore provide an in-depth empirical example of his approach.

The three partnerships that were selected are the CPD’s work with the Cambridge Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Commission; the Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative; and the CPD’s engagement with The Port/Area Four neighborhood. Each was considered by department leadership to be an important effort. While the partnerships will be described in considerable detail in discrete chapters, each is now briefly introduced.

Created in 2004, the GLBT Commission—renamed the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission in 2017—is a volunteer commission enacted by Cambridge city ordinance. The commission advocates for the city’s LGBTQ community on numerous fronts including public safety and relations with the police. At the time of data

\textsuperscript{29} Going forward, “partnership” is often used along with other terms to refer to the specific initiatives examined and other purposeful, sustained interactions between the police and community members or organizations. Although partnership’s meanings are in question, the label is used to avoid verbal gymnastics in some cases. Readers are asked to tolerate this shortcut.

\textsuperscript{30} As Palmberger and Gingrich (2014) note, qualitative case studies often restrict themselves to two-to-four cases in order to allow for adequate opportunities to explore their complexity, to address meaning rather than measure difference.
collection, the commission had 19 members, who are appointed for three years and often serve multiple terms. The CPD has provided a liaison to the LGBTQ community since 1997, when a community organization called the Cambridge Lavender Alliance (CLA) had requested one. The liaison relationship shifted to the commission after its creation (the CLA disbanded around this time) and has continued, with different personnel in that position, to the present.

Started in 2007, Safety Net, as it was generally referred to, is a multiagency effort to intervene in problem youth behavior. During the time of data collection, organizational participants included four city agencies—the CPD, the Cambridge Department of Human Services Programs, the Cambridge Health Alliance, and Cambridge Public Schools—the state Department of Children and Families, and The Guidance Center, a local non-profit behavior health services provider. Individual participation changes over time, but “membership” at the time included at least 20 people, with its largest contingent being from the CPD. Participants cited the police commissioner and a psychologist from the Cambridge Health Alliance as the originators of the initiative in an effort to address the high rates of diagnosable mental and emotional health problems affecting young people encountered by the police. Safety Net uses a

31 The researcher approached the commission to seek its participation in July 2014, first attending the public monthly meeting of the commission being held that month. Prior to the meeting, the researcher introduced himself to a number of members present, including a commission co-chair. The researcher was the only “guest” that evening—the police liaison was unable to attend that meeting and no other members of the public were present. He was given the opportunity during the meeting to introduce the project more formally and ask the commission to consider participating. The commission members welcomed the researcher and provided a brief history of the commission for his edification. After the meeting, the co-chair indicated she would like to discuss the proposal with the other co-chair. It was soon decided that the co-chair from that meeting would contact the commission’s membership and ask them to indicate to her whether they would be interested in participating. She would then forward their contact information to the researcher to arrange for interviews.

32 Access to Safety Net was sought by the researcher in June 2014 by reaching out to the lieutenant leading the collaborative, who was also the commanding officer of the Community Services Unit. The CSU included the Youth and Family Services Unit, which housed the CPD personnel involved in Safety Net. Although the lieutenant agreed to participate, observations of collaborative meetings would be limited to a single meeting of the full collaborative during their bi-weekly case management gatherings at CPD headquarters and to one of the Safety Net leadership team. There were concerns that, given the privacy of information promised to participating youth and their families, including another person—especially a researcher looking to write about and publish his observations—would potentially interfere with the relationships they were cultivating.
case management approach in which individual police officers and juvenile detectives (all of whom are members of the department’s Youth and Family Services Unit) serve as the main point of contact for youth and their families and as the case manager.

The relationship between The Port/Area Four neighborhood is less easily bounded than the preceding two, hewing more to the classic idea of community policing partnerships. The focus continues to be primarily on the CPD’s relationship with other organizations, however, the target of efforts is wider—community engagement and public safety more broadly than a particularly type of behavior, as with Safety Net, for example. Compared to the GLBT Commission, the focal community is much broader (geographic rather than demographic). In the course of conducting the study, it became clear that partnership could be conceptualized in ways that transcend a strict focus on relationships across formal organizations (e.g., across units within the department, between individuals in ways important to activating interorganizational partnerships). This neighborhood-focused case study allowed for perceptions of partnership to expand where necessary.

In addition to a regular patrol presence, a more targeted effort—the Neighborhood Sergeants Program—is in practice. Started in the late 1990s, the Neighborhood Sergeants Program (NSP) assigns at least one sergeant and a supervising lieutenant to a neighborhood. The lieutenant generally supervises two sergeants, each working in the two neighborhoods in the lieutenant’s sector. The sergeant serves as the primary contact for community concerns. The Port/Area Four was chosen due to its position as special case in the city. The neighborhood had a lower median income, greater racial and ethnic diversity, and higher crime compared to other

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33 The NSP served as the launching point for this case. Discussions with The Port/Area Four sector lieutenant (and former neighborhood sergeant) served as the main source of information regarding the participants for this case study. In October 2014, he provided a list indicating the organizations and individuals with whom the Neighborhood Sergeants Program had had a relationship in the neighborhood.
parts of the city. It was also experiencing higher levels of development, which were associated with neighborhood tensions.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This study uses a conceptual framework for exploring the CPD’s understanding of partnership based on a synthesis of Crank’s (2003) neo-institutional model and organizational sensemaking theory.\(^ {34} \) Reflecting Giddens, Crank’s (2003) model requires reflecting on action by “taking into consideration its particular context in space – our local geographies, and in time – what other things are also going on. Reasons for acting at one time may be different than for another time” (p. 199). An important implication is that actions will have unintended consequences, it is impossible to predict the future. In this synthesized conceptual framework, this historical context is considered primarily as an influence on sovereigns demands, the technical environment, and police structure and operations. The unintended consequences of the professional policing movement for Cambridge as well as the effects of other events on the city are prologue. Reflections on how the city’s history has influenced how partnership is seen and used by the department are key.

The institutional environment is another important contextual factor. In Crank’s model, the value/belief systems “provide the moral predispositions which provide meaning to the life of members of a police organization” (p. 201). These are deeply held orientations that relate to belief in the law and other factors that would lead one to become a police officer. Political and economic ideologies are also included here, which speak to the discussion in Chapter 2 regarding partnership ideas that are culturally broader than policing but also serve to influence ideas of

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\(^ {34} \) It is important to note here the iterative nature of qualitative research generally and this study in particular. While Crank’s model specifically was not initially part of the study, neo-institutional theory and sensemaking have been considered from the beginning. During the later period of writing, the researcher determined that combining Crank’s model with sensemaking was helpful in framing the study.
partnership in policing. Linguistic/communications systems “[carry] the traditions of local police organizations” and “infuse police work with meaning” (p. 201). Verbal and non-verbal expressions (e.g., metaphors, symbols, rituals and ceremonies) are used and understood to convey the values and beliefs discussed above. As Crank notes, this includes the way language is used to construct categories, such as the way that race, ethnicity, and gender are framed and used to guide decisions and behavior. Interest is focused on identifying indications of values that might serve to influence notions of partnership. Such values are typically latent and only manifested through linguistic and communicative action.

A second heading includes more direct pressures and structures that may consciously influence thought and behavior. This is where Crank locates sovereigns, specifically in the polity field of action. Although he identifies sovereigns for “chiefs” and for “line officers,” the organizational locations seeing varying types of sovereigns is an empirical question and leaves open the possibility of greater heterogeneity. The technical field of action is where more tangible influences are visible, including research and grants, the municipal budget and tax structure, information technologies, and the like. Crank also addresses departments’ structures that exist to engage with and respond to both fields of action. Included in Crank’s model are agency mechanisms that monitor organizational legitimacy on these fronts. Here, the focus is on how people, groups, the nature of people’s roles, and organizational routines and structures affect notions of partnership. Under this umbrella are organizational features such as policy and procedures, training, performance review, advancement processes, and other mechanisms that serve to promote or hinder various ideas about partnership’s value and appropriateness.

There is some overlap between the features discussed under the second heading (pressures and structures) and the third heading, under which sensegiving falls. Indeed, various
sovereigns could well be engaging in purposeful sensegiving efforts. Sensegiving is somewhat artificially pulled out to focus on efforts performed by the police commissioner in particular (as a sovereign for other personnel in the department) and whether various organizational mechanisms were purposefully crafted to shape how personnel perceived a certain notion of partnership (as opposed to a mechanism have a serendipitous or inadvertent effect on perceptions). The issues discussed here related to whether the police commissioner purposefully engaged in sensegiving around partnership through his rhetoric, by his example, and through his influence on any number of organizational processes. Figure 4.2 provides examples of organizational structures and sensgiving opportunities that may guide sensemaking about partnership.

At this point in the model, occupational, organizational, and role identities are envisioned as mediators to how personnel make sense of partnership given the myriad pressures and attempts to consciously influence their thinking on the subject. Given the heterogeneity of police departments in terms of the different roles and statuses, sensemaking is expected to be heterogeneous as well. These identities are expected to shape retrospection and, similarly, notions of plausibility. Identities both enact and are shaped by what is noticed when looking to contextual factors, the institutional environment, the actions of sovereigns, what occurs in the technical field of action, departmental features, and direct attempts at sensegiving. Whether subconscious, implicit, or direct, these factors are involved in developing the identities, which are then deployed by individuals to make sense of their worlds. Identities are dynamic, however, and so what is noticed and how it is interpreted changes, too. The final step in the model is the latent construct of partnership’s meanings in the CPD. This could not be comprehensively characterized given the scope of the study, but a case is made later on for how partnership is perceived within the organization and areas to consider in the future.
Thus far, this discussion has only implicitly addressed the experience of partnership and interactions with those involve from other organizations. These issues need to be brought out into the light. The experience of engaging in work with people, groups, and organizations outside the CPD is a feature of the technical environment, and those who are directly involved in the work or who are part of the organizations or sponsors of the work are also sovereigns. There is of course a link to the historical context. The nature of the relationship between the police and various groups is likely caught up in whether they have worked together and the types of
interactions that have resulted. Subsequent demands from sovereigns will reflect these experiences to some degree.

Figure 4.3 provides a visual summary of the preceding discussion. It should be noted that Crank’s discussion and Giddens’s model on which it is based do not present the elements underlying action as being have clear causal connections among one another. They are discussed as factors underlying action. In contrast, the model below suggests directionality and causality among its elements while also acknowledging that the relationships are also likely recursive. This study does not propose to test this model; rather the model is being used to guide our exploration of partnership’s meaning. Its strength lies in connecting the notion that partnership’s meanings are likely to be heterogeneous and the likely sources of that heterogeneity. The model suggests that the less-consciously-examined factors (context and the institutional environment) influence the development and maintenance of organizational structures that shape routines and opportunities, demands made on the organization, and strategic organizational efforts by leadership to shape how personnel conceptualize an issue, in this case partnership. These structures, pressures, and sensegiving efforts are unlikely to be perfectly aligned, leading to heterogeneity of meaning. Moreover, how personnel understand partnership is filtered further through multiple social identities pertaining to professional, organizational, and role pressures. It is argued that how partnership is ultimately understood at the organizational level can only be observed through this fractured lens.

**Framework Applied to Research Questions**

How are these theoretical concepts related to the research questions? As explained, the overall question of how partnership is understood within police agencies and among their partners is complex and multifaceted. In order to bring clarity to this latent construct, the main question is divided into three parts. Answering the main research question—how partnership is
Figure 4.3 Synthesis of Crank’s (2003) Neo-Institutional Model and Sensemaking

- **Context and institutional environment**
  - Uniqueness of time and place
    - The Cambridge context: history of CPD, police-community relations
  - Institutional environment
    - Value/belief systems, communication systems

- **Pressures and structures**
  - Polity field of action
    - Sovereigns: for top executive, line officers (and other personnel)
  - Technical field of action
    - Research, grants, budget, technology
  - Department
    - Technical structures, polity structures, monitoring for legitimacy

- **Strategic organizational processes to shape meanings**
  - Sensegiving
    - Leadership (rhetoric, example), strategic organizational efforts
  - Identities
    - Occupational Organizational Role

- **Sensemaking efforts**
  - Heterogeneous sensemaking
    - Understandings in various organizational locations, as members of CPD, and as police
  - Police organizational meanings of partnership
understood within police agencies and among their partners—relies on exploration of numerous contributions. It requires examining the professed meanings offered by individuals, but this is certainly insufficient. To be useful, it is also important to look toward the influences on these views and, assuming heterogeneity, what might explain such variation. While not seeking to test causal relationships, this study was searching for plausible explanations of how perceptions have come to be what they are. The conceptual framework presented above identifies helpful avenues to consider when trying to answer this question and its subparts. The following discussion relates the theoretical model to each of the research questions.

**Research question 1: How is partnership framed at the organization level?**

1.1 How does police leadership conceptualize partnership?
1.2 How are the associated meanings of partnership communicated to agency personnel?
1.3 How is the agency and its understanding of partnership conceptualized relative to other police agencies?
1.4 How are the associated meanings of partnership communicated to agency partners?

This question focuses on the intentional, strategic efforts—primarily of police leadership—to convey specific meanings of partnership within the department, to agency partners, and to the general public. First, police leadership needs to be clarified. The police commissioner has the singular authority to develop a vision for the agency to follow. While he is also subject to the influence of identity frameworks on his sensemaking, he is taken here to be the primary sensegiver in the CPD. Other personnel in leadership positions are involved in carrying out sensegiving, but the vision is that of the commissioner. The police commissioner’s understanding of partnership is therefore key. But it is also important to understand how top leadership below the commissioner conceptualize partnership, as they play a critical role in communicating the commissioner’s vision, which is not wholly and perfectly transmitted to these
leaders. Like other personnel, they too must make sense of these ideas, even if they are closer to their source and have the authority to dictate how the vision is implemented.

Influences on how partnership is understood also vary due to the police commissioner having been appointed from outside of the CPD, whereas command staff have spent their careers almost entirely in the CPD and have observed the city and department for a long period. Historical contextual factors were expected to have greater salience for them. Pressures from the institutional environment such as policing trends and assumptions about proper policing, along with styles of communicating were anticipated to be experienced in similar if not identical ways. Both the commissioner and top leadership would be attuned to similar sovereigns, who as Crank (2003) indicates are at a higher institutional level compared to line officers, and their expectations about policing generally and partnership either explicitly or indirectly. This is closely connected to the technical field of action, as leadership would be expected to pay more attention to how policing research, trends, budgets, and the like apply to partnership compared to lower ranking personnel. It was also of interest to see whether leadership’s understanding of partnership was framed relative to other departments. In other words, how important was it for leadership to see partnership in the CPD differently than other departments? How might the CPD convey how it understands partnership in comparison?

Police leadership is most effectively positioned to control organizational messaging about partnership. Meanings can of course be conveyed directly through official communication and rhetoric. Somewhat more subtly, top brass can lead by example. There are also organizational structures and processes that convey to personnel not only official messages but the value and usefulness of partnership relative to their own experience in the department. Such communication may be the result of strategic action but may not. For example, factors such as
how much attention is paid to partnership in academic and in-service training and the extent to which collaborative work is accounted for in performance reviews convey important messages to personnel. These messages can also be observed by partners and the public, but there is also the question of whether the department attempts to frame partnership in particular ways with these audiences as well.

**Research question 2: How is partnership understood within the organization?**

2.1 How do police personnel conceptualize partnership?
2.2 What message do personnel perceive leadership to be communicating about partnership?
2.3 What organizational mechanisms are perceived to support or hinder partnership?
2.4 How do views compare/contrast across the organization?
2.5 How is the agency and its understanding of partnership conceptualized relative to other police agencies?

The second question looks further into the CPD. As noted above, leadership below the police commissioner overlaps with other personnel in that they are also not the ultimate source of sensemaking fodder in the agency. Many may also have longer experience working at the department than the commissioner if not necessarily living in the city (there are no longer residency requirements). But there are also important distinctions in that polity and technical fields of action differ; the applicable sovereigns and nature of the daily expectations and routines can be quite different. Below leadership, there is an opportunity to plumb participants’ conceptualizations of partnership based on their experience of the local context and institutional environment, direct pressures from their work environment, and the influence of sovereigns. There is also a need to explore how leaderships’ efforts to communicate messages about partnership is received outside of the top echelon. Is the signal strong enough? Is the content relevant? Moreover, how do personnel react to other organizational features that purposefully or
inadvertently convey messages about the value and use of partnership? The three identity types are considered along with their views.

**Research question 3: How is partnership understood within relationships involving the police?**

3.1 How do police personnel involved in the relationship perceive partnership?
3.2 How do police personnel involved in the relationship perceive their partners?
3.3 How do non-police personnel involved in the relationship perceive partnership?
3.4 How do non-police personnel involved in the relationship perceive their police partners?
3.5 How do views of partnership compare/contrast across partners?

Observing empirical partnerships themselves is necessary to ground the sensegiving and sensemaking discussed internally. Although CPD personnel spoke of many partnerships, some of which they were involved in personally, without some reference to the practice of partnership these discussions are less satisfying. Within the context of actual relationships, questions of meaning can be addressed *in situ*. Moreover, these initiatives offer insight into what contextual features and pressures may be more salient in practice. Claims of sensegiving are put to the test, and identities are more intensely activated when confronted with heightened sensemaking needs. This serves as an opportunity to compare and contrast police identities with the identities of partners working in different professions and organizations. What cues are noticed by partners from different occupational mindsets? How are past events framed? How do current events seem to have shaped past understandings? There is also an opportunity to consider CPD organizational practices by looking across partnerships. What do the experiences within each tell us about how partnership is understood by the police, particularly leadership? Are they equally connected to organizational rhetoric, structure, and processes?

**Operationalizing the Model’s Concepts**

With operationalization in mind, the model’s theoretical concepts can now be discussed with greater specificity. The City of Cambridge is the local context most applicable, as it is tied
to identifiable political, economic, and cultural factors involving the governmental and budgetary structures that shape life generally and the workings of the CPD specifically. These features and trends are investigated as to their influence on notions of partnership, as they would be expected to shape the approaches to policing taken. What events and trends have been important to shaping policing in Cambridge? How do they appear to have affected meanings of partnership, the value associated with partnership, and the uses of partnership?

The institutional environment includes within it the deeply held cultural and professional ideas about policing, including what it means to be a proper officer, what “real police work” is, and how various notions of “partnership” fit with these conceptions. How do CPD personnel understand the nature of proper policing? There are communication practices associated with ideas emanating from the institutional environment. How do police personnel talk about partnership? What terms, symbols, metaphors, rituals, or other manifestations are related to perceptions of partnership? What appear to be their sources?

Crank (2003) takes sovereigns out of the institutional environment, locating them in the polity field of action. Pressures to engage in “partnership” and to do so in specific ways should be expected to differ within the department. The police commissioner and command staff, while not facing exactly the same demands, will typically be concerned with issues concerned with organizational legitimacy and high-level problem solving rather than day-to-day operations. As noted in Chapter 3, Crank (p. 202) lists as sovereigns for chiefs such entities as municipal government, other police organizations/leaders, business interests, residents, other agencies of the criminal justice system, and federal government as a source of ideas, grants, and other influences. Demands on line officers are expected to come from a more limited public (criminals/suspects, complainants/victims, troublemakers/misdemeanants/assholes), their
organizational environment (police managers, unions), the courts as their main criminal justice contact, and investigations by the department or an outside authority. Who are the sovereigns invoked by CPD participants? Are there pressures to engage in “partnership”? Do sovereigns exert direct or indirect pressures to “partner” in certain ways? Do pressures overlap or conflict? Are tensions recognized by police personnel? Is partnership perceived as representing a single or heterogeneous idea?

Somewhat surprisingly, Crank does not partition the technical field of action in the same way he does for the polity, given the close connection between these concepts. For example, the extent to which policing research is recognized as a regular or even critical part of one’s field would almost certainly differ by one’s rank and assignment. Factors like research, budgets, and grants may well affect the organization as a whole, but awareness of them and understandings of their impact on one’s daily routines would vary. This is also the case when considering perceptions of interorganizational and community partnerships. The salience and emotional attitude regarding these relationships will depend on how they involve themselves in personnel’s lives. How do ideas about “partnership” fit with participants’ daily routines and responsibilities? How do organizational and professional “realities” shape perceptions and use of “partnership”? How are relations with community and current, past, potential partners described?

The CPD itself—its structures and processes—is an important source of meaning, even if not intentionally crafted to do so. Features such as organizational structure, policy and procedure, recruitment and training, data collection, and recognition and advancement opportunities can all speak to the meanings, value, and uses of partnership. For example, lofty rhetoric about the importance of community partnership (discursive strategies) may be ignored if officers do not see it required through performance review or rewarded on promotional exams (symbolic or
structural strategies or non-strategic organizational features). How do features of the CPD serve to communicate notions of partnership? Sensegiving by the police commissioner (as well as top leadership) represents strategic attempts to shape meaning. This can involve not only rhetoric and direct communication but through modeling and organizational change. Do the police commissioner and top leadership engage in purposeful, strategic efforts to shape understandings of “partnership” in the CPD, among “partners,” and with the general public? What are the mechanisms used (e.g., rhetoric, example, organizational restructuring, etc.)? Do CPD personnel notice sensegiving efforts?

How CPD personnel formulate ideas about partnership was expected to involve a sensemaking process that relies on police identities on several levels. How do participants describe the nature of police work, how policing is done by the CPD, and what it means to be in their specific roles? It was expected that differences would be observed in discussions of partnership based on participants’ location within the CPD. How do personnel describe the nature of “partnership”? How are these descriptions informed by their understandings of policing as an occupation, what it means to be part of the CPD, and the nature of their specific place within the CPD? What cues do participants look to for guidance? What from the past is brought to bear? How does the present inform these retrospective searches? A summary of this discussion can be found in Figure 4.4.

When thinking about instances of partnership, the same concepts can be applied. However, now there are external perspectives informing these topics. People from organizations outside of policing and criminal justice will have distinct, if perhaps overlapping, sets of sovereigns and technical fields of action. The organizational structures from which they come will impose their own routines, opportunities, and constraints, and participants may bring with
### Figure 4.4 Theoretical Concepts Operationalized to the CPD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Concepts</th>
<th>Related Issues</th>
<th>Operationalizing Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Local political, economic, cultural trends that have influenced meanings and uses of “partnership”</td>
<td>How have political, economic, and cultural trends/events influence the CPD’s approaches to policing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional environment</strong></td>
<td>Notions of “real police work” and how “partnership” fits, related language and symbols</td>
<td>How is the nature of policing understood in CPD? What is considered “real police work”? How do CPD personnel talk about police work and partnership? What symbols, metaphors, etc. are highlighted? Where do these ideas appear to come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polity field of action</strong></td>
<td>Pressures from sovereigns to “partner” and to “partner” in particular ways</td>
<td>Who are the sovereigns invoked by CPD participants? Are there pressures to engage in “partnership”? Are there pressures to “partner” in certain ways? Do pressures overlap or conflict? Are tensions recognized by participants? Is partnership perceived as representing a single or heterogeneous idea?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical field of action</strong></td>
<td>Policing research, budgets, grant requirements, status of relationships with current, past, potential partners</td>
<td>How do ideas about “partnership” fit with participants’ daily routines and responsibilities? How do organizational and professional “realities” shape perceptions and use of “partnership”? How are relations with community and current, past, potential partners described?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
<td>Organizational structures/processes influencing personnel’s views of partnership</td>
<td>How do features of the CPD serve to communicate notions of “partnership” (e.g., policies, training, advancement opportunities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensegiving</strong></td>
<td>Police commissioner’s (and leadership’s) strategic efforts to shape understandings of “partnership” within the department, among “partners,” and with general public</td>
<td>Do the police commissioner and top leadership engage in purposeful, strategic efforts to shape understandings of “partnership” in the CPD, among “partners,” and with the general public? What are the mechanisms used (e.g., rhetoric, example, organizational restructuring, etc.)? Do CPD personnel notice sensegiving efforts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identities</strong></td>
<td>Notions of what it means to be a police officer, a member of the CPD, and in one’s role</td>
<td>How do participants describe the nature of police work, how policing is done by the CPD, and what it means to be in their specific roles?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensemaking</strong></td>
<td>Understandings of “partnership” from different organizational locations, as compared to other police departments, and occupationally as “the police”</td>
<td>How are descriptions of partnership informed by understandings of policing as an occupation, what it means to be part of the CPD, and the nature of their specific place within the CPD? What cues are attended to, what past events are referred to, how is retrospection informed by the present?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
them dramatically different perspectives, not just on partnership but a wide variety of issues, stemming from their particular occupational, organizational, and role identities. The sensegiving efforts of police leadership can be seen from another angle as well. Moreover, sensegiving may be offered by police personnel involved in the specific partnership. These efforts may be in place of higher level sensegiving, supplementary, or contradictory, and perhaps reflect some combination of these options. While sensemaking is ideally studied through a longitudinal design, participants were able to offer some clues to how sensemaking has proceeded.

**DATA COLLECTION**

**Methods of Data Collection**

This study used semi-structured interviews, observations (of ride-alongs and meetings), and a variety of materials (e.g., news articles, reports, departmental and partnership documents) to address the research questions. In total, 57 semi-structured interviews and 7 ride-alongs were conducted and 7 meetings were attended across the course of the study. See Figure 4.5 for a breakdown of interviews and observations across the phases and cases of the study.

In semi-structured approaches, the interviewer has a set of questions that can be asked within a looser framework than structured interviews but while providing more guidance than in unstructured. Protocols were developed and used to guide the interviews. They were memorized but were brought along for reference. It should be noted that qualitative research does not require that interviewers state protocol questions verbatim or ask questions in order, and interviewers are encourage to ask additional questions for clarification or to probe further on productive topics.

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35 Interviews and ride-alongs are counted by event rather than the number of participants, which is listed separately in the description column of Figure 4.5. For example, where multiple participants were interviewed at once, this was counted as one interview.
(Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The ensuing interaction leaves room for participants to expand on the topic or change directions to some degree.

**Figure 4.5 Interviews and Observations Conducted by Participating Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>With 17 sworn, 8 civilian personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ride-alongs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>With 4 officers assigned to Community Services Unit, 4 officers assigned to Patrol (one two-officer car is counted as one ride-along)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLBT Commission</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>With 9 commissioners and the liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Public monthly meetings: July, September, October, December 2014; February 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Net Collaborative</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>With 15 police and non-police members (one interview included three participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>One bi-weekly meeting of full collaborative membership, one meeting of collaborative leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Port/Area Four</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10 police and neighborhood stakeholders (one interview included two participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total ride-alongs</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total meetings</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two types of observations were made. Ride-alongs were conducted with officers in patrol and from the Community Relations Unit\(^36\) in order to learn more about how these officers perceived partnership within their front-line duties and to observe their work and interactions in the field. Protocols were developed to guide discussions. Rides with the CRU officers saw them engaged in their targeted duties, allowing for observation of “partnership” in the field. Those with patrol officers were more exploratory; the rides offered an important if limited opportunity to observe whether “partnership” activities were pursued during a portion of their shifts. Rides were not recorded electronically in any way. Notes were taken during the rides and more detailed field notes were made after their conclusion.

\(^{36}\) The CRU and Youth and Family Services Unit comprised the Community Services Unit.
Meetings were observed in two of the partnership cases (GLBT Commission and Safety Net). In addition to being valuable opportunities for validating findings from interviews and other methods, meetings are potentially important occasions for sensemaking. Whenever organizations come together for some purpose, we can expect challenges to understanding and increased ambiguity (Patriotta & Spedale, 2009). Individuals enter situations with a variety of occupationally, organizationally, and personally-informed perspectives view of the specific task at hand. A diversity of views may well trigger sensemaking efforts to overcome the ambiguity. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) observe that in Patriotta and Spedale’s (2009) study of a series of meetings among a group of experts from different organizations with a designated task, the experts initially entered into intensive sensemaking efforts in order to develop a shared sense of what the task was about before they were able to carry it out. The number of meetings observed in the course of this study were likely too few over a narrow time period to examine sensemaking processes. A longitudinal approach would be needed to observe whether and how dynamics had changed over time. However, witnessing the interactions during meetings added to the picture drawn by participants during their interviews, which addressed identity (as discussed, a key aspect of sensemaking). Notes were taken during meetings and more detailed field notes were made afterward.

This study focused primarily on participants’ perceptions to build an account of partnership in the CPD. While people’s opinions or attitudes are not impeachable through triangulation as are facts, myriad additional materials were used at times to check factual information offered by participants, describe contextual factors, and add additional details as needed for clarity. These include materials from the CPD (annual crime reports, organizational personnel allocation reports, Harvard Kennedy School report on the Safety Net Collaborative,
departmental pamphlets, departmental website, and internal departmental emails); other city
departments (city budgets, demographic reports, GLBT Commission meeting minutes and
establishing ordinance); the partnerships and their members (meeting agendas, Safety Net
process flow diagram, pamphlets); reports by non-governmental organizations; and a variety of
local as well as some national media news sources speaking to the Cambridge context, police
department, or the partnerships examined.

Data Collection Inside the CPD

Data collection was carried out first within the CPD to become sufficiently familiar with
the department and its relationships and which personnel might consider “partnerships” or using
some other label. Twenty-five members of the CPD (17 sworn, 8 civilian) participated in
interviews, mostly from September through December 2013, with two occurring in May 2014.
This represents the police commissioner and full command staff, six lieutenants, and one
sergeant (who had recently retired). Figure 4.6 summarizes the participation of CPD participants
in this first phase of research.

Figure 4.6 CPD Personnel Participating in the Initial Phase of Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank/designation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police commissioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy superintendents</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenants</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sworn</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment started at the top of the department with the police commissioner and
proceeded down through the command staff and lieutenants.37 The interview with the

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37 Although each of the 17 lieutenants was invited to participate, only six did. Of the eleven non-participants, five
expressly declined, while the remaining six did not respond to recruitment efforts. In early 2014, with the goal of
increasing participation at the lieutenant rank and to reach personnel at the rank of sergeant, the researcher sought
commissioner was intended to provide information on sensegiving efforts and thus to ground reflections from other personnel when discussing how they perceived leadership and organizational processes to be shaping understandings of partnership. Generally, higher ranking personnel were interviewed first, although the vagaries of scheduling individuals’ participation meant that this was not always the case (e.g., several lieutenants were interviewed before a number of deputy superintendents). It was expected that higher-placed personnel would possess greater knowledge of such efforts and greater power to define what a partnership is in the departmental context.38

Interviews with CPD personnel addressed their understandings of partnership, their perceptions of the influences on their views (i.e., unique context, institutional environment, sovereigns, technical environment, organizational structures, and sensegiving), and the extent of heterogeneity of views in the department. Regarding influences, questions asked participants to consider organizational and contextual issues that may have shaped how partnership is understood, valued, and used by the CPD. Participants were also asked about differences within the department as they pertain to views of partnership. Questions delved into comparisons between the CPD and other departments. Participants were also asked directly to describe what partnership means to them, and additional questions sought to clarify these meanings. Figure 4.7

the involvement of the Cambridge Police Superior Officers Association (CPSOA), the departmental union of sworn officers at the rank of lieutenant and sergeant. The CAO contacted the CPSOA president to request he reach out to the association’s membership about the study. No additional volunteers were forthcoming. Eventually, the researcher was able to reach the CPSOA president. The researcher then met with the president to discuss ways to increase participation from the superior officer ranks. Following a subsequent executive board meeting of the association, the president informed the researcher that none of the board expressed willingness to participate or to promote the project within their larger membership.

38 Personnel were emailed with an introductory message describing the project and the reason for soliciting the individual’s participation and an attached unsigned consent form that had been approved and stamped by the Northeastern University Human Subject Research Protection office (see Appendices 2 and 3). Follow-up emails were sent and phone calls made to try to ensure prospective participants were reached. Details of recruitment efforts (for participation across the study) were organized using Excel (e.g., dates of attempts made to contact individuals, notes on next steps, dates and locations of interviews, additional notes).
provides examples of the issues asked about concerning each of these subjects. The full protocol, provided in Appendix 7, includes various probes related to these issues.

**Figure 4.7 Concepts and Related Issues Addressed in CPD Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Related questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Context/ influences** | • How does the police commissioner communicate about partnership?  
• Are there pressures or demands from outside the department to engaged in “partnership” or to “partner” in a certain way?  
• How is “partnership” made visible to personnel within the department?  
• How is “partnership” made visible to the public?  
• How is “partnership” made visible to those with whom the CPD engages in “partnership”?  |
| **Identity/ sensemaking** | • Are “partnerships” in the participant’s unit/area of responsibility different from those in other parts of the department?  
• What do personnel in this unit/area of responsibility say about “partnership”?  
• How has the CPD’s view of/approach to partnership changed?  
• How does “partnership” in the CPD differ from other police departments?  |
| **Meaning** | • What is a “partnership”?  
• Is “partnership” different from other types of relationships?  
• What is required for a relationship to be a “partnership”?  
• Why does the CPD participate in “partnerships”? What are the purposes?  
• Who does the CPD “partner” with?  
• What are the expected benefits and challenges of “partnerships”?  
• Are other terms used to describe these types of relationships?  
• Has the CPD declined to participate in any “partnership”?  
• Have other actors ever declined to join a partnership with the CPD?  
• What has influenced the participants’ ideas about partnership? |

Identity is addressed through questions about routines and communication within one’s particular area and conjecture about other departments. Information was gathered on the participants themselves to ascertain their role and circumstances in the department, including their rank, assignment, time in their current position, other positions within the department, and whether they had professional work experience outside of the CPD.
Interviews with CPD personnel were conducted in person generally with a single participant.\(^{39}\) Typically, they took place in the participant’s office; if an office was not private enough or the participant did not have one, a conference room or similar setting was used. Before the interview was started, the participant was presented with a copy of the unsigned consent form (or presented with another copy if they had already received it by email). The interviewer verbally explained that participants’ involvement will be kept confidential—that is that they will not be personally identified in any products resulting from the study.\(^{40}\) Permission was also verbally sought to record the interview using a digital audio recorder.\(^{41}\) Although stated in the consent form, participants were told that being recorded was voluntary to give participants as much control over the decision as possible. Every participant granted permission, most without expressing any sign of concern.\(^{42}\) Phone interviews were similarly recorded using the speaker-phone function after having received permission from the participant. Interview recordings typically ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews averaged nearly 1 hour, 13 minutes and ranged from 35 minutes to 2 hours, 40 minutes.

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\(^{39}\) One interview scheduled with one individual ended up including three people, all of whom had been sought for participation. Conducting the interview with three participants rather than one was necessary to take advantage of their willingness to participate in the moment.

\(^{40}\) The specific language in the consent form reads: “The Cambridge Police Department will be identified as the study site of this research project. However, your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being part of this project” (original emphasis). There were a small number of instances where it was recognized that such confidentiality was not possible, such as the police commissioner and, later, in case studies of partnerships involving the CPD, the liaison to the GLBT Commission. There seemed to be no expectation of or desire for anonymity; being seen as participating in the study appeared not to be a problem among participants. The agreed upon process reflects this: the interviewer presented himself at the front desk for meetings with specific individuals, and, in the frequent event that interviews were interrupted, the participant would often explain to whoever had come in what was going on, regardless of whether the interviewer had met them before. However, among non-participants, the need for anonymity may have been an important concern that prevented their involvement.

\(^{41}\) The specific language in the form reads: “The interview will be recorded so that the interviewer will not need to take extensive notes at the time of the interview. Recording the interview will also make it possible to transcribe the interview and limit the extent of follow-up for clarification. Recordings will be destroyed after being transcribed or otherwise used in the study. If you are not comfortable with being recorded, please let the interviewer know and the interview will not be recorded.”

\(^{42}\) Any “concern” appeared to be quite mild. For example, a slight pause or confirmation about how the recording and transcription would be used.
Seven ride-alongs were conducted with eight officers. Four officers with the Community Services Unit initially participated in the study in October 2013. As described above, after it was determined that a wider range of patrol officers would be desirable, additional recruitment efforts were made starting in July 2014. A total of four officers volunteered: two in a shared patrol car during the day shift, one in a single-officer car in the 3pm-11pm shift, and one on foot patrol also during the 3pm-11pm shift. Although ride-alongs were necessarily more informal than the sit-down interviews conducted, protocols were developed to guide questions asked during these experiences. The earlier rides with members of the Community Relations Unit focused on their particular focus, including homelessness, mental health, and the business community. Similar questions were prepared with the addition of specific items addressing their particular area of specialization. The protocol generally addressed the same subjects as the interview protocols but were shortened in recognition of the more challenging circumstances.

Questions connect back to the model. Context is addressed through questions about observations of how the job has changed over time and commissioners. Questions tapping into the influence of the institutional environment ask about the nature of patrol work and how partnership is talked about. Issues involving demands from patrol-related sovereigns (e.g.,

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43 As the CPD does not have a civilian ride-along program, the researcher requested whether arrangements could be made to set up rides with several officers (originally asking for 12-15 to try to ride with several officers across shifts). Command staff noted that they would not be able to assign officers to this task, as officers could not be forced to bring a civilian individual not working at the department with them on their shift. Individual officers would need to volunteer any participation. The researcher made a subsequent request was made to permit him to email patrol officers to solicit participation directly, as had been done with personnel of other ranks. The request was denied, as was a suggestion that the request be sent through either the command staff or shift commanders. These methods were framed as posing implied coercion for participation from higher ranking personnel. (It is unclear why the earlier ride-alongs with members of the Community Services Unit were able to be facilitated through similar methods.) The ultimate process approved was for command staff to ask shift commanders whether they would be amenable to the researcher requesting participation directly to the officers at a particular roll call, after which officers could of their own accord let their commanding officer know that they would like to participate. Shift commanders invited the researcher (via deputy superintendents in charge of patrol) to two roll calls (one morning, one afternoon). The researcher spoke for approximately five minutes at each, providing a brief explanation of the project and the reason for their involvement and directly asking for their participation.
supervisors) and pressures from the technical environment (e.g., expectations about clearing calls, having time for other activities) are addressed. Issues of training, performance review, and advancement tie back to departmental structure and processes. Questions related to sensegiving were included (e.g., how the police commissioner and command staff communicate about partnership). Identity and heterogeneity related to sensemaking are addressed through questions about the nature of patrol work, the work of other units, and expectations about working with personnel outside patrol. In Figure 4.8 below, questions from the protocol are grouped by the categories of meaning, influence, and identity/sensemaking.

The protocols were consulted ahead of time and not used directly during the actual ride, as it would have proved impractical. Carrying and consulting it on the walking beat would have been awkward and unwieldy, and it would have been challenging to read during the ride taking place at night. Notes were taken during the rides (or walk, in one instance) when feasible as well as after the experience.\footnote{In addition to the questions from the protocol, attention was paid to the events taking place during the shift to inform what was discussed during the rides. For example:}

- Where did we go? Did we stop anywhere? Where, why, how long? What happened there?
- How many calls for service did he receive/respond to? What were the CFS for? How did the officer handle the requests by dispatch? What was the officer’s attitude about them?
- Who were the callers, who was involved in the incident? How did the officer interact with them?
- What did we do when not responding to calls? Who did the officer speak with?

\footnote{The second phase of research required its own set of recruitment and consent materials to be approved by the university IRB. An approved email was sent to the co-chair the day after the meeting. See Appendices 4-6 for the IRB approved partnership recruitment message, individual partnership member recruitment message, and unsigned consent form.} “Partnerships”\footnote{In addition to the questions from the protocol, attention was paid to the events taking place during the shift to inform what was discussed during the rides. For example:}

Research into the three partnerships took place following the interviews conducted in the first phase of the study. While the specifics of the protocol questions differed based on the unique features of the partnerships (e.g., the partner organizations involved), partnerships were explored with the same set of issues in mind. They were intended to provide a “thick
## Figure 4.8 Concepts and Related Issues Addressed in Ride-Along Protocols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Related questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Patrol** | • How has participant’s job changed over the years and commissioners?  
• Is there pressure to clear calls and get “in service”? Is there time for other activities (e.g., problem solving, getting to know the people, businesses, and other organizations on the beat)?  
• Who does the participant work with when on patrol? What units and personnel from the CPD? What agencies, organizations, or people from outside the department? Are these positive interactions?  
• What are the benefits and the challenges?  
• What are the expectations around patrol officers working with people and organizations outside of the CPD? How are such expectations communicated?  
• How are patrol officers evaluated? What does the participant want the shift commander to know about? What are officers required to report about their work? What skills and experiences are useful to getting promoted? |
| **Context/ influences** | |
| **Community Relations Unit** | • How did the participant come to work in this assignment?  
• Who does the participant work with outside the department?  
• How are the participant’s services used by CPD personnel, esp. patrol? |
| **All officers** | • Is partnership something that is talked about in the department? How is addressed by the commissioner, command staff, commander, patrol group/unit?  
• Is any training provided on how to work with other organizations? |
| **Identity/ sensemaking** | • What is the nature of patrol work? What does the participant spend the most time on during shifts? Is this what participant wants to be doing?  
• Are patrol officers knowledgeable about what the CSU does? Are their services found useful to patrol? Has the participant ever worked with CSU personnel? Is this a type of work the participant would be interested in doing? What other specialized units does the participant work with?  
• For Community Relations Unit officers: what are their experiences working with patrol? Are the participant’s services valued and used? What do CRU personnel think the patrol perception of their unit is? |
| **Meaning** | • What does partnership mean to participants?  
• What do participants think is expected when told to do partnership work?  
• Is “partnership” different from other types of relationships?  
• What is required for a relationship to be a “partnership”?  
• Why does the CPD participate in “partnerships”? What are the purposes?  
• Who does the CPD “partner” with?  
• What are the expected benefits and challenges of “partnerships”?  
• Are other terms used to describe these types of relationships?  
• What has influenced the participants’ ideas about partnership? |
description” of the partnerships, to allow for perceptions of partnership be appreciated in their context.

Figure 4.9 provides a summary of this discussion, linking the broad concepts of the model to protocol questions. Protocols for the respective partnerships can be found in Appendices 9-11. The details of data collection are described following the figure.

**Figure 4.9 Concepts and Related Issues Addressed in Partnership Interview Protocols**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Related questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context/ influences</strong></td>
<td>• How did the partnership originate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do organizational leaders communicate about this partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have there been pivotal events that influencing the need for or direction of this partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What was the nature of the prior relationship between the CPD and the members of this partnership? How have relationships changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How are decisions made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is necessary for the partnership to continue (e.g., funding)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is this partnership connected to others involving the CPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is this partnership integrated into the CPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What organizational processes were involved in the partnership’s formation and maintenance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How is the partnership and its work assessed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How are problems handled?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How has the partnership changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity/ sensemaking</strong></td>
<td>• What is the nature of members’ organizations’ missions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are members’ roles in their organizations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What were members’ expectations when joining this partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have there been disagreements over goals or activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have there been communication challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>• What does “partnership” mean to members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the partnership’s goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do members of the partnership do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do members interact and communicate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is this relationship seen as a “partnership”? What qualities tie it to partnership? What is not characteristic of “partnership”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What would make it more of a “partnership”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are its accomplishments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do members’ views of one another generalize to their corresponding organizations as a whole?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**GLBT Commission**

Interviews were conducted from August 2014 through March 2015. Ten of the nineteen current commissioners and the liaison elected to participate. Interviews with commissioners averaged just under one hour (58 minutes) and ranged from 26 minutes to 1 hour, 14 minutes, and the interview with the liaison lasted nearly 3 hours (2 hours, 44 minutes). During interviews, the researcher sought to learn from participants about the nature and history of the relationship between the commission and liaison and their perceptions of police-LGBTQ relations in Cambridge. Specific questions were asked about the partnership variables described above.

Observations were also made of four additional meetings (September, October, and December 2014, and February 2015). Prior to meetings, the researcher prepared a brief protocol to guide observations about the nature of the interactions. This included, for example, such features and processes as attendance, configuration of the room and where participants sat, whether participants arrived on time, informal interactions during the meeting, who appeared to be in charge, what business was covered, who spoke, and other dynamics. In addition to information provided during interviews and during meetings, news stories in the media and meeting minutes published online on the commission’s city website were also consulted. Additional correspondence and documents were provided (e.g., CPD policy on Preventing Gender Identity Bias).

**Safety Net Collaborative**

Fifteen members of Safety Net were interviewed, including representatives of the CPD, Department of Human Services Programs, Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge Public Schools, Massachusetts Division of Youth and Families, and Riverside Community Care.
Interviews averaged\textsuperscript{46} just over one hour (1 hour, 2 minutes) and ranged from 40 minutes to 1 hour, 22 minutes. They were conducted from September 2013 through February 2014.

The same or similar questions that were used in the GLBT Commission protocols that were related to core variables (e.g., regarding the meaning of partnership, aims, internal dynamics, trust, etc.) were included in those for Safety Net. Some variation and additional questions were required, however, given the differences between Safety Net and the commission. For example, the commission was an independent body with a broad portfolio of issues related to the city’s LGBTQ community, while Safety Net was specifically created to focus on a public safety issue (i.e., preventing and intervening in youth problem behavior). A particular process (case management coordinated by officers or juvenile detectives) was in use that needed to be understood. There was also a greater variety of participating organizations and more and varied participation within the CPD itself, producing numerous relationships to be explored in terms of their dynamics within Safety Net, their share of power, and their histories of interaction prior to Safety Net’s creation. The number of participating organizations also made it possible to explore cross-organizational and between-role police conceptualizations of partnership.

As with the GLBT Commission, the researcher prepared a brief protocol to guide observations of meetings. This included, for example, such features and processes as attendance, configuration of the room and where participants sat, whether participants arrived late, informal dynamics during the meeting, who appeared to be in charge, what business was covered, who spoke, and other dynamics. In addition to information provided during interviews and during meetings, news stories in the media, a study about the collaborative published by one of its members, a policy analysis conducted by Harvard Kennedy School master’s students on Safety

\textsuperscript{46} This calculation includes individual interviews only. There was one instance where three participants were interviewed at the same time. This group interview lasted nearly 1 hour, 9 minutes.
Net’s performance measures, and other Safety Net materials (e.g., a case workflow diagram) informed the case study.

**The Port/Area Four**

Ten interviews were conducted from October 2014 through February 2015 with CPD personnel, representatives of two organizations operating in the neighborhood, past members of a neighborhood association, and community members were interviewed. Interviews averaged 1 hour, seven minutes and ranged from just under a half hour (29 minutes) to nearly 2 hours (1 hour, 50 minutes).

Just as Safety Net and the GLBT Commission differed in important ways, The Port/Area Four relationship also contained significant variation. Although starting from a classic community policing approach to neighborhood partnership (the Neighborhood Sergeant’s Program), this case was more challenging to bound and define than the others. Here, the focus was on a longstanding program that served as an open-ended point of contact to the department rather than a specific problem, as with Safety Net, or a narrowly defined constituency, as with the GLBT Commission.

The neighborhood sergeant and sector lieutenant had regular, formal contacts with many local organizations and even sat on at least one local non-profit’s board; however, there were also less organized as well as oppositional constituencies that were also ostensibly partnership targets for departmental engagement. The meanings of partnership were expected to vary widely and follow from multiple perspectives. An added layer of complexity was the need to understand not only the relationship between organizations and the police but perceptions of the

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47 This calculation includes individual interviews only. There was one instance where two participants were interviewed at the same time. This group interview coincidentally lasted the average interview time: 1 hour, 7 minutes.
neighborhood itself, its needs, and its history with the CPD. In other words, the question was not just how participants conceptualized their organization’s relationship with the CPD but how they saw the relationship between the neighborhood more broadly and the department. There is also a looser coupling of communication and action between the police and neighborhood “partners” given the much wider range of constituents than in the other cases.

In addition to the interviews conducted, various stories published in local media outlets and reports relating to the neighborhood were consulted to prepare this case report. Figure 4.10 provides a summary of the three partnerships.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND CODING

Assiduously assembling and organizing the study’s data was vital to the analytic process described in the next section (Yin, 2016). An Excel file was used as a master file for keeping track of study participation and logistical activity. It contained information on individuals contacted for participation, including their rank and assignment; their contact information; the dates and times as well as the nature and results of communication attempts; whether they participated in an interview; the date, time and location of interviews; whether the interview audio had been transcribed and by whom; and other miscellaneous comments.

Interview data were compiled in both digital and physical forms. Audio files were saved in NVivo, a commonly used Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), as were the interview transcripts. File names indicated the study category of the participant (initial CPD interviews or the specific partnership), participant’s name, and date the interview was conducted/recorded. Additional details about the participant and location and time of interview were also recorded in the notes feature of the file. Data collection overlapped with the compiling process (and, indeed, other stages as well); as new interviews were conducted and
### Figure 4.10 Summary of Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Origins/purpose</th>
<th>Period active</th>
<th>CPD representatives</th>
<th>Partner representatives</th>
<th>Observation period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLBT Commission</td>
<td>CPD provided liaison upon request by commission’s predecessor community organization to promote communication between the department LGBTQ community.</td>
<td>1997 to present</td>
<td>1 liaison: Superintendent of Support Services</td>
<td>19 GLBT Commission members</td>
<td>Aug. 2014-Mar. 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Net Collaborative</td>
<td>Police commissioner reached out to other city agencies to more comprehensively address youth problem behavior (crime, status offenses). Provides prevention, intervention, and diversion services using officer-led case management approach supported by partner organizations.</td>
<td>2007 to present</td>
<td>Youth and Family Services Unit: 1 lieutenant, 1 sergeant, 6 youth resource officers, 3 youth outreach officers, 2 juvenile detectives</td>
<td>1 from the Cambridge Health Alliance, 2 from Department of Human Services Programs, 1 from Cambridge Public Schools, 1 from Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, 1 from The Guidance Center</td>
<td>Sep. 2013-Feb. 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Port/Area Four</td>
<td>The focus was broader here, looking at the relationship between the CPD and neighborhood. Point of entry was Neighborhood Sergeants Program (NSP), a community policing initiative providing specific departmental contacts for neighborhood residents.</td>
<td>NSP began 1997</td>
<td>NSP: 1 lieutenant, 1 sergeant</td>
<td>Study included staff from Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, Community Art Center, Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition, community members</td>
<td>Oct. 2014-Feb. 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they were added to the NVivo project. Various other digital materials (e.g., field notes, meeting minutes) were also saved in NVivo for ease of access. Similarly, other materials were continually being located by or offered to the researcher during the course of the study, and these accumulated materials were filed electronically or manually.

A “disassembling” process of “breaking down the compiled data into smaller fragments or pieces” (Yin, 2016, p. 186) involved coding of interview transcripts, making annotations within transcripts, and preparing analytic memos. Coding, conducted using NVivo, refers to “the process of attaching concepts to data, for the purposes of analysing that data” (Urquhart, 2013, p. 2), which in this case involved highlighting passages of text and assigning one or more labels based on its contents’ relevance to the study. Coding of interviews ranged from a phrase to much lengthier passages. Although the specific language used by participants was important, in order to preserve the context in which the language was used, coding was not performed in a word-by-word or line-by-line approach.

Attention was not especially focused on the number of times a code was used. This study was interested in the range of perceptions about partnership as much as it was with the prevalence of a particular idea. Coding helped the researcher to think through interviewers’ responses, rather than serving as a quantitative tool that would provide an analytical output.

While the researcher’s intention was to have interviews transcribed immediately or shortly afterward, the number of interviews occurring in a short amount of time and the lengthy process of transcription (approximately five hours to transcribe one hour of recorded interview), was challenging. Additional transcribers were hired to assist with the workload. During the first phase, the researcher transcribed 13 interviews while a professional transcription service provided 12. Of the total 57 interviews conducted over both phases, the researcher transcribed 26 interviews, 19 were made by graduate students hired for this purpose, and 12 by the transcription service. The transcription service and graduate assistants provided signed guarantees to protect the confidentiality of the participants and the information provided.

To be clear, NVivo—or any CAQDAS—does not perform the analysis in a way analogous to quantitative statistical software (Gibbs, 2014). Rather, depending on the researcher and theoretical paradigm followed, these programs help organize the interview data, code the text, annotate selected passages, and make retrieval of coded passages easier. There is some debate over the purpose of coding in CAQDAS, ranging from a basic data management role supporting analysis to one inherently enmeshed in theory-building (Gibbs, 2014).
Annotations were also often made, which involved highlighting a relatively small passage of text and directly attaching a comment of greater specificity than allowed by a code. As noted above, the conceptual model presented was not involved when coding began, however, many of the components were, as neo-institutional theory and sensemaking had long been conceptual guides. Initial codes were used to identify parts of interviews addressing issues related to the model’s concepts: meaning, external pressures, internal attempts to communicate about partnership, organizational structures and processes involved in supporting or hindering partnership, identities, and perceived benefits and challenges of partnership. These codes were further parsed when passages revealed greater nuance.

Consistent with accepted qualitative practices, the coding process was iterative through multiple readings of the transcripts and the building of larger themes (Miles et al., 2013). Notes from ride-alongs and observations of meetings, media sources, and other materials were not coded using NVivo but were reviewed with the concepts described earlier in mind; however, they contributed to the analysis and are included in the case reports. The interviews served as the primarily data source, while additional methods contributed to triangulation, helping to check and bolster the researcher’s interpretations.

ANALYTIC PROCESS

It should be clear at this point that this study sought to explore partnership as an organizational approach, constructed and expressed in a specific cultural context. As Geertz colorfully argues, “Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape” (Geertz, 1973, p. 20). The meaning or understanding of “partnership” in the CPD sought by this study was not expected to
be simply a definition derived from participant interviews. The conceptual framework attends to multiple facets expected to be involved in an organizationally-based understanding of partnership, taking into account not just what partnership “is” but why and how. Indeed, individuals’ perceptions, combined with what was learned about organizational structures and processes, provided a complex and contingent idea of partnership, not a product ready to be unwrapped, wound up, and put into action. Here, the process of how these insights were drawn from the data collected is described.

The analytical strategy was intended to provide a “thick description” of partnership in the context of the Cambridge Police Department. Thick description is a concept coined by the philosopher Gilbert Ryle and borrowed and popularized by the famed anthropologist Clifford Geertz; Norman K. Denzin subsequently elaborated on the concept and introduced it to sociology, communications, and the humanities (Ponterotto, 2006). It refers to an approach to describing social action that envelopes it in meaning. Compared to a “thin” description that more narrowly takes note of actions observed, “thick” accounts surround the action with the intentions of the actors involved and ground it within a richly detailed context. This is critical to the present study, which argues that typical descriptions of partnerships are thin in that they treat partnership as a social action that needs little further explanation. This study argues that a hard-to-define set of cultures is key to framing how partnership is understood. To describe thickly is not to describe entirely. That is, it is not characterized by the amount of information or number of details but rather the extent to which it facilitates “thick interpretation” and, ultimately, “thick meaning” through which readers can locate themselves in the research context (Ponterotto, 2006, p. 543)

The first “phase” of data collection addressed the first two research questions—how partnership was framed by leadership and understood in the department. The study was
structured to assist in the building of a contextualized understanding of partnership from the police perspective. It was grounded in a set of discussions with police personnel about how partnership was understood and practiced. The first interview was with the police commissioner in order to set a sort of baseline for comparison. Given the commissioner’s authority in the department to set the tone, implement policy, and direct resources and operations, it was critical to learn about how he framed partnership and sought to implement his vision. It was then possible to compare and contrast the commissioner’s comments with what was said by other personnel.

This was, however, not merely an exercise in noting where there was more or less agreement on fine details of a definition. Interviews and ride-alongs were intended to seek out where participants saw partnership happening, where it might have come from, where it might be going, and how they felt about it all. As described earlier, a coding process was used to capture and organize how partnership was described. The codes of CPD participants’ interview transcripts were grouped by rank for easier reference by this status (i.e., commissioner, superintendents, deputy superintendents, supervisory personnel, nonsworn).

This first phase also served to make possible investigation of the third research question, which focused on specific initiatives between the police and actors from outside the department. If the meanings of partnership are contingent upon a particular context and cultures, it would be necessary to get inside the organization before making judgments about what might be considered partnerships in situ. And then, which to select for further examination? The commission and other members of the CPD discussed a large number and variety of interactions, many of which could have been useful to explore. Ultimately, the three initiatives included were
chosen on the basis of their apparent connection to the police commissioner’s vision, which prioritized relationships with other city agencies as well as with members of the public.

Looking to actual practice was vital to the study. Interviews with the police commissioner and leadership as well as personnel in lower ranks were often somewhat abstracted. Personnel were being asked to comment on what partnership meant to them in the context of the department; even if they were involved in specific “partnerships” the discussion was typically on a broader set of experiences. There were some exceptions in that ride-alongs were conducted with several officers whose role was centered on interorganizational work. The three partnerships provided opportunities to learn more about how the CPD engages with its external environment. Examining specific relationships also provided an excellent opportunity to engage in a focused way with non-police members or participants of these initiatives. Of course, to leave out this perspective would create a problematic gap in the study.

In addition, examining several different initiatives allowed for comparison. Each involved a different form, type of membership, purpose, set of dynamics, history—what lessons could their differences provide? Would the police and non-police partners understand the experience similarly? How would various cultures and identities interact? As with the internal CPD phase, the conceptual model was applied to each partnership, helping to frame and contextualize each experience.

A cross-partnership analysis was also undertaken. How each partnership experienced the various conceptual components offered common points of comparison for quite different initiatives. The analysis across partnerships is also closely tied to findings from the earlier part of the study, which located partnership in the broader organizational and city contexts. For example, the histories of how the CPD has interacted with the LGBTQ community, youthful law
breakers, and residents of The Port are important to understand on their own terms, but it is then illuminating to consider how they may differ and the effects on the partnership. Moreover, setting these findings in context contributes to readers’ understanding of why these differences might have emerged. Figure 4.11 describes the focus of each piece of the conceptual model within each individual partnership and as a focal point for comparison in the cross-partnership analysis.

As an exploration of partnership’s complexity, it was important to capture not just details that overlapped but instances in which views diverged. Such “negative cases” were sought within the department and the three partnerships. These were not to be explained away as outliers but considered as important facets of the exploration. Examples can be seen in the discussion of “the Cambridge way” in Chapter 5 and, across Chapters 6-8 as participants address the ways in which their initiatives do or do not reflect “partnership.”

While not an evaluation or test of theory, it was important to “validate” what participants described through probing issues with other participants and through reference to other data sources. Validation is a contested term within a qualitative research context, as it suggests a quantitative, positivist epistemology (Miles et al., 2013). The present study is perhaps better characterized as seeking credibility or authenticity through thick description.50 As noted, a variety of data sources (i.e., participants inside and outside of the CPD) and methods (e.g., interviews, observations, publicly accessible materials) were used in pursuit of this goal. This triangulation supported the corroboration of some findings and also brought into relief negative cases.

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50 This is focused less on the factual accuracy of comments (although this was checked at times) and more on what insights participants were intentionally or implicitly conveying.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Concepts</th>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Cross-partnership analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>How has the focus of the partnership been addressed by the police historically? What has been the nature of relations between the police, their partners, service targets, etc. as related to this issue?</td>
<td>How do the histories of these partnerships compare and contrast? Do relationships differ between the police and various groups across partnerships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional environment</strong></td>
<td>What are the professional assumptions of the police and their partners in this area? How is language used across professions? Where are areas of overlap and conflict?</td>
<td>Are professional assumptions and language more in sync between the police and partners in some partnerships compared to others? Where are key areas of overlap and tension?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polity field of action</strong></td>
<td>Who are considered important sovereigns for the police and their partners in this area? How similar or heterogenous are the demands being made?</td>
<td>How do sovereigns differ across the partnerships? Are sovereigns more important at certain points in the process or more stable sources of pressure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical field of action</strong></td>
<td>To what extent does research inform the partnership’s approach? What budgetary and resource issues are relevant?</td>
<td>How do the partnerships compare and contrast in terms of their links to the CPD’s use of research, budgetary needs, etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
<td>How is the partnership connected to the CPD’s other initiatives, structures, policies, trainings, opportunities for advancement, etc.</td>
<td>How do partnerships compare and contrast in how they are connected to CPD organizational processes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensegiving</strong></td>
<td>What messages are purposefully communicated by the CPD regarding the partnership, its participants, and its area of focus?</td>
<td>How similar or divergent across partnerships are the messages and approaches communicate by police leadership about the partnership, participants, and issue being addressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identities</strong></td>
<td>How do professional identities manifest? How do they influence dynamics and actions of the partnership?</td>
<td>What identities appear to be more or less salient across partnerships? How are they expressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensemaking</strong></td>
<td>How do participants in the partnership understand the nature of their interaction with one another? How do they describe “partnership”?</td>
<td>How similar or divergent are participants’ understandings of their partnerships?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher was cognizant of the need to check his biases throughout the study. The nature of the research made it relatively easy to keep this in view. The focus on how culture is implicated in identity and sensemaking was a constant reminder that there are no fixed meanings or inevitable conclusions.

**STUDY LIMITATIONS**

There are several limitations to this study. First, the nature of in-depth qualitative research can limit the scope of inquiry. Although the partnerships selected provided rich data, there were many more interorganizational relationships involving the CPD that could not be examined, some of which might have exhibited important contrasts to the cases studied. For example, the study did not include a partnership that specifically and exclusively involved other police or law enforcement agencies (e.g., prosecutors’ offices, state police, federal law enforcement agencies), which might have demonstrated different meanings and understandings regarding partnership. The approach of the police commissioner focused so prominently on engagement with city agencies, service providers, and the public, the decision was made to focus on partnerships that more closely approximated this vision.

Second, participation was not as robust among certain police ranks as was hoped for. Superior officers or middle managers (i.e., sergeants and lieutenant) did not participate to the degree desired, particularly sergeants, and patrol officers were not accessible in the numbers hoped for. Their perspectives are important and would ideally have received greater coverage. Figure 4.12 compares the number of participants to the total number of CPD personnel by rank and nonsworn status.

Additionally, although the question of organizational capacity for partnership is key to this study, data collection relied mostly on participants’ perceptions of organizational
mechanisms. Although the researcher had access to the department’s policies early in the study, given the iterative nature and resulting changes in the direction of the study, it would have been helpful to conduct a more targeted review at a later time. Other materials were requested from police personnel, such as training curriculum, but ultimately these were not obtained. Only through a rigorous review of policies, training, and other processes can robust conclusions be drawn about the nature of organizational capacity for partnership. However, perceptions should not be dismissed. If policy or training did actually exist but study participants, particularly those in the highest leadership positions, were not aware of it or did not recall having been exposed to it, this observation is meaningful. Moreover, were related trainings identified, knowing the curricular content of training is not the same as having observed the trainings themselves (or actually learning and implementing their content). Still, being able to compare perception to these materials would have enhanced the study.
CHAPTER 5: PARTNERSHIP IN THE CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

This chapter examines how partnership is understood within the Cambridge Police Department, beginning with the police commissioner heading the department at the time of the study and moving into the perceptions of other personnel in the CPD.

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: THE POLICE COMMISSIONER’S PERSPECTIVE

It is the commissioner’s responsibility to set the direction and tone of departmental policy and operations. This position, theoretically, controls the greatest sensegiving capacity in a traditionally paramilitary, hierarchical organization, and carries the authority to promote and implement these ideas.

Characteristics of Partnership

First, it is helpful to lay out the basic contours of the commissioner’s understanding of partnership. The commissioner was asked at the beginning of the interview to describe what a partnership is. Before offering his own description, he specifically noted that “it means a whole host of things,” meaning that the nature of what people label a “partnership” or “collaboration” can range from a partnership in “name only” to more robust relationships, “where you are really trying to establish a meaningful collaboration between agencies where it almost becomes indistinguishable in terms of where they come from.” Thus, from the outset, the commissioner directly addressed the elasticity of partnership and indicated that he believed what many people are willing to label a partnership does not meet his standards for the term.

His own vision was concisely stated and reflected in his comments throughout the interview: 51

51 All quotations in this section are the police commissioner’s unless otherwise noted.
To me, what a collaboration is, or a partnership is, is where there is really a true sense of sharing of responsibilities, there’s a true sense of trust that exists, there’s respect for one another’s roles in terms of what they’re doing, and . . . they see a value in terms of why we have this collaboration or partnership. So they’re bringing something to the table that has probably a different dimension or flavor than we can do. And it broadens our capabilities of in terms of providing a wider array of services or interventions depending on what we’re trying to accomplish.

In his description, partnerships involve members sharing responsibility for the work and the relationship is characterized by trust. Members should be at the table because they bring different but complementary contributions to bear on a problem, and these contributions (and the members’ roles) are to be respected. The idea that members “see a value” in the initiative suggests a shared vision for the purpose of the partnership and the need for participants to benefit from their involvement. Respect therefore appears to be both an interpersonal dynamic among members as well as a larger issue tied to whether members benefit from their participation. With these features in place, it is expected that partnerships are greater than the sum of their constituent parts and also broaden what their participants are able to accomplish. Each member is thus elevated in the process.

Based on the entirety of the police commissioner’s interview, these characteristics are discussed here thematically, taking into account how they relate and overlap. The ideas of added value and trust emerge as the overarching features of partnership. Added value relates to the reasons why partnership is expected to be a useful and worthwhile approach. Trust relates to why partners would desire to work with one another from a more affective position. More pointedly, in the immediate context this referred to why agencies, organizations, their staff, and members of the public would want to engage with the police specifically given their past insularity and enforcement-based priorities. Each is described in detail below.
**Added Value**

The theme of added value addresses the enhanced problem-solving capacity that is expected to result from bringing together new perspectives. However, this potential is not activated unless the partnership members actually share responsibility for the initiative. While describing the importance of having diverse perspectives, the police commissioner spoke more about the latter feature—shared responsibility—which can come about in multiple ways. For one, there was an affirmative responsibility for members to do their share; otherwise partnership may be “in name only.” The commissioner argued that fundamentally partnerships should involve participants who are committed to the group and its goals. Partnership is not one-sided or for show, he indicated, and should be driven by actual common problems. Several times the commissioner lamented that partnerships could often be driven by funding concerns rather than common concerns. This was seen as creating a barrier to effective partnership, as organizations doing so interfere with others’ ability to benefit from the relationship. The commissioner indicated that when deciding whether to get involved in partnerships he looks to how efforts could be continued when funding stops.

In another layer, however, responsibility addressed not only expectations that participants all carry their own weight but have voice and power within the group. Decision making and control over resources were critical issues, but not in the way predicted by much of the policing literature. The commissioner noted that it was incumbent upon the police department to ensure that other members were given the space and support to participate meaningfully. There was, therefore, an affirmative role for the police to empower participants so that a genuine opportunity was created for engagement and reciprocity, to make use of members’ unique contributions. The
commissioner talked about the distribution of power in partnerships mostly in the context of not wanting the CPD to be a dominating force or to be seen as the lead organization.

The other thing we’re very clear about is that [if] there is an initiative, it’s not our initiative, it’s really an initiative of our partners, and we’re one of many partners. So we don’t say we’re the lead agency in this situation, in fact you really rarely see us take credit as being the lead agency on any particular initiative that we’re working on.

Indeed, the impact of a partnership’s diversity is activated through its participants having a meaningful voice. If certain members dominated, the potential contributions from other members were likely to be muted or missed.

Frustration about the negative influence of funding concerns was part of a larger theme connecting several of the commissioner’s comments: the misuse of partnership as empty rhetoric or ruse. Numerous comments suggest a wariness of relationships labeled “partnerships” and the like (e.g., collaboration). He noted that the label can be misapplied (intentionally or otherwise). He used qualifying language indicating that the term partnership itself cannot be assumed to convey the presence of certain characteristics. For example, he criticized partnership “in name only,” calling some partnership “symbolic” and contrasting them with “real” ones. He observed that many agencies “traditionally are siloed, they take care of their piece of what they’re dealing with and then may or may not hand it off to another agency.” He emphasized that although he had “seen a number of people describe that kind of a relationship as a partnership,” such “hand-offs” did not represent partnership in his view.

Concerns about empty rhetoric and wasted resources were captured by a financial metaphor. The commissioner tended to talk about needing to demonstrate “value” of initiatives, getting a good “return on investment” for working collaboratively, and the “dividends” that result from cultivating relationships that can pave the way for productive partnerships.
I think my perspective and I think our partners’ perspective is when you make an investment, I always look at it in terms of investments or returns, if I’m going to invest in something, what am I getting in return, and my returns have been greater than my investments. And if they’re not, then what am I doing? So, it’s more a matter of looking at it from a sheer economics point. If I’m going to invest, what am I going to get for that investment? And I always look at it in those kinds of terms. So, when I invest in a partnership, I see that I’m going to get a greater good out of the investment. And if I don’t see that then I question what’s the utility in terms of engaging that partnership.

Both unwilling participants and inequitable distributions of power can apply to missed opportunities and a poor return on investment. The commissioner cited examples of both. All investments involve risk, and the commissioner’s investment approach recognizes that some risks do not pan out. He discussed several examples of relationships that had not provided sufficient value for the CPD, and he had extricated the department from them, but this appeared to take place only after multiple attempts or a lengthy trial period. Those that the CPD had left seemed to be the result of the CPD’s expertise benefiting a powerful member but not sufficiently benefiting the department itself. In other examples, problems with participants not doing their share were resolved or the initiative was still young and seen as having natural growing pains.

Trust

The commissioner discussed trust in the context of convincing potential partners and groups who would be targeted by initiatives that they would be helped rather than harmed by police actions, that the CPD was going to pursue non-traditional strategies—that is, approaches that did not emphasize law enforcement tactics as the main intervention.

Discussions pointed to three facets of trust among potential and actual partners and target populations: sincerity, control, and consistency. The commissioner stated that participants need to see that the police are sincere in their motivations and purposes. This could be seen as closely related to commitment to shared responsibility as discussed above. Sincerity is addressed here as more closely related to trust as opposed to the more transactional notion of whether participants
are exerting an acceptable level of effort. Perceptions of sincerity are particularly important, he noted, when an organization like the police is switching gears in the way they approach a particular problem or population. For example,

"Early on we had a number of agencies that weren’t getting involved with us on the homeless outreach initiative because they didn’t see the utility. I don’t think see they saw the benefit in it, I think they were just distrustful of what we were getting into this for. “Why all of a sudden do you want to do this when you haven’t been doing this all along? For a long period of time all you’ve been simply doing is arresting these people, kind of pushing them off the street and get them to leave and now all of a sudden you want to help them? It doesn’t make any sense now.” . . . So you have to really spend some time demonstrating that there is going to be a change in terms of how you want to do things.

In this case, the department had taken observable steps demonstrating a different approach, assigning officers to conduct homeless outreach on a full-time basis. Starting in 2008 with one officer, a homeless outreach capacity was developed to address the repeat nature of disruptive behavior by individuals living on city streets. Shortly, second officer was added. Based in the Community Relations Unit, the homeless outreach officers addressed issues related to homelessness and homeless individuals. This included being in continual contact with individuals without permanent housing, engaging them about services needed, working with area homeless resources, as well as transporting individuals or arresting them in some cases. The officers were selected for their experience, skill, and interest in working with homeless people. They had the ability to build trust with the homeless and the organizations that work with them.

This capacity came about because of a patrol officer’s initiative. Before the advent of the program, the first outreach officer had been patrolling Central Square. He started taking a focused interest in the homeless population and realized that calls for service associated with homeless persons were numerous and taxing departmental resources. He spoke with individuals on the street and began making contacts with other city agencies and organizations to connect homeless people with needed services. This continued successfully until a patrol officer
leveraged his seniority to take the beat. When leadership noticed that things had changed for the worse, the officer was encouraged to develop a proposal to create a homeless unit. His initiative was funded first for one office (himself) and then for a second, who was able to come on within the first year. The original officer noted that only two officers applied for this second position—it is a well-used service, he stated, but not one that many officers want to undertake.

The commissioner indicated that he worked to demonstrate sincerity of purpose through his own active personal involvement. This was not perceived simply as involvement or leading by example, although those benefits were also seen as important. It was predicated on proactive relationship building, such as getting to know other city agency heads so that a personal relationship existed prior to the need for specific engagement. He argued that doing so allows the agencies to better coordinate strategies for addressing problems. When combined with support and resources for personnel to guide them in carrying out these plans, this personal involvement of agency heads communicates the importance of the direction being taken. The commissioner indicated that if he did not demonstrate his own commitment to addressing problems in conjunction with other agencies and organizations, partnerships would be in danger of being merely symbolic.

The extent to which others could judge whether the police were sincere and would not dominate situations appeared to be based on consistency. Three facets of consistency came out in the discussion: (1) being a regular, expected, and engaged presence, (2) demonstrating that the department’s aims are aligned with its partners, and (3) coordinating departmental actions in ways that demonstrate reliability of purpose in the eyes of partners and communities, which ties back to sincerity. Demonstrating consistency of organizational priorities was viewed as critical. The commissioner gave as an example the problem with building trust between the police and
Muslim community if a department is at the same time working with the Department of Justice in ways that frame Muslims as terrorists.

The question that you have to be able to answer with a straight face is that we’re here to support you, we’re here to be a resource to you. And if along the way we encounter somebody that’s of concern to us that’s a side dividend, that’s not our main focus and the reason why we’re doing what we’re doing. I think it’s really in what you’re trying to accomplish making sure you can communicate what you want to accomplish but then them believing that’s what you want to do. . . . It’s not just saying it, it’s demonstrating it through your actions.

This view prioritized community engagement and relationship building and was based on the idea that doing so will increase police legitimacy. Investment strategies that promote the public’s willingness to believe in and cooperate with the police was viewed as a more effective long-term crime (and terrorism) prevention strategy than those likely to alienate communities and possibly push their members toward illegal behavior.

According to the commissioner, partners need to be confident that they will retain a certain level of control. He cited concerns among community organizations about the potential for automatically surrendering control to police when the police get involved. For example, some organizations were worried that if the police were alerted to a particular individual the police would then control decisions about what to do about the individual, shutting out the other organization. He spoke of the climate in which he arrived as commissioner and realized the police had to work toward demonstrating that they valued partners’ views on how to handle situations.

**The Broader Narrative of Partnership**

It is important to ground the characteristics identified above in the broader vision of policing discussed by the police commissioner. During the interview, the commissioner couched his views within several metaphors and narratives that spoke to a problem-focused policing requiring an outward, collaborative approach that was in direct contrast to traditional policing.
These narratives speak to important influences on his approach to both partnership and policing, showing them to be closely linked. The themes of evolution and transformation are added to the investment metaphor noted earlier.

The overarching narrative is that of evolution. The term evolution is one that the commissioner himself used to describe processes taking place in specific interorganizational initiatives, the police department, and within the Cambridge city apparatus more broadly. In the biological world, evolution is a complex mechanism that involves a population of organisms changing in ways that make its members better able to survive and reproduce in a given environment. While this term brings with it a multitude of concepts and controversies (e.g., “social Darwinism”), it is used here to refer to a select set of ideas that are useful to this discussion and follow from the context of the commissioner’s statements.

Most fundamentally, evolution involves change. But the change is not random; rather, it involves adapting to fit the features of a particular environment. Evolution requires a diversity of influences to occur; insular populations do not evolve. Increased diversity also speaks to the idea that the changes taking place are moving from one of relative simplicity to greater complexity. Evolution takes place within a population, not among individuals. And it is a process that is based on long-term processes; it is not revolutionary. These facets of evolution are found within the commissioner’s discussion of partnership, policing, and the city’s operations, suggesting a vision emphasizing a shift to greater diversity and complexity.

The evolution narrative encompasses a number of points. It involves an incremental and incomplete transition away from traditional insular policing. The commissioner indicated encountering a prevalent silo mentality, a cultural emphasis on the letter rather than spirit of the law, and a narrowly conceived scope of mission.
Evolution—indeed, change generally—inherently involves a starting place, even if that is itself fluid and challenging to define. The starting point addressed by the commissioner is traditional policing by a department that possess great potential within a well-resourced (but siloed) city apparatus. Like many police departments, the CPD continues to be influenced to some degree by professional policing cultural ideals, to which the notion of partnership, in many of its forms, is anathema. When the he first started, the commissioner indicated that the department had “a decent reputation” but the nature of policing was “very traditional” and the organization was insular. Little collaboration was taking place. “I think everyone knew we existed and we knew they existed, but we didn’t really do a lot of work with them,” he said. This was a mind-set and approach that the commissioner recognized as more widely characteristic of city agencies, not merely of the police or of Cambridge city government.

Although these characteristics continued to affect the department, the CPD was described as changing over a long period, with these changes contextualized in the broader city government culture. A shift in the city’s management culture was closely tied to a long-serving city manager, who occupied that position from 1981 until 2013. The commissioner commented that when he arrived to run the CPD, he found a “professional management team” that had been put together by the city manager. This had laid the foundation for the direction the police commissioner wanted to take the department. The level of collaboration between the CPD and other city agencies was not especially robust when the commissioner arrived, he said, but had developed considerably since then. “I think we’ve changed our approach from just waiting for the calls to respond to being more strategic in thinking about where are the problems, what are the issues we need to deal with,” he stated. He credited the city manager with having worked
over a long period of time to foster a collaborative culture in city government that made its realization possible.

Cambridge’s economic strength was also described as a boon to the police department’s ability to engage in partnership.

What’s unique about Cambridge is that as much as it’s an urban environment it’s not so large that it’s not manageable, and because it’s so rich with resources that what we’re seeing and what we’re able to do here is remarkable because we have the ability, we’re well financed, we’re well-resourced, and we have a lot of resources that we can take advantage of.

The commissioner contrasted Cambridge and the CPD with neighboring cities and their police departments, noting that the CPD had the rare opportunity to focus more resources on “quality of life issues.”

Features of a more traditional policing could be seen in an insular approach, an overemphasis on the letter rather than the spirit of the law, and a short-term, reactive vision. The commissioner discussed trying to move away from these tendencies toward a policing that was more embracing of its environment. “Hand-offs” are an example of siloed thinking. Although they might involve a level of interaction or interorganizational contact, they can also be a manifestation of police personnel off-loading undesirable tasks to another agency. (Off-loading can occur within the department or another single organization, as well.) The policing literature is replete with observations of officers using discretion to avoid “nuisance” work (cf. Miller, 1999). As noted, such interactions did not fit the commissioner’s conception of partnership.

Siloed organizational thinking also involves reinventing the wheel when a solution exists outside the organization. The commissioner described a recent example in which the Special Response Team (SRT), the department’s SWAT unit, was trying to develop their own emergency medical capacity, primarily to provide aid to officers injured during an event or
operation. Noticing this, the commissioner said he asked, “Why are we building this capacity when it already exists in the city? We have trained paramedics that practice their trade every day that are very efficient at being paramedics, why wouldn’t we just bring them in and embed them on our team?” The reluctance to work with the city’s fire department personnel possessing this expertise reportedly came from as high up as the command staff and stemmed from a longstanding rivalry between the police and fire departments.

The commissioner argued that it would be better to connect with an existing group of trained professionals to ensure the best treatment if officers were wounded. Embedding paramedics with the SRT also solved the problem of the fire department being unable to go into “hot zones” where the event was still unfolding to administer medical treatment until the police had cleared them.

When they do anything, those paramedics are with them . . . and they have now become an integral team that works together, they’re not just occasionally training together, they’ve become the call-out team. When that team goes out, they all go out as a package. It’s proven remarkable from the standpoint that, to me, it makes much more sense, but . . . it’s really changed the whole complexion of the relationship between the police department and fire department overall through the whole rank and file because of this partnership now, this collaboration.

The commissioner noted that the CPD’s bomb technicians had also been embedded with the state HAZMAT team in the wake of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing along the same principle.

Another insular feature of the department the commissioner was trying to address was a tendency for some officers to prioritize the letter of the law—their legal authority to enforce laws—over the spirit of providing for the best interests of the community. The 2009 arrest of Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., by the Cambridge police was a pivotal event. The arrest outside of Gates’s home ignited a national firestorm that included a statement of condemnation by President Obama and a subsequent “beer summit” at the White House with
the president, vice-president, Professor Gates, and the CPD sergeant who had made the arrest. A blue-ribbon commission investigated the arrest, ultimately concluding that neither party to the incident was blameless but recognizing that the police have a professional obligation to pursue strategies that reduce the likelihood of such events (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010).

The commissioner characterized the incident as a turning point for how the department addressed officer discretion.

[The incident] was a major milestone in terms of us thinking about procedural justice and legitimacy and changing our philosophy in terms of what kind of policing we’re trying to administer in the city. And it’s not about our legal authority, it’s about the community understanding and respecting the fact that we’re doing things because we can be trusted and we’re impartial and we’re doing things in the best interest of the community. So we get our authority from the community saying and endorsing what we’re doing as opposed to simply saying, “Hey, look, I’ve got these laws I can enforce and I can arrest you if you give me a hard time.”

Two weeks following the publication of the committee’s report, the police commissioner released a statement to the media outlining steps the department would be or had already taken in the aftermath of the arrest (Cambridge Police Department, 2010). Reflecting some of the report’s recommendations regarding policing legitimacy and procedural justice, he indicated the department would emphasize in its training the need for officers to consider how members of the public might interpret their actions. Increasing communication on these issues and conducting co-training with the Harvard University and MIT police to make policing in the city more predictable was also in the offing. CPD managers would be charged with greater monitoring of officers’ discretion in making disorderly conduct arrests. The department would also establish a community advisory group and institute alternative dispute resolution and mediation within its complaints process. Finally, organizational mechanisms supporting communication would be implemented. A director of communications was hired to provide a more robust social media presence to encourage more interaction with the public, and the command staff would be trained
in “communication issues.” These changes were related to partnership, as they were intended to orient CPD personnel toward community safety rather than organizationally-focused ends.

Taking the department from a narrowly reactive approach was also being targeted for change. Major incidents as well as longstanding problems served as the impetus for a broadened approach. Several homicides appear to have had an influence on departmental practices as they relate to partnership. In 2012, a sophomore high school student was killed in a drive-by shooting in which she was, by all accounts, an innocent bystander (Levy, 2017). The following year, after bombs exploded near the finish line at the Boston Marathon, the perpetrators murdered an MIT police officer in his cruiser. Additionally, it was soon realized that the two brothers responsible had both attended the city’s public high school, and that the younger was a recent graduate (Lotan, 2013).

According to the commissioner, the department’s previous handling of crises tended not to look beyond the immediate incident or recognize the “rippling effect” that would occur in the future. In this case, they saw the need for an expanded role for the police in a non-traditional mode. With the shooting of the high school student, a crisis-network response that was being developed was implemented for the first time. Communication between the police, schools, human services department, and health alliance helped to provide an enhanced counseling environment for the school community. The apparent success of this response also led the department to involve the faith community in this network. After the bombing, the department activated the relationships they had built in the schools to support teachers as well as students by bringing in counselors and being alert to needs that might arise in the aftermath of this tragedy.

52 These agencies are the core members of the Safety Net Collaborative, the subject of Chapter 7.
In addition to the features directly mentioned, the commissioner’s comments suggested other qualities of partnership were important to his understanding of the idea. In the commissioner’s view, partnerships are dynamic entities. This view allows for relationships to be “partnerships” from the start if they evidence certain features or dynamics. However, there is also an acknowledgement of variation in the nature and quality of partnerships; that is, even if a relationship demonstrates the “necessary” features, there is still room for improvement.

The commissioner’s comments additionally focused on the transformation evident within an evolutionary process. Transforming intersects with the evolutionary narrative but refers specifically to the idea of being value-added or producing exponential rather than additive results. Relationship-building and partnership foster the capacity for more relationships and partnerships. They also change the way things are done within partnerships and within agencies. Partnerships can transform into a qualitatively different way of working. In addition to the attention to the shift from a more traditional policing approach, the commissioner described several different transformative processes where something in a relationship changes fundamentally. He noted that a new collaborative way of working between entities becomes “automatic” at some point within the partnership; the question of who actually started an interorganizational relationship becomes indistinguishable; and there is a sense that more resources or organizations are involved in a partnership than really are because of its success or return on investment.

Sensegiving

There were numerous purposeful efforts to communicate the importance of partnership within the department as well as to outside agencies and organizations and the public. The police commissioner did not specifically refer to these acts as “sensegiving,” but he did describe a
number of ways in which he and the department sought to communicate about partnership and its approach to policing. Likely the most visible message was the department’s mission statement:

The Cambridge Police Department is a dedicated and diverse group of professionals who are committed to working with the community to make the City of Cambridge a safe and desirable place to live. Our mission is to partner with the community to solve problems and improve public safety in a manner that is fair, impartial, transparent, and consistent. (Cambridge Police Department, nd-c)

At an abstract level then, community partnership was a central component of the Cambridge police’s raison d’etre. There did not seem to be an official comprehensive plan that directed sensegiving about partnership; there were, however, several tactics and examples addressing how notions of partnership were intentionally conveyed. One of the most important signals about partnership involved the use of special units. Under the commissioner’s watch, the CPD had focused some of its most visible partnerships within the Community Services Unit with its constituent parts, the Community Relations Unit and Youth and Family Services Unit. This was intentional. The commissioner explained that “a lot of the partnerships exist within our special units because [they’re] the ones that have the daily contact” with external organizations and agencies. The existence of the YFSU and the umbrella of the CSU is due to the commissioner. The previous police commissioner had closed the juvenile investigations unit, making all detectives generalists. Upon assuming his post, the commissioner at the time of this study quickly moved to change the department’s approach to young people. In the first annual crime report since joining the department, the commissioner wrote that “we are always looking for ways to work much more closely with our youngsters and identify a means of creating positive and healthy interactions that are designed to keep them safe and from making bad choices” (Cambridge Police Department, 2008, p. 5).
The Community Relations Unit had previously existed and was the center of many of the department’s community policing efforts and housed the bicycle officers and school resource officers. However, this unit was soon to experience significant changes to its approach with the commissioner’s arrival, moving to an outreach model focused on seniors, homeless individuals, people experiencing mental illness, and the business community. In the CRU, each substantive outreach area had one or two officers assigned full-time to responding to calls involving members of the specific population (either independently or assisting patrol officers), following up with individuals they have been in contact with, and liaising with organizations serving these populations. Finding the appropriate administrative location of these units in the department appeared to have been an ongoing project. Organizational charts of the CPD show a number of changes reflecting a new approach to youth engagement. With the appointment of the commissioner, the organizational chart underwent many changes, as different approaches were experimented with.

The commissioner also spoke about direct methods of communication about partnership. He noted that new officers coming into the department are immediately oriented to the department’s collaborations. Patrol officers are seen as an integral part of these efforts, because although partnerships are often housed in special units they rely heavily on patrol officers informing them of interactions that fall within their area of responsibility. Mid-level managers were also exhorted to do more than simply instruct their subordinates to engage these units and other partnerships but to sell them on these efforts.

The commissioner’s own efforts to forge relationships with agency heads was also intended to send a message about the department’s intention to engage a wider set of ideas. The commissioner recognized that it could be important to include both police and partner
organizations’ personnel in trainings. A training conducted early in the commissioner’s tenure sought to build closer relationships between the police and staff in the city’s youth centers, which are run by the Department of Human Services Programs (DHSP). These cross-trainings were deemed particularly important because of the sometimes-troubled history between officers and city youth who were now working in and running the centers. Engaging the fire department also contravened a professional rivalry.

But the commissioner also spoke of the challenges involved in changing officers’ expectations about their work and partnership. Shifting cultures is not easy, and the commissioner’s comments conveyed a sense that there was no clear way forward, no map that he or leadership could hand personnel. The commissioner discussed this uncertainty and the challenges of proceeding without a clear plan.

I think when you’re going to make any change and people are leaving their comfort zones in terms of the way they’ve always done things and now we’re asking them to do something very different. The difficulty that we have is that we can’t be very clear about what that difference is or what it looks like because we’re still trying to figure out what that looks like based on what they’re able to do and things like that. It really puts them in a place of being very uncomfortable and uneasy because now we’re asking them to do something, we’re trying to give them some general guidelines of what we think it looks like but then watching and seeing how they work, but I think it’s a process you have to go through.

Without blueprints, the department nevertheless moved ahead, the commissioner trusting that they would learn as they went. The commissioner described a period of experimentation, noting that individual collaborative initiatives developed in ways that were unanticipated.

This whole period to me is just figuring out what works what doesn’t work and if it doesn’t work, that’s as instructive to us as things that do work. Because we know that doesn’t work, what will we try differently next? It’s that whole process of going through that and just trying things. Especially when you don’t have clear blueprints from any place else that are doing something very similar.
The nature of change was recognized as inherently uncertain, with learning occurring unpredictably. In this context, sensegiving took on a more general symbolic or supportive nature rather than a direct, discursive approach.

Figure 5.1 summarizes the key metaphors identified in the commissioner’s comments.

**Figure 5.1 Key Metaphors from the Police Commissioner’s Interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>The commissioner’s vision for the department involved a continuous process of relationship building that would prepare it for when concerted collective efforts were required. To be worthwhile, partnerships need to provide a “return on investment,” meaning that involvement is worth the department’s time and contribution. Investment thus occurs on two levels: a continual seeding prior to creating partnerships and the effort and resources committed when engaging in a partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evolution</td>
<td>When the police commissioner arrived, the police department and city government were in the process of changing from more traditional orientations. Evolutionary processes were perceived to have been promoted by a long-standing city manager, who built a competent and professional management team and presided over a strong local economy. The commissioner spoke of working to harness his personnel’s capabilities and connect with other agencies to exploit the city’s wealth of social services and resources. This involved shifting away from the insular tendencies of professional policing, emphasizing the improvement of community conditions over a focus on the letter of the law, and broadening the scope of the department’s approach. The department’s “evolution” continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>Transforming intersects with evolving but refers specifically to the idea of value-added or exponential rather than additive results. Not only is partnership good for problem-solving focused on particular issues but it generates further opportunities for collaborative work. It also changes the way things are done within partnerships and within agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lack of) blueprint</td>
<td>The uncertainty of change and the unfamiliar direction collaborative work takes police personnel suggests the need for leadership to provide clear guidance. The commissioner indicated there is no blueprint for much of what they were doing and noted that it was probably not possible to offer more than general guidance. He seemed to argue that he and the department needed to expect and be relatively comfortable with this ambiguity.</td>
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CPD PERSONNEL’S UNDERSTANDINGS OF PARTNERSHIP

Characteristics of Partnership

In the wider department, participants did not generally offer concise definitions of partnership. “Partnership” did tend to resonate as the primary term used in the department, however. When asked whether collaboration or another term was more commonly used, some participants parsed the terms, suggesting that one or the other was more commonly used, more formal, or characteristic of a more sustained initiative. More often, however, participants noted that, to the extent they thought about it, they used partnership and collaboration interchangeably. Such comments were also sometimes accompanied by doubts as to whether distinguishing between terms was important as long as key features were present.

The more important distinction participants made was between partnership (or a related term) and relationship. Partnership-type terms (hereafter simply referred to as partnerships once again) conveyed a special set of qualities that were not guaranteed merely by assembling people from within and outside of the department to work together. Relationships are discussed in more detail within the section below addressing trust. First, the characteristics of partnership discussed by CPD personnel are addressed. Like the commissioner, departmental personnel saw partnership as an emergent quality. Generally, participants spoke of criteria similar to those mentioned by the commission: a diverse set of influences, a sharing of responsibility, and trust. Participants did sometimes differ in how they discussed these topics, illustrating that variation exists within the department.

53 It is certainly possible that the parsing of terms resulted from a social desirability bias. The researcher’s impression from his experience conducting the interviews was that closely defining partnership and distinguishing between related terms were not topics that most participants had previously considered. This is not intended as a criticism—understandably, these topics were not likely to come up for debate in the course of their work. The intent of asking whether other terms were commonly used and whether and how they differed from partnership was to give participants the opportunity to more clearly describe their perspectives.
**Added Value**

Like the commissioner, personnel indicated that a fundamental idea behind partnership is the synergy provided through working on a problem with people and organizations bringing different perspectives. As a lieutenant suggested, partnership “involves pieces that each of us can bring to the table . . . getting the right people in place so that we can get all of the slices of the pie there” (CPD 12). A member of the command staff indicated partnership brings together people with different outlooks and “the whole is greater than individual parts” (CPD 15).

But, depending on how one viewed an initiative—as a partnership or a relationship—working with actors outside the department could be seen as leveraging diverse points of view or more narrowly collecting information. The idea that “the police department can’t do it alone” could thus signal either a highly collaborative partnership or a more limited vision. For example, when speaking about the department’s practice of command staff personnel serving as liaisons to business associations, neighborhood groups, and city commissions, a high-ranking official described these interactions as more relationship than partnership.

It’s not the same sense that I bring something to a table, you bring something to a table, and we pool our resources to get something done. A lot of those relationships are about us gaining information from the group and then our resources going toward addressing the problem. I’m not saying that that’s necessarily a bad thing, because it’s our job quite often in those relationships to be the one that brings the resources to bear so to speak. What the community in those instances bring to the table are our eyes and ears, which without them we can’t get anything accomplished, because we can’t be everywhere in the city. But beyond that there’s not a lot that they bring. (CPD 2)

Another command staff member echoed these sentiments. However, this perception was not universal, as another high-ranking official described a personal liaison assignment as involving high levels of trust with the specific commission. The point is that personnel can see the same initiatives differently, as relationships or partnerships, perhaps using them differently depending on their expectations.
The question of how to clearly communicate the nature and quality of an initiative to those outside of its immediate orbit was also raised. A command staff member wondered how one would be able to identify whether an initiative one was not involved in personally was a “partnership.”

I think as a whole, if you were to ask the police commissioner, I think the police commissioner would say he has a lot of partnerships, you know? I’m told that we have a lot of partnerships, but I’m not directly involved with them, so, I couldn’t speak to that. (CPD 23)

That a member of the command staff could not automatically assume certain qualities of a relationship labeled as a partnership by the commissioner suggests that partnership is seen by at least some personnel as a very finely personalized or contextualized idea. It may also signal a problem with the sensegiving process. Focusing more pointedly on questions of legitimacy, if such a perspective were held by members of the public, it would suggest a highly fragmented understanding of the police department. It is akin to having a positive relationship with a particular officer but a terrible opinion of the department overall, suggesting that there is no generalization.

Aspects of the commissioner’s views on shared responsibility were also commonly found in participants’ comments, particularly the need for partnerships to be mutually beneficial and could not be “one-sided.” Several participants noted the need for group members to pull their weight as a quality of partnership. A high-ranking official observed that at times some groups or individuals relied too heavily on the police within partnerships because the police were viewed as having the problem-solving capacity and these actors could simply bring the problem to the police without contributing much further effort. This participant also said something similar to the commissioner regarding perceptions of the department’s legitimacy. Both indicated that some groups sought out partnership with the department because it conferred greater legitimacy on that
organization or actor to be seen as working with the police. In the present national climate, this might seem counterintuitive. Nevertheless, this perspective was supported by comments made in later interviews with the CPD’s partners. Among several participants, there was also a sense that the police needed to demonstrate that they were not going to be the dominating force in partnerships, that equitable distribution of power was important. This was specifically contrasted with the swaggering attitude characteristic of policing of a previous if not distant time.

The language used to describe partnership conveyed important messages about how partnership was understood. Department personnel often used modifying language similar to the commissioner’s to describe partnership. This practice was related to concerns that participants or their organizations were not fully invested, shirked their fair share of work, or otherwise compromised the experience, suggesting that valuable time and resources would inevitably be wasted. This involved references to “true” partnership, for example. Another linguistic issue arose in how some personnel referred pejoratively to the partnership-related work of their colleagues. Partnership work was caught up in the disdain among some personnel for special units and the perception that they do not engage in “real police work.” As the work of several such units is predominately partnership-oriented, there is overlap.

References to “true” partnership were often contrasting relationships in which all participants were not contributing something useful or that did not provide for a mutually beneficial experience. They could involve expectations on the part of non-CPD members that the police would drive the initiative. A “true” partnership could also refer to work with other organizations or actors that does not have prosecution as the primary goal. But there were other views of what a “true” partnership embodies. In reference to the work being done by the
homeless and mental health outreach officers within the Community Relations Unit, one participant noted:

Their day-to-day work is really kind of more on the true partnership level, because their primary goals are not prosecution. They’re getting people the help they need. (CPD 9)

One interpretation is that partnership was being connected in a positive way to trusting relationships where the police are connecting community members with helpful services. An alternative view is that if true partnership involves work that is not focused on prosecution—a major goal of traditional policing (and not inconsequential for modern policing as well)—it may be tied to activities not generally considered “real” police work.

Participants also referred to “equal” or “full” partnerships. One participant discussed the CPD’s work with the city’s commissions, boards, and associations. The police commissioner, command staff, and some additional sworn and non-sworn personnel, were assigned to sometimes several of these entities to act as departmental liaisons. One participant indicated that this work casts the police as “resources” for these groups but that the police liaisons are not necessarily “full” partners (CPD 17). Members of an organization may also not be “equal” partners (CPD 17) if their competence is questioned by other members. The examples noted above characterize “partnership”—without a modifier—as suspect. Plain-old partnership was framed as rhetoric rather than substance. This suggests that partnership was generally used quite loosely to refer to any professional interactions, but the term was still endowed—in the abstract—with greater meaning. When a group demonstrated these required or emergent properties, it necessitated clarifying language. Partnership had been devalued.

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54 This was not a universal perspective, as is described in the case chapter of the work between the department and GLBT Commission, where the police liaison was reported to be essentially a non-voting member.
On the other hand, sometimes partnership, even if *full* or *true*, was insufficient to convey the intensity of a relationship. The nature of the work and the strength of the internal workings of a group can at times seem to transcend the notion of partnership. In one instance, the CPD and Cambridge Fire Department had recently started having the bomb squad and paramedics train together. When asked whether this had led to a partnership, a participant stated,

Absolutely. Yeah, they’re like brothers. You know, so it’s *more than a partnership*, really. But, it’s one of the partnerships. (CPD 23)

Whether such intensity was reserved for street-level personnel in the tactical environment remains to be seen. Sufficient barriers may exist to make this type of interaction unlikely between the police and local service providers, for example.

There was some indication that the value of partnership might vary depending on who in the department is doing the partnering and with whom they are working. Several participants described the disdain many in the department had for special units’ work related to community policing as well as the derogatory terms for the personnel in those units and the type of work they were performing, which was oriented toward public engagement. A participant reported that in the earlier days of the Community Relations Unit, which had previously been a bicycle unit, it was not taken seriously. Colleagues would reportedly make comments such as, “Ah, you’re in the lollipop squad kissing babies, shaking hands” (CPD 3). According to another participant, the CRU continued to be disrespected by many patrol officers, who reportedly referred to it as the “bitch” unit (CPD 20). This participant noted that there was often a perception that the CRU was a cushy job that did not require much work. It was noted that this was not true when the unit first started and was even less so with the unit in its current iteration of highly targeted outreach. “Hug-a-thug” was cited as a typical way that officers traditionally viewed the type of outreach and case management work performed by the CSU (CPD 24). This nonsworn participant
explained that small units were always looked at with some measure of disdain by patrol, that they’re not necessarily doing “cop work” (CPD 24). Still, as with Waddington’s (1999) observation about the performative purpose of officers’ language among themselves, this language does not necessarily mean that patrol did not value such work. Indeed, it did serve to take less desirable calls off their plate, a benefit that several participants mentioned.

Describing changes in the relationship between the department and community, a member of the command staff appeared to characterize arrests and activities related to addressing the higher violence of an earlier period as being more authentically police work:

I think there was some, the community didn’t trust the police department. It was a lot busier back then. There was a lot of shootings. There was a lot of arrests. There was a lot of police work being done back then. And there was hardly any community involvement with the police department until 1992 or 1993, when this whole community policing phenomenon came across the country. (CPD 23)

Language used to describe partnership had often suggested its idealization, but the halo’s glow faded when discussed in closer comparison to traditional police activities. It should be noted that the more pejorative assessments were largely attributed by participants to other personnel; they did not claim such views as their own. It is impossible to know whether this was indeed the case or a way of voicing controversial opinions without risk to themselves. Whatever the case, these attitudes are not unheard of in the policing literature and, given the exploratory nature of this study, suggest how some within the department may view partnership.

**Trust**

Similar to the commissioner, participants talked about the importance of communicating sincerity of purpose through a demonstration of consistency of purpose. Trust was often discussed in the context of interactions among partnership members. A characteristic comment argued that this was a critical process, and trust did not simply exist as a stable entity.
You have to build trust. . . . There’s that time there when you are going to partner with somebody that there’s that initial phase, like, well what’s your role, what’s our role, how’s it all going to work? You have to build the trust. (CPD 15)

Much of the discussion on trust focused on demonstrating to the community that how the police act in a given situation accurately reflects their overall mission and approach. This applied across types of interactions, whether among organizations working together, between partnerships and the public, or between the CPD and community. Building trust at the patrol level was seen as critical. If these interactions did not go well, it could create cascading problems for other departmental efforts to reach the community. As a command staff member argued, “that first officer that they deal with can either make or break any sort of partnership that might or relationship that might develop later with our outreach workers” (CPD 13).

Sincerity and consistency were critical in working with immigrant communities living in the city. Participants described the need in some cases to overcome people’s negative experiences of policing in their native countries. Such fears were potentially exacerbated by worries that the local police are working with federal immigration officials to deport people who are not in the country legally. One high-ranking official, who had been invited to speak to a city program attended by immigrants, talked with the group about the department’s distance from federal immigration enforcement and emphasized that this position was part of the city’s approach, that the department was connected to the larger administrative fabric and culture of the city. He used the opportunity to communicate the mission of the department and the services available, such as the department’s language unit with a capacity of more than one dozen languages and the value the department puts on language skills in its recruitment efforts.

Although sometimes characterized in negative terms that served to contrast them with partnerships, the range of comments about relationships suggests that this notion is quite
complex itself and should not be seen as lesser forms of engagement. Indeed, relationships were also sometimes described as involving trust, an important feature associated with partnership. A relationship could represent everything from a very informal interaction to one nearly indistinguishable from partnership.\textsuperscript{55} The distinction between partnerships and relationships appeared to relate to the more targeted focus and regular collective interactions of the former. In addition to making people’s daily routines possible, providing information, and serving as stakeholders important to the city’s public safety, people with whom CPD personnel have relationships were described as the foundations for partnership and conduits of partnerships or other initiatives that do not necessarily directly involve the people in the relationships. A participant noted that of his many relationships some have become partnerships, a shift he attributed to there being “actual buy-in from both sides . . . to a common goal” (CPD 23).

Part of the conversation around trust involved relationships and relationship building. Participants, including the commissioner, discussed the active, purposeful cultivation of relationships. Well-tended relationships could be quickly activated when a crisis or event occurred that required a collaborative response or more easily brought together when a longer-term problem called for partnership. One participant cited the many relationships he and his immediate departmental colleagues had built up that made possible the execution of short-term missions such as coordinating the transportation of visiting dignitaries or similar logistically challenging events. Although the commissioner spoke of relationship building in an “investment” context, his comments overlapped with trust building, and trust seemed to be a

\textsuperscript{55} The term “informal partnership” was also used by a small number of participants in ways that seemed to suggest one-on-one interactions that might otherwise be called relationships. But the level of partnership formality was also invoked at times to convey an idea about the longevity or sustainability of initiatives, whether the initiative was driven by a grant, or the types of partners involved. The language choices could quickly grow blurry.
more compelling justification for relationship building in discussions with the broader department.

Participants noted that one could not simply “partner” with anyone absent a pre-existing relationship, or it would at least be more challenging and time consuming to implement a productive initiative. When a problem arises, “you have a name with a face . . . the first time you meet someone isn’t at the crisis stage” (CPD 5). A lieutenant described the link between relationships and the productivity of partnerships.

[Partnership] is a more sustained thing, but if you don’t have that relationship, your partnership falls by the wayside. . . . In the past there have been these task forces that you’ll try to do and all of these grand efforts and you’ll bring all of these people in and maybe you’ll get the players to sit around the table and maybe one or two of them just pay lip service. You don’t really have a partnership because you never established a relationship. (CPD 12)

Relation building connects individuals to organizations and agencies in meaningful ways. But the dynamism of relationships and partnerships means that they can devolve as well as develop. A lieutenant described the experience of partnership with non-profit organizations as one of ebb and flow depending on each other’s needs at the time. “When they intersect, we’re acting in a partnership, and when they’re divergent, we keep that affiliation for the times when we can help each other’s needs” (CPD 9).

An additional layer of partnership related to whether the internal workings of the department could constitute “partnerships.” While there was agreement over the need for personnel and units within the department to work well together, participants disagreed over whether such interactions constituted a “partnership.” A number of participants broached the distinction between “internal” and “external” partnerships. For example:
The internal partnerships are all about dealing with problems that face the department itself, whether it be a crime pattern or some strategic issues that have to be addressed and fully developed, and partnering there is all about just getting together, getting out of your silo . . . and then understanding what you can bring to the table to accomplish what you’re setting out to attain. . . There’s a lot of different levels internally. It could be something that is tactical for a specific incident or it could be strategic in nature, and by that I mean an issue that might evolve around Harvard Square that involves purse snatching. That’s something that you work together, not only with operations personnel, but you work with detectives to set up various levels of police intervention to try to either reduce the incidents from occurring through a uniform presence or try to catch the individual through non-uniform presence, in a sting operation. (CPD 2)

The same participant noted that these kinds of “partnerships” are easier to accomplish than external ones, as they involve more familiar people and situations. However, some participants did not view work among personnel or units in within the department as “partnership.” Rather, this was business as usual or just doing one’s job. A participant indicated that while there is unity and cohesion within units, personnel work across units as needed. This was viewed perhaps as “collaboration” (the participant did not have a term that felt right, but neither did “partnership”) (CPD 30). Another characterized such work as just how things got done in the department (CPD 6).

The Broader Narrative of Partnership

Economic, Political, and Cultural Context

CPD personnel saw the city’s political, economic, and cultural context as influencing partnership. The robust Cambridge economy was not always thus. Several personnel noted that the recently retired city manager had been instrumental in putting Cambridge on solid financial footing. A high ranking sworn participant described the state of the city’s finances in the 1960s and 1970s as “the dark ages” and credited him with setting the city on a new path in the wake of plans for NASA to locate facilities in Cambridge falling through in the 1960s and the city being saddled with a low bond rating, preventing much development from occurring (CPD 2). “What the city manager did was he developed a plan of growth for the city that really hasn’t stopped to
this day. I mean, you drive around the city and you see project going up everywhere with
redevelopment in every area” (CPD 2). Others also cited the city manager’s influence on the
economic strength of the city. A high ranking sworn participant stated:

You’ll never find a city like Cambridge as far as money being in the black all the time. And I got to give credit to the city manager who just retired in July, who’s been here for like 35 years. Ran the city very, very well. So, we’re very, very lucky here in Cambridge. When that, when the last downturn in the economy went, you know, all the police departments were laying off, demoting, not hiring. We were promoting, hiring and, you know, it never really affected us at all. (CPD 22)

The stability attributed to the city’s budgetary vigor is an important observation. The
robust local economy was not itself the cause of partnership, and the relationship between
funding and partnership can be unclear. Indeed, partnership was often discussed as a potential
salve to organizations that lack (or are forced to do without) the funding to implement initiatives
on their own (doing more with less). But in policing this type of work is also frequently the first
to be jettisoned during leaner times, as are other practices that do not conform to “real” police
work. The city’s financial strength supported the establishment and endurance of many services
and provided the police department with the resources and stability to staff itself in ways that
made collaborative work more likely.

Numerous participants connected the city’s strong financial position and wide variety of
available resources, especially in the form of city agencies and community organizations.
Participants contrasted the city’s economic viability with that of neighboring jurisdictions.

We’re a very resource rich community, financially and the resources that are available to
us, the people that we can partner with is, it’s a pretty huge list. So other communities
don’t have the financial resources to, I mean, we’ve probably got, we’ve probably got
two-to-three million dollars in our budget tied up in our Community Services Unit. A lot
of departments don’t have that luxury. So, I think we’re unique in that where we are and the resources that the city provides to us. (CPD 26)
At times, participants specifically contrasted the CPD’s ability to commit personnel and resources with observations about how other departments’ budgetary woes interfered with their efforts. A lack of resources at other departments was seen as limiting their ability to allocate personnel to collaborative assignments at all or with sufficient reliability (CPD 26).

However, a sworn participant at the management level noted that having a well-resourced department was not a prerequisite for collaboration. Speaking of the outreach-centered work performed by the department’s Community Services Unit, he argued that

[w]hat we do is replicable anywhere in this country, and that’s because there’s a police department everywhere in this country, some form of law enforcement. There are schools everywhere in this country. There is health care everywhere in this country. Why? Obamacare. If nothing else, Obamacare has ensured that everyone is entitled to health care, and part of that health care is mental health coverage, if not just the well-being of the youth that may need whatever. . . . Everybody can do this. You might not be able to do it to the level that we do it. Yes, we’re a rich city, we can pay the money, it makes it a lot easier, no doubt. But you can still do it, smaller scale. It still can be done. (CPD 24)

The larger problem for some departments might be a dearth of functioning local institutions, let alone a larger array of services with which to connect. Cambridge was fortunate to have both.

Several participants also noted the city manager’s influence on Cambridge’s administrative culture. As the police commissioner had noted, there was a sense that the city manager had worked to foster a collaborative culture with city government. One participant indicated that the city manager had taken charge of an administrative apparatus that was driven by a spoils system where politicians placed individuals into city government for what seemed like life-time appointments (CPD 17). The city manager was said to have had the overarching goals of establishing a professionalized agency culture. This goal was not achieved immediately, and participants described a frequent lack of collegiality across agencies over the years.

The situation seemed to have improved more recently. One participant described the city manager as seeing the appointment of the police commissioner and the CPD’s command staff at
the time of the study as the final pieces of the administrative puzzle (CPD 17). The participant recounted that twenty years ago, the city manager could not get anybody in the CPD but the police commissioner to give him information when he called the department. At the time of the study, this had reportedly changed. The city manager would directly call members of the command staff, and command staff personnel on duty would include the city manager and assistant city manager on emails about events occurring in the city and how they were being handled. It should not be surprising, perhaps, that the current police headquarters, to which the department moved in 2008, bears this city manager’s name.56

Participants’ perceptions of Cambridge residents cannot be overlooked. The city’s populace is culturally diverse and, overall, politically progressive. There are also many students attending prestigious private universities, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) most prominently among them, and, increasingly, those who come to Cambridge to live or work because of the high-tech economy that was booming. A 2013 New York Times article called Cambridge one of the top two or three commercial real-estate submarkets, with most of the growth attributed to the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries (Weintraub, 2013). Changes to the city’s population had also been brought about by the end of rent control in Cambridge in 1995, which resulted in substantial residential turnover and the conversion of many formerly rent-controlled apartments (one third of total Cambridge residential units were controlled properties) into condominiums and owner-occupied housing (Autor, Palmer, & Pathak, 2012). These factors put pressure on the Cambridge police to engage

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56 His long tenure was not without controversy, however. In addition to criticism of his salary, which at his retirement was $347,000, “far and away” the highest paid city manager in the state (J. Edwards, 2013), the city was successfully sued by a former city employee who had reported workplace racial discrimination and claimed the city manager had fired her in retaliation. The city lost an appeal in 2011, with damages and fees totaling $12 million (Baldassari, 2014). Still, he is widely credited with keeping the city on stable financial footing and bringing coveted pharmaceutical and bio-tech firms to town. At the CPD, nearly all references to the former city manager were positive.
in a customer service-oriented style of policing, where residents’ and business owners’ satisfaction was a major departmental goal, making relationships and responsiveness key concerns.57

Participants characterized residents as quite willing to voice their demands for more responsive city government. This was often directly connected to the need for the CPD to provide a high level of community engagement. Two members of the command staff described the diversity and high standards of the city in positive terms. One said that the city’s residents want “open and honest” policing and “they want to be treated with respect and they want to have a voice,” further stating that the CPD has lived up to such expectations: “I think it’s been a perfect combination where, I think Cambridge could be a model” (CPD 5). Another argued similarly that the department is “well ahead of the curve” because of the populace’s diversity and high expectations of the police (CPD 15).

They expect our police to act a certain way and deliver services a certain way, so in order to do that we realized that you need to not only have training and realize all those aspects of it internally, but you also have to look outside, outside the four corners of the building and work with other groups to make that happen. (CPD 15)

Of course, not all city residents are equally engaged, motivated to hold their police accountable, or even willing to report incidents that occur. Participants indicated that some neighborhood meetings with the police see larger, more active participants in some neighborhoods than others. Demands for police attention were also characterized as depending on whether a specific incident or problem has occurred. Still, there was a conception of Cambridge residents as a

57 The tying of organizational policing styles to the political environment goes back to Wilson’s (1968) seminal work. He linked city government structures with particular policing styles (legalistic, watchman, and service-oriented) and predicted certain arrest patterns that would be associated with these styles. His research provided support for the notion that the political environment influences how local policing is done. Although research continues to find environmental effects on police organizational behavior (e.g., institutional effects), an attempt to replicate Wilson’s findings (Zhao & Hassell, 2005) was not supportive of his specific hypotheses. In the present study, the notion of a service-oriented style of policing is not being explicitly linked to a city governmental structure, although it is being prospectively tied to political pressures and police leadership demands.
demanding lot ready to make waves when dissatisfied. Some participants noted that this was not contingent on being wealthy, but examples of having to police “the Cambridge way” (discussed in detail below) tended to reference concerns of tonier inhabitants, such as the need to take reports for minor incidents other department might not and the presence of a city ordinance addressing disruptions from leaf blowers.

**Organizational Change and Leadership**

Earlier, a participant was mentioned as reporting that the city manager viewed the appointment of the police commissioner and the commissioner’s appointment of his command staff as a pivotal moment in the city manager’s plan for Cambridge. Both the commissioner’s leadership and the personnel working in his command staff were cited by participants as important factors underlying the policing taking place and the perceived emphasis on partnership.

When research for this study started in 2013, the police commissioner was in his seventh year in that position. Top leadership was distributed across a sworn command staff, whose members included two superintendents and seven deputy superintendents. Figure 5.2 breaks down the commissioner and command staff’s major administrative areas of oversight at the department.

The CPD did not always have this leadership structure. It underwent significant changes to the hierarchy in the early 1990s. Until that point, the department had been headed by chiefs selected through a civil service process, in which the city manager had chosen a chief of police from a list of personnel who had attained the rank of captain\(^{58}\) and passed an exam (Lewis, 1990).

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\(^{58}\) Lewis (1990) indicates ranks of “captain or higher,” but it is unclear that a rank higher than captain existed in the CPD.
This was viewed as having led to parochialism in the department. As a participant described: “when . . . you’re a civil service appointed chief, you’re a god, nobody can touch you, you’re there ‘til the day you decide to retire or you die. And you can do whatever you want” (CPD 17). The new system sought to provide leadership with greater management and educational experience through the consideration of a larger applicant pool not limited to CPD personnel. The switch to a commissioner was credited to the city manager, who was reportedly trying to put a long-term plan in place to improve city services, which involved having the right agency heads. As a member of the command staff described,

He knew that wasn’t happening with the police department and he knew he couldn’t change it. And the only way he was going to change it is to take the leadership of the police department out of civil service and have it appointed. And we started moving forward. (CPD 17)

Like other departments at the time, prior to the switch from police chiefs to commissioners, the CPD reportedly pursued a traditional, enforcement-based form of policing. A lieutenant noted at
that time, “We were a very traditional department, very because that’s the way it’s always been done. And I think that this department did a lot of things well, but it was, ‘we’re the cops and we’ll tell you how it’s done. This is what our role is.’ Very paramilitary” (CPD 12). With the change in leadership, the city manager was moving the department in a new direction.

At the time of research, the CPD was on its third appointed police commissioner, each of whom had been hired from outside the department. Each had served in leadership positions in other police departments. The first was appointed in 1991 and served until 1995. He was credited with bringing community policing to the CPD. As a lieutenant noted, “he was the bomb that got set off” (CPD 12). This was in the early days of community policing, which was still seen as a cutting-edge innovation. Community policing was publicly touted as the philosophy behind the CPD’s efforts during the first two commissioners’ tenure (Manly, 1996). Implementation was characterized as challenging by most participants who were in the CPD at the time, but as a command staff member described, there was a sense among some that at least the department had the right raw materials.

Our officers knew how to talk with the community and find out what the problems are. The one thing that we didn’t have was an understanding that our way is not always the best way, okay? We would think that, “Hey, I’m the police,” you know, “I know what I’m doing, don’t tell me what to do.” We’d be out there talking to them, but talking and listening are two different things. So, [the first commissioner] and community policing and the formalization of it taught us to listen more, and that was the beginning probably of the true partnerships that we have today. We began to do outreach into the community to establish the relationships. (CPD 2)

During his tenure he established the first appointed command staff, doing away with the position of captain.59 Just as moving to an appointed commissioner position gave the city manager greater control over who heads the department through a wider array of applicants, having an appointed

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59 No additional personnel were made captains, but those already in that position appear to have been able to hold that rank until leaving the department.
command staff gave the commissioner greater power over the selection of departmental leadership. Two participants recounted that the former city manager had quipped that when he died, he would like to be reincarnated as a Cambridge police captain (CPD 17, CPD 26). The second commissioner served from 1996 through 2006. The police commissioner during the present research was appointed in 2007. In addition to experience as a police executive, he had cabinet-level leadership experience at the state level in Massachusetts.

The first two commissioners were often given credit for serving as “change agents,” instituting what participants referred to as community policing activities and seeking to reshape the more insular aspects of the department and its culture; however, the commissioner at the time of the study was often described as taking the department to a new level and expecting a degree of effort and commitment not necessarily demanded by previous commissioners.

I’ve worked for three police commissioners and all three have been very big into community collaboration. Matter of fact, our community policing program was started by [the first commissioner], you know back in the ‘90s when he first came. And then [the second commissioner] came and he developed our Neighborhood Sergeants Program, he increased it [that is, community collaboration]. [The third commissioner] is extremely big on partnering and collaborating with outside groups and outside agencies and the community, so he’s just taking the torch and making it better, but it’s always been there, and it’s progressively got better to the point where we have a police commissioner now that has fully embraced it and brought it even further. (CPD 15)

Participants often characterized the current commissioner’s pursuit of partnership in terms of reckless speed: as having “his foot on the gas pedal, 100 miles an hour all the time” (CPD 22) and “driving this bus at a breakneck pace in creating partnerships and innovations” (CPD 5). One participant, a lieutenant, stated, “I think sometimes he drives the train faster than the rest of the cars want to follow, but you have no choice” (CPD 12). Such sentiments suggest that the degree to which this commissioner emphasized community collaboration may not have been appreciated equally throughout the department.
That the commissioner could pursue such a collaborative approach with the speed and energy with which he was credited may have been contingent upon processes seeded earlier starting to bear fruit. Participants often spoke critically of now-retired leadership and middle managers who had come up through the organization during the earlier period of reform policing. These were individuals who had spent much of their careers in a departmental and occupational culture with different expectations. Some study participants blamed departmental inertia on their presence, noting that changes came slowly as this group trickled out. A current member of the command staff described how much of the department was skeptical about community policing, and those in supervisory and leadership positions were often unwilling to entertain these new ideas.

We’d heard about [community policing], we didn’t pay any attention to it. We probably went through a good three-year period where we had a lot of people come in and train us, and nobody was really buying into it because you had captains left on rank, you had sergeants and lieutenants from the old school, that [said], “Nah, I’m not doing that, I don’t care what you say, I’m not doing it.” But over time . . . new blood came in, you had better educated personnel coming in, people that wanted to do real good things with the community, people that’ve had great opportunities coming up through the ranks and say, “You know something, this is what I want to do, I want to make it a better place.” Now you add lateral officers, which we never had before. (CPD 17)

Command staff members were said to have managed personnel in a harsh, military style.

Participants also spoke of discord among them. One noted in reference to the priorities of the second commissioner, “I don’t know that there was a lot of partnerships, even his internal command staff, they couldn’t get on the same page” (CPD 13). Moreover, relatively little was expected of them compared with the present day. Participants spoke of the expectation being that the higher one rose in the department, the less work would be required. Two participants independently described members of the command staff sequestering themselves in their
officers, feet up and playing Sudoku (CPD 13, CPD 17). It was unclear whether this was the same person, but the larger point being made was that this was not necessarily atypical behavior.

Another important change taking place was the recruitment of “lateral officers,” or officers who had not started their careers in Cambridge. This was said to first take place in 2005. The need for laterals was reported to come from the shrinking Cambridge middle class and corresponding reduction of the number of people taking the civil service exam to become a police officer. Bringing outside officers in, however, seems to have presented an opportunity for growth. An irony of the civil service process, a product of Progressive “good government” reforms, was that city politicians reportedly monitored the lists, championing particular individuals to ensure they found a spot in the department (CPD 17). A member of the command staff spoke of how this had contributed to an insular department composed of personnel who were politically connected.

Now you add officers coming from the outside from other police departments that had horrendous experience with other police departments but now they’re starting to see the improvements in the Cambridge Police Department and they came in just at the right time, where we’re moving in a whole different direction and they helped drive the direction that we went in. Having so many lateral officers come on board, we had the opportunity of hiring the best and the brightest, and that just added to the professionalism and direction that we went in. It really made a big difference. And those of the old school that were not willing to get on board were left to the side. And the rest of the department moved forward. And over time, those who chose not to be a part of it left either through retirement or whatever. But it was long-term. It took a long time. (CPD 17)

These organizational changes and their consequences for the department—the shift to commissioners, the retirement of the old guard, and the infusion of lateral officers—represented an incremental, not inevitable, process that paved the way for the third commissioner to pursue a collaborative approach and to assemble a top leadership team willing and competent to implement his vision. These factors were key to understanding the milieu in which the meanings of partnership are enacted within the CPD.
As the descriptions above demonstrate, Cambridge is a unique city. Several participants indicated that this context has led to the development of a particular approach to policing, often referred to as “the Cambridge way.” This term has been cited elsewhere. In the Cambridge Review Committee’s report examining the events leading up to the arrest of Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010, p. 1 & p. 34) the authors indicate that policing in Cambridge is directly tied to its progressive culture and politics and is, as a result, “forward-thinking.” CPD officers themselves refer to policing “the Cambridge way” and are characterized as “proud” of this approach, which refers to policing “within a strong heritage of tolerance, respect, and community input.” This approach is specifically framed as contrasting with many other jurisdictions.

Explanations of the Cambridge way provided by interview participants often echoed the committee’s report. Descriptions noted the service-provider-over-crime-fighter approach of the department and the emphasis on collaboration and outreach. The Cambridge way was also directly connected to the higher police salary in Cambridge. A message communicated to at least some new personnel was “If you want the Cambridge pay, you’ve got to do it the Cambridge way” (CPD 23). The speaker, a member of the command staff, indicated using this phrase with new recruits to convey that if they had been attracted to the CPD by salary considerations they should know that they cannot simply police the way it is frequently done in other places.60

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60 As noted earlier, financial terminology made its way into the commissioner’s descriptions of policing and partnership. The police commissioner talked about needing to demonstrate “value” of initiatives, getting a good “return on investment” for working collaboratively, and the “dividends” that result from cultivating relationships that can pave the way for productive partnerships. The commissioner’s market-based language did not go unnoticed, as one participant noted: “The commissioner talks about dividends, how you make the investment in the relationships, and then in a time of need, those are the same people that are going to be coming to your side” (CPD 26). One participant indicated that “Like the city’s AAA bond rating, we expect a AAA type of customer service for the people that are in the city” (CPD 25).
Expectations are high, and they would not be just sitting around. It requires being “victim-centered,” which involves being aware not to revictimize people as well as taking reports for everything, including for issues other departments might not.

According to participants, the CPD’s approach to policing was not always seen by personnel from other departments as real policing. In the abstract, it could be a source of good-natured ribbing. A command staff member described attending a major police convention, where personnel from other departments would joke, “Oh, you guys from Cambridge.” He added, “They think we’re like Martians or something like that” (CPD 31). Cambridge’s way was playfully described by some participants as meaning a “touchy-feely” style, the need for which was linked to the stereotype of the ornery Cambridge resident. This could dip into gallows humor. For example, a lieutenant related that because the promotional exams are state-administered rather than tailored to Cambridge, “if you’d read a thing on police procedure the joke was think about how we do it in Cambridge and then pick the opposite answer on the exam” (CPD 12). The participant explained that “the culture is that we’re not going to get very heavy handed with that enforcement because it isn’t going to be received well in the community” (CPD 12).

However, one participant, a lieutenant, conveyed a more cynical view. When discussing the connection between higher pay and performance, the higher bar described earlier was characterized here as a lowering of standards (the apparent standard potentially being a more traditional approach to policing). The different expectations meant “you can’t be heavy-handed with the people, you got to take a little more insults from them before you pop off at them . . . We do things a little differently. . . We’ll take a report for a lost ham sandwich, you know. If that makes them happy, take the report. It’s ridiculous sometimes what we do, but we do it, and that’s
the way we work” (CPD 1). This is not to suggest that this attitude was prevalent, but it is important to convey a strong contrarian viewpoint that was offered. Nor does it appear to be inconceivable given the comparisons to other departments’ approaches.

The stark contrast between the ideals of the Cambridge way and a more common traditional policing culture was described by a command staff member. Differences that were often laughed about within informal gatherings of officers from different departments grew more emotional in a training context. The participant had given a training on legitimacy and procedural justice at the regional academy during an in-service program. The reaction by some officers was characterized as “hostile” (CPD 13), “People were like yelling at us, ‘You’re gonna get somebody killed’ . . . it was just visceral and some people got up and walked out.” The participant observed that these officers’ departments were often located in “suburban, small, affluent, homogeneous communities” where, unlike Cambridge, they had never had to work productively with a diverse populace, with whom the police needed to rely much more on effective communication. Here, then, the Cambridge way was being concretely tied to the city’s diversity. It should also be noted that the participant indicated that in spite of the negative reaction described above, some trainees would later approach and more privately express interest in the topic and frustration with their colleagues.

The Gates Incident

Lastly, it is important to address the arrest of Professor Gates from additional perspectives within the department. In his interview for this study, the police commissioner had described this event as an opportunity to change the department’s culture. Indeed, this was the impetus for the legitimacy and procedural justice training mentioned above, among other initiatives and actions. The department began having purposeful conversations within in-service
and other opportunities about engaging in a more tolerant, less aggressive approach with the public. A member of the command staff described an important outcome of these discussions.

[T]here were so many cases where officers used [a non-procedural justice-oriented] approach, and disproportionately what we saw were officers of color who either had experiences, negative experiences with other police departments, sharing those experiences and sharing how they chose to engage differently out in the street, and . . . I think officers learn from each other, I think people walked away from it saying, “You know, there are different ways to approach this situation.” (CPD 13)

This would suggest some level of cultural movement in the direction the police commissioner had hoped for, namely an understanding of public interactions that prioritized community safety (and officer safety) rather than one that prominently displayed an officer’s authority.

However, much of the conversation during interviews about the Gates arrest and aftermath revolved around disappointment with how the rest of the department was treated in the media and how the police commissioner responded. Coverage was perceived as not adequately contextualizing the incident. A high-ranking official stated that “[t]he biggest lesson that was beyond the incident itself, was that the Cambridge Police were doing a lot of excellent work, but the Cambridge Police didn’t tell anybody about it. We didn’t, we did the work. We did the job. We had quality relationships. But we weren’t good at telling people the good things. So, we let others control the message” (CPD 26). A lieutenant criticized the commissioner for not providing any defense of the department while they were under such intense scrutiny by national media. This was characterized as creating hostility toward the commissioner in some quarters of the CPD. Another lieutenant found some solace in the fact that other city agencies and community organizations were coming to the department’s defense, even if some people were making “cheap political points” by negatively characterizing the department as a whole (CPD 12).

Although the department may be growing in new directions as a result of the Gates incident, it
appears that what personnel saw looking back to the event and its aftermath may differ considerably both from the commission and from one another.

**LEADERSHIP, SENSEGIVING, AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTION**

Earlier in this chapter, the sensegiving efforts of the police commissioner were addressed. The interview discussion had conveyed that there were numerous ways in which the commissioner was communicating with personnel about partnership; however, the commissioner also highlighted the challenges of implementing partnerships in an occupational and organizational cultural milieu that had not adequately prepared officers to think and act collaboratively. His comments suggested a sensegiving focused in part on providing support and leeway to personnel involved in partnerships. He had noted several partnerships that were in development and whose goals and approaches had changed as their members experimented and learned from their experiences.

This section now looks at how personnel reacted to the commissioner’s sensegiving efforts and made sense of partnership using not only the commissioner’s intentional tactics but other features of the organization. This exploration suggests that personnel recognized that the commissioner believed in the value of partnership and had communicated a broad message that opportunities to partner should be taken when possible. However, the commissioner’s sensegiving efforts appeared to provide less clarity of direction the further one descended the organizational hierarchy. The value and usefulness of partnership was thought to be much less clear among the rank-and-file, and numerous organizational features were not perceived as supportive of officers who might have an interest in partnership.

**Sensegiving**

It was noted earlier that participants often characterized the commissioner as a leader taking the department to another, higher level. Participants were also asked more specifically
about how the use of partnership has changed in the department, and many credited the commissioner with championing it in a way that had not been done before. His command staff recognized that he was promoting an approach that prioritized relationships with other city agencies as well as other organized constituencies. A member of the group characterized his message to them as “This is important to me, I want you to be out there with other . . . city agencies, partnering” (CPD 13). Command staff and other select personnel each had multiple liaison assignments, an endeavor that the commissioner also participated in. There seemed to be a nearly universal understanding among participants that the CPD had not had a leader quite like this commissioner in terms of driving his personnel, and there had certainly not been as strong an emphasis on collaboration.

It was common for participants to describe a general sense of encouragement from the top of the organization to take advantage of any opportunity to work with the public and other agencies and organizations, to make connections to solve problems and engage with the community. “It’s ‘Get in there and know somebody,’” as one participant put it (CPD 3). It was noted by several participants that the commissioner led by example, suggesting that his message was visible and perhaps paying off. There was an expectation—“an atmosphere” as a lieutenant described it—of engagement and partnership (CPD 9). Personnel outside of the higher echelon saw that the commissioner and command staff were working with numerous groups, and the commissioner would make sure the CPD participated in and staffed community events. Representatives came from throughout the department; Community Services Unit officers, patrol officers, leadership, and others would often be in attendance. An official in leadership described the commissioner’s expectation:
I think there is a level of expectation that all department personnel regardless of rank, sworn or non-sworn, that if a community agency or a city agency or anybody calls, that it’s the commissioner’s wishes that you will help facilitate whatever that is. And if that means it’s one call or you’re forwarding the information or if it’s more in depth, that’s OK. So I think the philosophy supports that. If you come in contact with an asset out in the community that can provide resources, we would like to think that you would bring that information back and a lot of officers do. (CPD 29)

This assessment reflected other participants’ comments. There appeared to be widespread agreement that the commissioner was communicating a message through direct communication with his command staff in particular, through example (his own and that of his command staff), and through making his personnel available to the public for community events. The message was broadly but insistently encouraging of engaging the world outside the department in whatever form it was encountered. Although partnerships were often more directly and frequently the work of special units, the message was that partnership part of the department’s culture, not the exclusive domain of a particular unit.

However, a more specific message was challenging to come by. Command staff were directly embedded in a partnership environment by the nature of their rank and responsibilities. A member of the command staff argued that partnership was likely mainly the province of the higher echelon of the department.

I think that you get a better grasp on talking to the command staff. There might be a couple of lieutenants, but they’re very, they’re pigeonholed, kind of like, in their lanes. But, you know, you go one step higher, and his deputy, the night operations commander, now you’re going to talk about, you know, we’re the ones that talk to public works, we’re the ones that sit down, and we’re in the meetings all day. We’re the ones that are collaborating. We’re collaborating for everyone else under our line, because if everyone collaborated, no one would get any work done, we’d all be in meetings, right? So, we collaborate at our level, and then we push the messages down. (CPD 23)

It may be that strategic partnerships were mostly confined to higher-ranking officials, but this would seem to leave out the more ground-level partnerships involving personnel from the Community Services Unit, for example.
There was also a sense that the message was diluted as it filtered down from the commissioner and command staff, particularly when it came to patrol. There were structural impediments that did not readily allow for patrol officers’ routines to include collaborative work. A participant in leadership noted “we’re still driven . . . by the call” and were, at best, “trying to give guys more latitude” to go deeper with information gleaned from the beat and reach out to city agencies and other groups as necessary (CPD 25). A lieutenant suggested that patrol officers likely did understand the importance of collaboration and saw themselves as actually being frequently involved in such work, but they probably did not know about the more formal partnerships (CPD 12). However, others questioned whether patrol officers were truly in a position to do much more than respond to calls for service and carry out plans pushed down by their superior officers. As a high-ranking official stated, “if you spend your whole career in operations [that is, patrol], all you’re going to really know is the operations part” (CPD 26).

It appeared that outside of certain special units like the CSU there was little direction on how to operationalize the commissioner’s vision. A high-ranking official commented, “I think partnering and working collaboratively is kind of the philosophy of the department, but I think the further that you go down, that message might be lost a little bit” (CPD 26). A member of the command staff also wondered:

Is [partnership] really part of our culture, because I still think that there’s officers out there that are, you know, the law enforcement officer, “My job is just to go out there and arrest people and reduce crime” and not so much about the diagnosing problems and connecting people to resources and partners. (CPD 13)

The commissioner had noted the uncertainty and ambiguity of partnership even within units dedicated to this idea. A more discursive sensegiving did not necessarily appear to be present, leaving many personnel with little guidance about applying partnership in their particular roles.
It was common for participants to indicate that the value and use of partnership would vary by departmental role. This could affect not just who an individual or their unit would partner with but how readily the idea of partnership fit their role to begin with. Patrol was generally cited as being the least likely component to see partnership as aligned with what they did, outside the most basic notion of partnership. With the vast majority of personnel in patrol, this presents a well-documented challenge to change, particularly change requiring a greater outward focus. Individual officers may be motivated to go beyond the typical patrol routine, but this is best seen as personal motivation rather than the result of organizational processes supporting partnership efforts in patrol. Generally speaking, engaged patrol officers were developing meaningful relationships within their area of responsibility but not partnerships as many participants understood the concept.

Two lieutenants spoke of how they likely would have or did feel about partnership-oriented work when they were patrol officers. In these comments, the idea of partnership was not simply seen as being outside of patrol’s typical daily experience but anathema. One stated that “if you talked about it with me ten years ago, I’d roll my eyes” (CPD 22). Another recalled going to community meetings and the like was “a pain in the ass” because it interrupted one’s routine and exposed patrol officers to complaints from the public that they should be sheltered from by their sergeants (CPD 1).

Organizational Communication Processes

Messages about partnership can also be conveyed through a variety of organizational processes, such as policy, training, incentives and advancement opportunities, and features of organizational structure. Materials providing information on these facets were requested but were in most cases not provided despite multiple requests. This section therefore relies primarily on participants’ perceptions, which includes the entire leadership team.
Policy and Training

There are several direct formalized ways that a department might convey messages about partnership. Department could have policies and procedures speaking to expectations generally or for certain positions or units. Likewise, training could convey how the department would like to see partnership performed. A review of official departmental policies early in the study period did not identify specific instances where partnership was defined or personnel were otherwise directed in its practice. Participants were also asked whether they could point to specific policies, procedures, training, or other explicit forms of communication about partnership in the CPD. How would someone coming into the agency—for example, a new recruit—understand partnership’s importance in the CPD and the particular expectations around its performance? At the time of research, however, most participants indicated that they were not aware of any departmental policies that dealt specifically with partnership. At the time of research, the department was in the midst of updating its policies but had not completed the process; participants were uncertain whether the new policies would address partnership.

There also appeared to be little formal training on partnership specifically. Recruits attended a regional police academy in Lowell, Massachusetts, which was not specific to the Cambridge context. Participants noted that trainees learned about community policing in the academy and then engaged in a two-week community policing project when they started at the CPD. During this time, they were also introduced to some of the collaborative community work being done by the department through the Community Services Unit or other units or initiatives. The CPD generally provided its own in-service training at an internal academy. Here, members of the department had received training on mental health response and were also introduced (and re-introduced) to the various outreach components operated through the CSU. The commanding
officer of the CSU addressed in-service classes on these subjects. A participant indicated that the commissioner made sure that the CPD programming for recruits and in-service training included information on current partnerships.

The picture painted of training appeared to provide personnel with knowledge of existing collaborations and introduced some of the partner organizations; however, beyond notifying personnel about the existence of such services available to patrol, there did not appear to be any training specifically focused on ways to work productively across different organizations. As a member of leadership indicated, “there’s no black and white curriculum that says this is how to build a partnership. We don’t have anything like that” (CPD 29). It was a different situation for special units engaged in collaborative endeavors. It was within special units or in the context of a particular interorganizational initiative that more focused training was provided. More details on such training is provided in Chapter 7 on the Safety Net Collaborative.

**Incentives and Advancement**

Workplace incentives, such as scheduling, pay, recognition, and career advancement also play a potentially important role in shaping how personnel construct a contextualized understanding of partnership. How these incentives apply to various activities and roles conveys status and identity. If collaborative work is not measured or rewarded, this might serve as a disincentive. Participants indicated that patrol pays more than working in a special unit, and that night operations work (i.e., patrol night shift) pays more than the day shift. This appeared to be the case for supervisors in special units as well. The difference was attributed in large part to the predictability of scheduling. That is, members of the CSU, for example, had schedules that were more closely tied to business hours and offered more discretion in scheduling one’s shift. Certainly, there were trade-offs between pay, scheduling, and the nature of the work itself to
consider. However, the fact of lower pay for work related to partnership suggested a lower status, which might diminish the allure of such work. A high-ranking official indicated that the department did not provide organizational-level supports or incentives for partnership but was supportive if an officer took initiative. Otherwise, partnerships tended to take place in the units within the CSU.

Promotions from patrol officer to sergeant and from sergeant to lieutenant were made on the basis of state civil service exams. Individuals taking the exams are tested on the material from texts on community policing, police administration and supervision, criminal investigation, state law, including criminal, motor vehicle, and juvenile, as well as criminal procedure (Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance, 2017). The exams, like the recruit academy, were not tailored to a police department and municipal environment that were by most accounts different from others in the area. An officer’s skill or experience in partnership was not important to how they performed on the exams (CPD 29). Command staff positions were not subject to civil service requirements; these had become appointed positions with the retirement of the rank of captain. The process was therefore quite different, and there was a greater opportunity for experience, skill, and interest in collaborative work to be recognized.

There appeared to be a desire on the part of department leadership to move away from the traditional activity or output measures that have typified performance assessment in policing, such as stops, citations, and arrests. These are easily quantifiable measures but have been found to be poor indicators of quality policing. Similar to the comment on providing officers with

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61 There were comments suggesting that the police commissioner was trying to work with the departmental unions to create promotional exams tailored to Cambridge, but it was unclear at the time of research whether this would ultimately take place.
greater latitude in their shift, a participant described an attempt to communicate that leadership wants to do a better job of recognizing community engagement work.

What we’ve said to the officers is we want you to be productive for the eight hours that you’re here and all of these things are important to the police department but public safety is the most important. So if you have any of these areas that you may like this one or that one, it’s your responsibility to make sure your area that you’re responsible for is safe. And then from there, you can do whatever you like to do. So we had a couple of officers that really liked the community engagement piece that were just really building these great contacts in an area where we had some problems with violence. And so we wanted to give those officers like credit for, they weren’t so high on the enforcement of pulling over cars but they were really high on the community. (CPD 29)

This description aligns with the commissioner’s general message to partner when possible, and like that message seems to suggest that partnership is not only optional but geared more toward the interests of the officers rather than those of the organization or of public safety.

Structure

Structure refers to the formal organizational map as a way to explore the department’s approach to partnership. The use of special units would be a visible manifestation of resource allocation and organizational priorities. The department-wide message to work-with-others-when-you-can paired well with the Cambridge way. It was intended to serve as a cultural imperative to interact in certain ways with the public and to engage in problem-solving rather than simply speed off to the next call. But, as discussed earlier, the diffusion of partnership messaging and lack of direct incentives to engage in work that was not clearly defined and that did not convey the same cultural status did not appear to have resulted in changes to officers’ routines or supervisors’ directives to their officers. The CPD had focused some of its most visible partnerships within special units. That the CSU and YFSU, where several prominent partnerships resided, were created by the third police commission would likely send a message about where partnership was expected to be prioritized.
SUMMARY

This chapter presented an exploration of how partnership is understood in the Cambridge Police Department. The political, economic, and cultural context of Cambridge was seen as unique, and the department itself was characterized as policing with a different approach than many other police agencies. Over a period of three decades, changes in the Cambridge environment along with developing trends in policing, were perceived to have reshaped the department in meaningful ways. Most participants not only acknowledged but celebrated these changes. They also offered generally favorable assessments of the police commissioner and praised his intense drive to expand the CPD’s outreach to and engagement with the community.

Partnership was understood as a way to leverage diverse perspectives and skills to address challenging problems and was grounded in trust. Not only must the problem be addressed but the participants must perceive the partnership as benefiting themselves, which could refer to their own capacity to address the problem. The police commissioner’s vision of partnership was one consistent with an ethos of both community policing and problem-orientated policing and sought legitimacy through ideas consistent with these approaches, inclusion and competence. Many of the sentiments expressed by other participants reflected these ideals, and there was a sense that an atmosphere of partnership pervaded the department. Partnership itself was seen as a form of interaction with emergent or special properties that “relationships” did not necessarily possess. However, relationships were also recognized as the building blocks of partnerships. Relationship, like partnership, was an elastic category with greater complexity than might be initially considered.

Partnership seemed to remain an atmospheric rather than concrete concept for much of the department, however, as much of the formalized and regular collaborative work was the full-
time responsibility of personnel in special units. Patrol personnel were regularly educated about
the work being done by these units and how they can leverage those partnerships, but it was not
clear that there was a message concerning how patrol might otherwise engage in partnership.
Even within special units, the nature of partnership and its awkward relationship to policing
culture reportedly made it difficult to convey a clear path for personnel to take. There also
seemed to be various organizational processes that did not strongly promote the value of
partnership for rank-and-file officers. Still, numerous examples were given of partnership, and
there was a clear sense that the department was working with myriad agencies, organizations,
and community members on many issues.
CHAPTER 6: THE CAMBRIDGE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER COMMISSION

This chapter explores the relationship between the Cambridge Police Department and the Cambridge Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Commission. First, the relationship is placed in context through a brief discussion of the socio-legal developments around LGBTQ rights, the scant research on police-LGBTQ collaboration, and the Cambridge environment. A history of the CPD’s formal engagement with the city’s LGBTQ community charts the origins and development of the GLBT Commission and is followed by a description of the major activities performed by the police and commission. Next is a discussion of how commission members and the police liaison described the relationship and how they understood it in relation to the notion of “partnership.” Intersections between identity and understandings of this relationship are then addressed. In particular, these relate to the sexual orientation and gender identity of the current and former liaison, to police occupational identity, and to the perceived differences between the CPD and other law enforcement agencies.

Research was conducted over the course of eight months—August 2014 through March 2015. Interviews were conducted with nine of the nineteen members of the commission and the CPD liaison to the commission at that time, and observations were made during five public meetings of the commission. Other information sources include minutes of commission

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62 This acronym, standing for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, is currently the preferred term of prominent advocacy organizations, as it better reflects the diversity of this community than other terms, for example, “the gay community” (GLAAD, nd). “GLBT” is used to refer to the commission. Terms other than LGBTQ are used where warranted by the context (e.g., quotations).

63 Appointed members of the commission are referred to in this chapter as “members,” “commission members,” or as “participants” in the study. Commission documents (e.g., meeting minutes) often use the term “commissioners,” however, the commission website also refers to “members” of the commission. Moreover, using member helps avoid the confusion that might occur when referring to both GLBT commissioners and police commissioners with the same terminology.
meetings, police department documents, stories in local media, and other publicly available materials.

**INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

Historically, conflict rather than partnership has characterized interactions between the LGBTQ community and police. Medicine and religious institutions viewed “homosexuality” as a perversion, facilitating legal prohibition and criminal enforcement (A. Dwyer, 2014). Even after the American Psychiatric Association decided in 1973 that “homosexuality” did not meet the criteria for a mental disorder (R. D. Lyons, 1973), American police were sanctioned to intervene in the consensual behavior of LGBTQ individuals until the U.S. Supreme Court struck down laws criminalizing sodomy in *Lawrence v. Texas*. Of course, such progress did not put a stop to intolerant social mores, and police in some jurisdictions have continued to engage in harassment or have failed to take seriously the victimization experiences of members of this community (Dwyer, 2014). Furthermore, police officers who do not represent themselves clearly as a man or woman have been subjected to harassment and violence by their colleagues (Dwyer, 2014). The masculinized culture of law enforcement has traditionally made it difficult for LGBTQ officers to serve openly. Indeed, the problematic notion of LGBTQ cops is reflected by popular culture in the typical lack of cinematic portrayals of LGBTQ officers (Wilson, Longmire, & Swymeler, 2009), and it was not until 1981 that an American police officer publicly acknowledged being gay (Barlow & Barlow, 2000).

Research on law enforcement efforts to engage LGBTQ individuals is scarce, but journalistic accounts suggest that in recent years the police have increasingly, if unevenly, sought to improve these relationships. Even before the medical community stopped pathologizing homosexuality and the evolution of cultural views, there have been documented cases of positive
relationships between the police and LGBTQ community (Dwyer, 2014); however, these may have stemmed from extraordinary relationships with particular individuals rather than supportive organizational or institutional arrangements. More recently, publications oriented toward law enforcement audiences have recommend a variety of approaches, including policy change and development, training, relationship building, and establishment of a liaison position to the LGBTQ community (cf. Burke, Owen, & Few-Demo, 2015; Burks, 2014; Crumrine, 2016).

Law enforcement agencies have taken a number of approaches to engage the LGBTQ community, including police liaisons to the LGBTQ community and specialized units focusing on LGBTQ public safety concerns, as well as mandatory sensitivity training for officers (Israel, Harkness, Delucio, Ledbetter, & Avellar, 2014). These practices are only now starting to be evaluated (Israel et al., 2014), suggesting that while partnership between the police and LGBTQ communities may be increasingly emphasized rhetorically and perhaps practiced by some police agencies, the meanings, experiences, and outcomes of such efforts are largely unknown.

64 Like those of many Americans, law enforcement attitudes toward transgender individuals are still evolving, and this is necessarily an imperfect process. A recent article posted online by the law enforcement-oriented publication POLICE Magazine (Parlow, 2013) provides an illustration. The author, a retired police officer serving as a P.O.S.T. coordinator and assistant professor, provides a basic introduction to issues related to encounters between law enforcement officers and transgender individuals and logistical and policy issues agencies should be aware of. However, in the midst of trying to reassure the audience about transgender individuals and condemn harassment against them, the author normalizes inappropriate reactions upon meeting a transgender person rather than more directly acknowledging inappropriate reactions as commonplace: “Normal reactions to meeting someone for the first time who is transgender is usually at first curiosity and then fear and disgust. Often times, it is the fear that encourages us to react with disbelief, skepticism, or intolerance. Being transgender is not contagious or a mental illness, yet some officers still make jokes, mock, and tease someone who is different from them. They bully, harass, disrespect, insult, and hurt persons that don’t fit into their idea of what a person’s gender identity” (emphasis added). Editorial decisions by the publication also deserve attention. A reader noted in the comments section that the accompanying lead photo, with the caption “A transgendered (‘TG’) prostitute moments after being arrested by undercover LAPD officers,” perpetuates the stereotype of transgender women as sex workers. Another commenter, whose response and handle appear to identify him as the article’s author, apologized, noting that “I did not submit a photo with the article.”
CONTEXT: HISTORY OF CPD-LGBTQ RELATIONS

Cambridge has a record of activism in the movement for LGBTQ rights. It was the first municipality in Massachusetts, in 1984, to adopt a human rights ordinance that included sexual orientation—it was later amended in 1997 to be inclusive of transgender individuals—and, in 1992, to pass domestic partnership legislation (Colbert, 2012). The Cambridge City Council elected the first Black and openly lesbian mayor in the United States in 2008 (Handy, 2016). When the state Supreme Judicial Court legalized same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, Cambridge was the jurisdiction in which the first same-sex couple received a marriage license. Dating back to at least the 1970s, Cambridge has also been home to several politically active gay rights advocacy organizations. For example, in 1983, the Cambridge Lesbian and Gay Alliance (CLAGA) held a public meeting to vet city council and school committee candidates on their stances on issues important to the gay community; nine city council members and eight members of the school committee attended (Schmidt, 1983). These advances have implications for policing in that they make explicit the notion that LGBTQ individuals are an important part of the community—legally, culturally, and in the community’s ability to wield political power—and are to be consulted as any other legitimate constituency. Still, Cambridge is not a utopia, and LGBTQ individuals have had concerns about their treatment in the city (Diaz, 2004).

Although the Cambridge Police Department had met with and otherwise interacted with LGBTQ organizations previously, the earliest formal linkage between the CPD and the LGBTQ community began in 1997. This was one of the contemporaneous steps being taken by the CPD and city government to engage the local LGBTQ community. Conversations between the Cambridge Lavender Alliance (CLA), other LGBTQ organizations, and the CPD had led the department to actively recruit gay and lesbian police officers. The CPD began working with
advocacy groups to encourage gay and lesbian individuals to take the upcoming state police exam (Hennessy-Fiske, 1997). The LGBTQ community had also asked the department for a police liaison.

In April of that year, a sergeant in the department became “the first police liaison to the gay and lesbian community in Cambridge” (McKim, 1997). In an interview with the Boston Globe, the sergeant stated that his sexual orientation was generally known within the CPD, but he had decided to publicly come out in the department. The timing was based on his retirement from the military reserve, because it would have jeopardized his military retirement benefits under the “don’t ask don’t tell” policy in place at that time (McKim, 1997). This was viewed as fortuitous timing by the CPD, given the pressures on the department. The sergeant described his experience telling the police commissioner to the Bay Windows newspaper:

“The Commissioner was thrilled,” said [the liaison] during a recent interview at Cambridge Police Headquarters. “When I told him, he slapped the table and said, ‘Thank God you came forward.’” As a result, the Cambridge Police Department joined a handful of departments around the state -- including Boston, Springfield and Northampton -- with at least one openly gay officer on the force. (Kuhr, 1997)

The commissioner then asked him to serve as liaison to the gay and lesbian community (Kuhr, 1997). The assignment was greeted with excitement from the CLA:

“We are extremely excited that Cambridge not only has an openly gay police officer but also a liaison to the community,” commented . . . a member of the Lavender Alliance. ‘(sic) That’s important in a city as large and diverse as Cambridge.” (Kuhr, 1997)

Being out in the department at the time appears to have been a complicated situation. Although the sergeant noted that his sexual orientation was an open secret in the department and that coming out “was no big deal,” during the same interview he reported discussing with the commissioner his fears about possible retribution from within the department (Kuhr, 1997). The

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conversation led the commissioner to obtain the city manager’s approval for the department to treat such actions as hate crimes and to fire the individuals responsible (Kuhr, 1997). The lack of openly LGBTQ officers statewide and concerns over colleagues’ negative reactions suggest that the sergeant’s decisions to come out and to agree to serve as the liaison were important developments. Founding members of the New England Gay Officers Actions League (New England G.O.A.L.) spoke to the *Boston Globe* about the conditions leading to the creation of that organization in 1991 (Cramer, 2016). During the 1980s and 1990s, publicly admitting one’s LGBTQ status was met with a wide range of reactions from fellow officers and agency leadership, from welcoming and acceptance to threats, firing, and discriminatory treatment (Cramer, 2016). A Springfield, Massachusetts, police officer reported that in the 1980s he feared that his life would be in danger if his sexual orientation were discovered (Cramer, 2016).

The nature of the liaison role had not been worked out when it was first announced. The sergeant told an interviewer that he “hopes to bridge the gap between the police department and the gay and lesbian community -- particularly on issues of hate crimes and same-sex domestic violence” (Kuhr, 1997). He had planned to work with the Boston Police Department liaison to clarify the role. It is not clear what came of that plan.67

While an encouraging step, the appointment of the liaison and other steps taken by the CPD did not mitigate the frustrations of the city’s LGBTQ community with the police. A few years later, in 2004, a town hall meeting was held at the Cambridge Senior Center to discuss the community’s concerns (*Report of the GLBT Town Meeting*, 2004).68 The meeting was sponsored

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66 New England G.O.A.L. provides peer support for sworn and non-sworn LGBTQ personnel in law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies at the local, state, and federal levels and “comprehensive training for police officers and other criminal justice professionals in an effort to enhance their knowledge of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (G.L.B.T.) issues and laws” (New England G.O.A.L. website, nd).

67 The liaison did not respond to requests to participate in this study.

68 The draft report was provided by a GLBT Commission member.
by a city council member who a few years later became the nation’s first openly lesbian Black
mayor. Between 150 and 200 people attended the meeting, with participants engaging in group
discussions on various topics related to LGBTQ quality of life and safety in the city (Cambridge

One of the eight discussion groups addressed police-related concerns. Participants
identified the need for the police to show greater respect for GLBT relationships, provide more
sensitivity in their response to domestic violence in the GLBT community, and improve their
approach to hate crimes incidents, which were reported as being mishandled or receiving no
response at all (Report, 2004). Recommendations included sensitivity training for police staff on
the handling of hate crime and domestic violence incidents and training on hate crime definitions
and protocols for response and reporting. There were also recommendations related to the liaison
role. Participants suggested that the expectations of the role of the police liaison be clarified and
that the visibility of the liaison be promoted (Report, 2004). The 2004 meeting represented a
major event in the city’s relationship with the LGBTQ community, resulting in the creation of
the GLBT Commission and promoting training and policy priorities in the police department and
other city agencies (LGBTQ+ Commission, 2017a).

At the time of this study, the Cambridge Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender
Commission was one of fifty-one city boards and commissions (City of Cambridge). Through
authority provided in the Cambridge Municipal code (Ch. 2.125), the city council issued an order
in February 2004 that the city manager establish the commission (“Cambridge Lesbian, Gay,

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69 Following the period of research, the commission formally changed its name on February 13, 2017 to the Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission through an amendment to the Cambridge
Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission”, 2017). The commission started meeting in May 2005 (LGBTQ+ Commission, 2017). The commission’s purpose was to:

Advocate for a culture of respect and to monitor progress toward equality of all persons with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity; promote policies and practices that have a positive effect on the health, welfare, and safety of all persons who live, visit or work in the City with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity. (GLBT Commission)

Unlike the CLA, the GLBT Commission was a part of city government, albeit a largely independent body. A commission member who had been part of the CLA indicated that this organization dissolved when the commission was established and suggested that its members may have perceived that the group was no longer needed once the commission was established (GLBT 8).

Participants described the group’s mission as focused generally on the wellbeing and safety of the LGBTQ community in Cambridge. The commission’s formal characteristics were seen as offering stability and legitimacy but also as creating challenges. It was an all-volunteer commission; unlike many city commissions, the GLBT Commission operated without a paid executive director or administrative staff.70 Its budget was also smaller than many other commissions. During the period of research, the commission’s annual budget was $2,500 and was provided by other city departments rather than being earmarked in the city’s budget. Comparatively, the city’s budget at the time (FY14) shows the Commission on the Status of Women (also called the Women’s Commission) indeed had a budget of $233,115 and the Peace Commission’s was $143,940 (City of Cambridge, 2013). Nearly all funding for these

70 Chapter 2.125, Section 050 of the Cambridge Municipal Code describes the appointment and term of an executive director, but an executive director has never been appointed by the city manager as indicated in the ordinance. This may reflect the lack of a budget to hire a director. https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT2ADPE_CH2.125CALEGABITRQUPLLGCO_2.125.050EXDIPPER (accessed January 1, 2018).
commissions went to salaries: an executive director and project coordinator/office manager for the Women’s Commission and an executive director for the Peace Commission (City of Cambridge, 2013).

Commissioner members lauded the current city manager and deputy city manager as well as several members of the city council for their support. Although the former long-serving city manager had received glowing reviews in the police department, appraisals by commission participants were less enthusiastic. The former city manager was less engaged with the commission, with one member describing the contrast between the former and current managers as “night and day” (GLBT 8). Participants attributed the challenging relationship to the former city manager’s disdain for the city commission system and budget concerns rather than any animus toward the LGBTQ community.

During the time of the study, the commission had two co-chairs with an additional seventeen members. Members served three-year terms without term limits and were required either to live or work in the city but were not obligated to publicly identify their sexual orientation or gender identity. During the period of research, members either self-identified or discussed other members’ identities; based on these conversations, the commission included individuals identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, and the commission has included allies (i.e., cisgender heterosexuals) as well. The commission was characterized by participants as a place where views were not uniform and members could voice their opinions. One member observed that the commission has a diverse mix of people identifying in various ways. “Everyone is welcome to join the commission and the commission tries to serve and

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At the time of data collection, the commission’s web page indicated that 10-15 members serve at a given time. Since then, the web site has been changed to note that membership is 10-20 members. During the period of research, a number of members resigned for personal reasons, and a number of new members joined the commission.
protect everyone in the acronym and wherever they fit in that acronym” (GLBT 2). Observations at several commission meetings supported this characterization. Monthly commission meetings were held in a Cambridge Health Alliance building conference room. The two co-chairs generally took turns facilitating the meetings. Minutes were taken by a commission member, submitted to the co-chairs for review, and then posted on the commission’s website.

Recommendations from the 2004 town hall meeting had noted ongoing concerns with the original police liaison. The relationship between the liaison and the CLA and, later, the GLBT Commission, was characterized by study participants as unproductive. Commission members who had experience interacting with the liaison recalled that he did not appear to enjoy this assignment and was only sporadically involved. One commissioner noted, “When I joined, he would come once in a while, but it wasn’t consistent” (GLBT 9). Another noted that the liaison had voiced concern that he was not provided the organizational support to be effective in this role.

He came to some of our meetings, but he didn’t do very much and part of the issue was he says, “You know, they said, would you like to be this liaison, and I said I will do that, but they never give me any time to do anything.” because he had a regular job. . . . Maybe it was some of his personality, but also I think it was really true. There really wasn’t much support. (GLBT 8)

The liaison working with the commission at the time of this research was assigned in 2009 to provide support to the original liaison; the first meeting at which he appeared was in November of that year (the first liaison was not listed as being present) (Cambridge GLBT Commission, 2009). The minutes for that meeting state that he had held several different positions in the CPD over the course of twenty-five years and was “currently involved in a review of all City boards and commissions to improve communications with CPD” and “working on defining the CPD GLBT Liaison position.” In the latter effort, the minutes indicated that “our
input can help shape the role to include more defined responsibilities, greater accountability and improved communication with the Department” and called for the liaison to “receive training, attend commission meetings, and report back to command staff.” A commission member was also tasked with seeking information about liaison positions in other police departments. The two liaisons overlapped for several months, with both attending five commission meetings between January and October 2010. It appears that after the October 2010 meeting, the last attended by the first liaison, the current liaison had taken over the position fully. By all accounts, the change led to positive results.72

**ACTIVITIES**

The GLBT Commission was an active body on numerous fronts related to the well-being of LGBTQ individuals in the city. Since the involvement of the current liaison, the most visible accomplishments included the provision of cultural sensitivity training to the CPD and other agencies and the development of departmental policy on gender identity. The liaison also provided a regular communication channel, conveying information about the department on pertinent issues and looking into questions and concerns from the commission. Moreover, the liaison engaged in advocacy work on behalf of the LGBTQ community.

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72 It should be noted, however, that despite problems with the first liaison, overall the commission’s work with the police department did still appear to have produced results. According to commission meeting minutes, in the commission’s earlier years the department’s training coordinator was a frequent contact. This appears to have been a productive and positive relationship, as she was given an award for her work with the commission at the city’s 2008 Pride Brunch. In 2009, the commission was given an award by New England G.O.A.L. in part for its work with the CPD, which included G.O.A.L. training on LGBTQ issues being provided to the department. Official meeting minutes also mention the attendance at meetings or other involvement of the department’s legal advisor. However, when asked whether they had contact with other individual members of CPD, participating members did not mention these earlier contacts. Because meeting minutes are not available prior to 2008, there is no official record of what took place with the CPD during the tenure of the former police commissioner.
Training

During the tenure of the second liaison, the commission had been instrumental in the implementation of training within the police department and beyond. The New England Gay Officers Action League (New England G.O.A.L.) was engaged to provide training to recruits on working with LGBTQ residents and other issues. This training reached not only police recruits from Cambridge but those from other agencies that use the regional Lowell Police Academy. This training has continued. The September 2017 commission meeting minutes indicate that this training was conducted with “new recruits to Police Departments in Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, Everett, Salem, Malden, Hopkington, MIT, and UMASS” (LGBTQ+ Commission, 2017b).

Additionally, the commission sought to extend training to other public safety agencies in Cambridge (e.g., the Cambridge Fire Department) and the surrounding area (e.g., the Middlesex County Sheriff’s Department). At the time of this research, there was an ongoing effort to implement training to all Cambridge city employees as well, approximately 3,000 individuals (Cambridge Community Development Department, nd; Levy, 2013). The liaison reported reaching out to area transgender advocacy organizations to give them a voice in developing the training. These trainings are now being held for the city as well as the various public safety agencies. The July 2017 commission meeting minutes state that “The city’s training for all employees in Sexual Orientation and Gender (SOGI) rolls out 8/31, concludes 12/14. There will be 60 three hour sessions led by trainers from the Fenway Institute” (LGBTQ+ Commission, 2017a). The September 2017 minutes indicate that the training was in progress and that “The feedback so far has been very positive.”

The trainings were viewed as being among the most significant accomplishments stemming from the commission’s work with the liaison. Participants also praised the liaison’s
participation as being instrumental in bringing such training beyond the CPD. A member stated that “having [the liaison] and the commissioner be able to say ‘Hey, this is a positive thing, this is a good thing, let’s figure out how we can do it,’ has been incredible in terms of getting things to move” (GLBT 9) in the fire department and other agencies.

**Policy Enactment**

The relationship between the department and commission had tangible results in terms of policy development. The departmental directive “Preventing Gender Identity Bias” (Policies & Procedures, No. 231) went into effect on January 6, 2014. This policy’s purpose is “to describe how members of the Cambridge Police Department will respond to various situations that might involve transgender persons so as to avoid any misinterpretations of bias or disparate treatment” (Cambridge Police Department, 2014b, p. 1). The directive addresses basic issues related to how to address and interact respectfully with transgender individuals; regulations for conducting “stop, frisk, and threshold inquiries;” and arrest, booking, holding, and prisoner transportation. The process of developing the policy involved discussions between the liaison, commission, and advocacy groups in the state.

**Advocacy**

The CPD’s involvement in broader legislative advocacy resulted from the liaison’s relationship with the commission. In 2011, the liaison testified before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary in support of the Transgender Equal Rights Bill that would pass the state legislature and become law (G. Scott, 2011). He noted that the connections he had made during the process of researching and writing the department’s gender identity bias prevention policy had likely led to the head of one of those organizations requesting the police commissioner testify in favor of the bill. Although the commissioner had agreed, he subsequently asked the liaison to go in his place due to a scheduling conflict. The liaison also discussed working to help shepherd the
department’s signing onto an amicus brief in support of same-sex marriage that had reached the federal appeals court at the time.

PARTNERSHIP

Discussions of the relationship between the CPD and GLBT Commission highlighted the importance of commitment and active participation. While not always stated explicitly, a connection was apparent between these features and trust. These characteristics are addressed below; the subsequent section delves into the question of whether the nature of the relationship constitutes “partnership.”

Characterizing the Relationship

The relationship between the GLBT Commission and the CPD liaison was characterized by a high level of trust and respect based on several factors. The liaison’s clear commitment to the commission and his consistent responsiveness and hard work were major sources of this trust. However, his active participation also needs to be contextualized. Trust was enhanced by the contrast between his work and that of the previous liaison and that he did not identify as LGBTQ.

Trust and communication are frequent concerns within interorganizational partnerships. Worldviews can clash, making it challenging to understand one another and preventing trust from building. Given the history of police-LGBTQ relations, one might reasonably expect that trust and communication would present problems in any relationship between this community and the police. However, interactions between the commission and the second police liaison did not appear to experience problems in those areas. This relationship is described briefly in the commission’s 2015 annual report:
We have an active liaison relationship with [liaison] of the Police Department. He participates in our meetings, keeps us informed about police training activities in Cambridge and other locations in Massachusetts and has been working with the Training Department on an RFP for an LGBT Cultural Competency training program for all city employees, planned for 2016. (Cambridge GLBT Commission, 2016, p. 1)

While the report certainly characterizes the liaison’s role and level of engagement quite positively, its description pales in comparison to comments by commission members, who universally indicated that they held him in the highest regard as an ally to the LGBTQ community.

Participants viewed this liaison as an unofficial member of the commission. As one participant stated, reflecting appraisals from other members:

When [the current liaison] came along, it was just a revelation that someone could be eager to work with us, and I’m sure you’re going to hear from everyone else the love fest towards [the current liaison]. He is just amazing, he’s been incredible. (GLBT 4)

As the interviewer asked about trust and communication from different angles, another participant joked, “I wish I could dredge up some really horrible examples for you. . . . I think it’s a testament to [the liaison], . . . you kind of wish you could clone the guy really” (GLBT 9).

There was a perception among members that the nature and benefits of this relationship were rare.

Trust appears to have been built on the consistency of the relationship and the expectation that the liaison would “follow through” on efforts, qualities that were lacking before the current liaison’s involvement. Much of the commentary about the liaison had to do with his active participation, both in terms of attending commission meetings regularly as well as the extent to which he took the commission’s concerns seriously. Members’ trust came not only from his diligence but his competence and fluency in the issues of importance to the commission. These
attributes led the commission to give this liaison essentially free rein on issues related to policing and public safety. As one member described,

Even the transgender policy, [the liaison] sent us a draft, then it went to legal, and last I heard legal was going over it. . . . But he didn’t need us to be fine-tuning that policy, which is good. Because it’s a great policy, and I think he had had enough training himself. . . . I think what the commission has given him is lots of contacts to go to and he knows people now at MTPC, Mass Transgender Political Coalition, and G.O.A.L. and all over the place, so that he is actually becoming an expert himself. The training part is really out of our hands, which is the way it should be. (GLBT 7)

The liaison’s participation was viewed as even more impressive because, as a high-ranking official, he was spending his limited time engaging productively with the commission. Referring to the liaison’s level of commitment and action across these fronts, another commissioner stated, “that’s partnership” (GLBT 8).

For his part, the liaison specifically identified trust and a commitment to working toward common goals as being critical components of partnership. Responding to a question about how his role with the commission has changed over time, he noted the trust that had been built:

I think the sense is, in the beginning I was someone who attended the commission meetings, and that evolved into I’m part of the commission. Before I was just someone who went to the commission. I went to the meetings, and I was there to answer questions. I mean, I’m part of the commission. I don’t get a vote. I think that people trust me, I think they respect me, they respect my opinions. I think the big thing is the trust. I’m not the boogie man. I think they know. It’s interesting to see the newer members, too, because you can tell, I’m [liaison’s name], superintendent for the police department. I’m not Superintendent [liaison’s name]. I kind of disconnect myself from the position in the role. (Liaison)

Work ethic and professionalism were frequently noted by the liaison in relation to his role. He emphasized the notion that community policing requires forging strong relationships not just with people in geographically-based areas but within associations of identity, interest, business, or other affiliations. In the liaison’s view, his approach to his role had little to do with the particular nature of the commission’s work.
It’s not about whether you’re an immigrant working with the immigrant community, you’re gay working with the GLBT community, you’re disabled or you have a disabled family member. It’s not really that. It’s do you believe the message, can you advocate for what’s important to them? Are you true to what they’re trying to do? (Liaison)

His work on implementing the trainings and other substantive accomplishments demonstrated this commitment.

The liaison also looked to leverage more mundane acts. A small but powerful way in which he conveyed his commitment to the GLBT Commission was by copying commission materials. The commission’s budget was minimal, and the liaison often volunteered to make copies of brochures and programs. The role of “copy cop,” as he put it, was also brought up by numerous members, suggesting that this was an important aspect of his role and of the larger relationship. It seems to have ingratiated him to the commission in several ways. This practice fit with members’ perceptions of him as an unofficial member, that by providing this service he was fully participating in their mission. It also communicated humility; the work, rather than his rank, was paramount.

The liaison’s personal identity was also consequential. That he identified as heterosexual was often seen as reflecting a more impressive personal commitment compared to having a liaison from the LGBTQ community. This was a common theme.

For him to be a heterosexual, which I wasn’t even sure, until I met his wife at a function later, but it was just an assumption I made. That he would be so interested and involved with this commission, was just really impressive. If he was gay or lesbian or bisexual police officer, you know I’d be like, “Okay, we have a cool partnership.” But to me it speaks volumes when there’s advocates that don’t have [inaudible]. Where they’re in it just because they believe in those fights and what’s important. (GLBT 2)

The extent of trust in and recognition of this ally’s commitment was grounded in the commission’s earlier experience with a gay liaison exhibiting less engagement in the role. A small group of participating members who had worked with the first liaison directly contrasted
their experience of the two police representatives. How the two organizations interacted with each other changed dramatically across the liaisons’ involvement. When the subsequent police commissioner assigned the second liaison, some commission members were skeptical. One participant also noted the lackluster involvement of the previous police commissioner; the commissioner had provided a liaison but may not have demonstrated great personal investment in the relationship. For example, it was reportedly difficult to schedule a meeting with the former commissioner. The participant stated that when one was finally held, the commissioner was annoyed and said he had appointed the liaison so the liaison could meet with the commission.

The police commissioner at the time of this research received more favorable reviews, both for his appointment of the current liaison and the sense that he was more interested in promoting the commission’s interests. Participants indicated that they viewed the liaison’s appointment and what he was able to accomplish as being based on the police commissioner’s support. They also noted that they had seen the police commissioner at various events such as the ten-year anniversary of the passage of marriage equality. One participant stated that “For him to be there as an ally, not as an LGBT person, as an ally, it speaks volumes. . . . because his position is political as well as a leadership role, but he chooses to go to those. . . Just being there is part of the partnership” (GLBT 2). The liaison’s commitment was in part connected to the positive message being communicated by the police commissioner.

**Nature of the Relationship**

To locate partnership in its empirical surroundings, participants were asked whether they and the liaison were involved in a “partnership;” if so, what made it a partnership and was there anything that would make it more of a partnership; and, if not, was there anything that would potentially turn the relationship into a partnership. Descriptions of the relationship between the GLBT Commission and the CPD liaison suggested a positive and productive initiative. Was this,
then, understood as a “partnership”? Several participants agreed that this was an appropriate label.

I do feel like it’s a partnership because we have asked things of them and once in a while, [the liaison] will ask things of us, like there was some police policy that they wanted community input on and he asked us to come to the table for that. And I suppose if [the liaison] weren’t there or weren’t available for some reason and something came up, we could go to [the police] commissioner . . . because he has shown up for us. So I would call it a partnership. (GLBT 7)

I would say it’s a partnership. I mean I certainly think we’ve been able to achieve a lot more with [the liaison] attending meetings and being essentially an unofficial type of commissioner than if he weren’t there. Because he picks up a lot of things. . . . He hears everything and he’ll bring it back, I’m sure, to the police force and during his meetings there I am sure he relays back things. (GLBT 3)

The notion of partnership, like trust, was connected to the expectation of being an active participant who could be counted on to take action when needed. These participants additionally saw partnership as involving a mutually beneficial arrangement. Moreover, the liaison’s involvement was directly connected to the ability of the commission to achieve goals that would have been much more challenging to achieve otherwise.

But the idea of partnership was not easily specified. Several members indicated that this was a mutually beneficial relationship; however, one commissioner, who emphatically indicated “yes” when asked if the relationship was a partnership, went on to note that the benefits tended to accrue inequitably.

I think he does a lot more for our community than we do for his. . . . But I honestly, we would do anything he asked us, you know? And certainly, if there’s ever an issue, sort of cops versus citizenry, which there hasn’t been, we could make it, we could defuse it a lot by testifying to the general goodness of the police. We haven’t had to do that, but we’d certainly be prepared to. (GLBT 6)

This comment suggests that there was subjectivity in what was seen as a benefit. While other members might disagree that the liaison and police department had not received more tangible gains, a distinction was being made between short-term, visible benefits and more strategic or
long-range goals. Here, the member’s comment linked to the notion of legitimacy—that the main desired result was that the commission (and perhaps the larger LGBTQ community in the city) would come to view the CPD positively. The more tangible potential benefit would be the willingness of these groups to come to the department’s defense when incidents occurred or doubts were raised about its motives and competence.

Participants held different opinions as to how generalizable the relationship with the liaison was. Some viewed the liaison’s commitment and support as reflecting or helping to create a positive police organizational culture.

Although [the liaison] is as wonderful as he can be, he is generally representative of the Cambridge Police Department. You know, if you go up to a random policeman on the street in Cambridge and engage them about LGBT citizens they’re probably gonna say all the right things. We haven’t really had any really bad experiences recently. (GLBT 6)

When asked about the quality of experiences with individual officers, the participant indicated there had been no problems. “What they’re thinking, I don’t know. But what they’re saying . . . you couldn’t ask for more” (GLBT 6). A member quoted at the top of this section saw the support of the police commissioner as conveying partnership (GLBT 7). Others saw the relationship as more narrowly cast, as being with the liaison rather than the department overall.

We don’t really have a relationship with the police department per se. It is really directly with [the liaison], so if you replace [the liaison] and put someone else in these, I’m not sure how that would work? I am not so naïve to think that everyone’s as supportive as [the liaison], even at the present, you know, we’ve come a long way, I think, but they have come a long way, too, but I would imagine the relationship would be different. (GLBT 3)

Another member’s comment suggested that “partnership” has gradations. It could be inclusive of more limited as well as more comprehensive relationships.
I would call it a partnership but particularly a partnership with [the liaison], so I don’t know to what extent this isn’t just one extraordinary person versus this is the whole Cambridge Police Department has totally bought into this and [the liaison] is just a representative of that, a very good representative of that. So I’m not one hundred percent sure that it’s a full partnership. (GLBT 4)

To this participant, a “full” partnership would require a greater level of participation and engagement from a more representative swath of personnel, but the more limited situation still warranted the basic label. But positive perceptions of this relationship did not inexorably lead all participants to characterize it as a “partnership.” One member indicated that having a productive trusting relationship with the liaison provided for “strong communication” but was not enough to endow it with the status of partnership (GLBT 1). This participant saw the relationship primarily as an information channel and did not feel that this embodied a comprehensiveness required of partnership.

When asked whether the commission had relationships with anyone else in the police department aside from the liaison, a participant responded, “I wish we did. Maybe that’s our next thing with the police department, our next project is maybe having a small task force” (GLBT 9). An additional three participants (GLBT 2, 3, and 6) did suggest that it might be useful to have one or more members act as liaisons to the police department, perhaps sitting in or participating in departmental meetings or being a resource for trainings. Another (GLBT 9) suggested meeting with recruits and officers about the new training they received and then touch base with them again at a later date to see how it may have affected their experience on the job.

It should be noted that these suggestions were generally framed by the participants offering them as being off-the-cuff remarks. As one noted: “I’m not asking for that. I’m just saying, you asked the question and it popped into my head” (Commissioner 6). However, the fact that four commissioners had similar thoughts suggests that greater participation of commission
members within the CPD might be considered a “fuller” partnership. Alternatively, one commissioner offered a counterpoint to the idea that an expanded set of contacts would be helpful. This participant noted that having the police commissioner or a larger group of people involved may make a ceremonial statement but, in this participant’s experience, such ceremonial demonstrations have typically not resulted in a substantive commitment.

Other participants also saw the liaison as having positively changed their perceptions of the police in some way. A participant talked about being invited by the liaison to tour police headquarters. Although this opportunity was not exclusive to the GLBT Commission, learning more about the nature of police work—the volume and variation of calls for service and the challenges officers encounter—gave this participant more respect for the police (GLBT 3). Even though this was not directly related to the commission’s work, the liaison’s involvement and the participant’s membership in the commission had intersected to provide a positive experience. Another member saw the effects of this relationship as expanding beyond the immediate interaction. The quality of the relationship accrued to other Cambridge officers and even more broadly, serving to extend a feeling of warmth and willingness to offer the benefit of the doubt to the police in general (GLBT 9).

Despite the longevity of the position’s existence, however, members expressed uncertainty in several ways about the nature of the liaison position and the degree of its organizational integration within the CPD. Participants indicated that there had been little consideration of what might happen once the liaison left the position. Nobody knew what the department would do: whether another liaison would be assigned, how much input the commission would have into the selection of a new liaison, and how the position’s expectations might be formalized were issues that had not been officially addressed. Although the liaison
position was a longstanding role and the CPD had expanded the practice of providing police liaisons to the city’s commissions, boards, and associations, participants were uncertain about the future of the assignment.

More optimistically, participants noted that the major accomplishments with the liaison (e.g., the trainings) were now institutionalized, that all recruits would continue to be exposed to the G.O.A.L. training (GLBT 4 and 8). Moreover, in thinking through the future leadership of the police department and other city agencies, one participant (GLBT 4) observed that there was more community representation in hiring decisions, making it likely that the city would not bring on a candidate viewed poorly by the commission.

The disconnect for some members between the commission and the CPD overall is important to thinking about the relationship in organizational terms. The lack of clarity and certainty around how the CPD saw this relationship, the expectations of the liaison position, and the process through which the liaison would eventually be replaced suggest a lack of clarity about the assignment on the department’s part. Having an extraordinary colleague did not entirely quell concerns that this relationship was insufficiently institutionalized by the Cambridge police. Thus, while the commission generally expected the relationship with the police department to continue and perceived that some accomplishments were being integrated into the department, some level of concern remained about how the relationship could be replicated. Little had been done to plan for this inevitable event.

Lastly, efforts to follow up on the effects of the initiatives pursued through this relationship, such as an evaluation of the trainings, were lacking. Certainly, the commission had few resources to directly fund an evaluation, but the CPD had also not indicated that such an effort was being planned. Additionally, there appeared to be little attention to the nature of the
CPD environment for LGBTQ officers. A participant commented that being out in the CPD might still be considered problematic. Whether or not this was ultimately an accurate characterization of the department, this was the perception of an active member of the commission.

IDENTITY

Identity was an important topic related to the relationship between the GLBT Commission and the CPD. As the main contact between the two organizations, the liaison served a boundary spanning role, providing the leverage point for discussion. Several features of identity were raised during interviews. The personal sexual orientation and gender identity of both liaisons were salient in that they communicated important messages to the commission about the perspective of police leadership. In addition, the fact that the liaison position inherently involves a police representative invoked the question of tensions between LGBTQ communities and the police. This was relevant both within the commission itself as well as with the interactions of the liaison with the broader public. These issues clearly overlapped and also involved the occupational and organizational identities of the liaison. As discussed in Chapter 5, the CPD saw itself as quite different from other departments in its policing approach. How did “the Cambridge way” manifest in the context of a relationship with the GLBT Commission?

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

When the original request for a police liaison to the LGBTQ community was made in the mid-1990s, it is unclear whether the Cambridge Lavender Alliance had stipulated or preferred the liaison to be from the gay community; however, it appears from media accounts and recollections of commission members who had been members of the alliance that the police
commissioner at the time saw the need to assign a gay officer.\textsuperscript{73} If true, this suggests an essentialist approach to the liaison’s selection—that is, it was assumed that a person nominally of a group viewed as different from the majority would be most capable of understanding and appropriately representing the needs of that group. This suggests that the first liaison’s sexual orientation was the most salient feature upon which the police commissioner had grounded his decision.

Dissatisfaction with the nature of this relationship led to requests for a change. This time, the liaison assignment did not appear to be based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2009, the police commissioner at the time of this research asked the Superintendent for Support Services to work with the commission in addition to the original liaison. As noted earlier, the police commissioner had made it a priority for departmental leadership to liaise with numerous city agencies, boards, commissions, and associations. The superintendent had experience working with other city boards and commissions, including the Police Review and Advisory Board, Human Rights Commission, and Commission for Persons with Disabilities. The liaison reported that some of these relationships had been challenging in the past and he had shown success in helping to turn them around. The GLBT Commission now appeared to be treated as one of many entities with which the police department works, but there was still a sense that it was potentially a more controversial assignment than some others. The potential for a conflict based on sexual orientation and nature of the assignment may well have been in the air. The liaison described being approached for the role. “The [police] commissioner . . . grabbed me

\textsuperscript{73} In addition to the original liaison’s account in \textit{Bay Windows} quoted earlier, a commission member described the CLA’s meeting with the previous police commissioner to request a liaison. “[The police commissioner] said, ‘Okay, I’ll do something, but what I want to do is, what I’m gonna do is [at] some meeting stand up and see whether there’s a gay or lesbian police officer who’s willing to be out to the police force and would be willing to be the liaison’ . . . And he found somebody” (GLBT 8).
after a meeting. He kind of proposed the idea, and . . . I thought he thought I might be resistant to it” because of the historic tension between the traditional police culture and the LGBTQ community (Liaison). The superintendent agreed to take on the role and soon after began the assignment.

Although the liaison’s high level of commitment was a crucial feature of his relationship with the commission, he and the commission additionally recognized the significance of his sexual orientation and gender identity. The liaison self-identified as a heterosexual man. The issue of communicating expressly that he was not LGBTQ was a source of some ambivalence for him.

I don’t really feel a need to have to start every conversation with, “I’m not gay” or have that actually come up in the conversation. It’s kind of awkward. But I also think it’s important that they don’t automatically think I’m gay, because what I’m trying to do is break those barriers down for the police. It’s not about me being gay. (Liaison)

On one hand the liaison felt his personal identity was not relevant to the source and nature of his commitment; on the other, he recognized the potential power that follows from being a straight cop in this position, both in terms of his relationship with commission members as well as with people and organizations outside the commission.

There’s a strength in being an ally. And I talk about that, how because I’m an ally, I can sneak up on people, and I can raise awareness. I can talk about an issue, and I can do it from a perspective where they don’t expect me to be, you know, waving the rainbow flag, I just talk facts. (Liaison)

Combined with his commitment and approach, this proved to be powerful. In a very purposeful way, he used his various statuses—cisgender, heterosexual, White, male, high-ranking officer—to promote the commission’s goals.

Indeed, the liaison’s identities were seen as often having tangible effects for the commission’s work, particularly with regard to the LGBTQ training for police recruits. Working
with the commission, the liaison also used his influence to work on expanding the training to other arenas, including the city’s fire department, area sheriffs’ departments, emergency services providers, a key private ambulance service, and to all Cambridge city workers. Members noticed him using this power strategically.

I know the fire department was a big nut to crack, that they were not at all eager to do any training for their employees and having [the liaison] was invaluable, to have this straight guy who’s been in the city forever and to have him just tell them “Look, you gotta do it, it’s the right thing, it’ll make you better professionals.” (GLBT 4)

This influence was seen as broader than the trainings, though. Another member stated that the liaison “has educated a lot of people” on LGBTQ issues and that this had been facilitated by his status as a mainstream fixture in the Cambridge community. “It’s pretty powerful,” this member noted. “I think he’s realized how powerful he is” (GLBT 7).

**Occupational and Organizational Identities**

The liaison’s status as a police officer comprised a complex set of overlapping identities, requiring him to navigate challenging terrain in deciding his approach. In addition to interactions with members of the commission, the relationship between the GLBT Commission and CPD necessarily extended into the community. The liaison attended many of the events organized by or involving the commission, and the larger public was not necessarily familiar with him or the nature of the relationship between the commission and liaison. More broadly, the history of friction between police and LGBTQ individuals naturally made the police a focal point. This highlighted the question of how the liaison presented himself as a police representative in multiple contexts.

How the liaison understood his role was therefore a critical factor. Based on his experience as the police conduit to other city commissions, the liaison worked from the beginning to demonstrate that he was not only a police representative but a person who can
interact on a warm, human level with commission members. He did not wear his uniform or a
gun to commission meetings in order to communicate this message. Informal interactions were
also an important priority, and the liaison spoke of working to establish personal relationships
with individual members by identifying areas of common experience, from neighborhood of
residence to lighthearted frustrations with bikes or drivers in the city. His efforts appear to have
been successful given the personal terms with which members described him.

The liaison also consciously strived to present himself as an active ally at events.
Although plainclothes attire was seen as necessary to building and maintaining a certain rapport
at meetings, the liaison was adamant about wearing the uniform to larger public events. In such
cases, he argued, a conspicuously formal sartorial statement was needed.

I think it’s important for the community, because I’m representing the department. I
represent the department in the meeting, but at the events I want to be recognized as a
police officer. I want to be recognized as supporting the event and the reason why we’re
there. (Liaison)

He employed other tactics to communicate that he was not merely there to provide security. For
example, early in his tenure he took on the task of handing out programs or brochures at the
entrance to an event, chatting and joking with people as they enter. The liaison had also
volunteered at commission tables at public events, providing an opportunity for the community
to observe the commission and police working together. He additionally described using various
engagement strategies that had worked well for him in previous assignments. These efforts were
couched in the recognition that he was working to improve relations with a specific part of the
community that has had reason to distrust the police.

The liaison’s occupational identity as a police officer was also in some tension with his
organizational identity as a Cambridge police officer specifically. An important theme
throughout this study is the extent to which the CPD saw itself and was seen by others as
different from departments in other jurisdictions. In terms of public safety, Cambridge was viewed as a more welcoming place than most for LGBTQ individuals. In recent years, there had been little reported violent crime in Cambridge overall, and commission members did not see Cambridge as a place where LGBTQ individuals needed to fear for their safety generally or from the police more specifically. None of the members or the liaison could recall a significant incident between the police and a member of the LGBTQ community. No complaints had been communicated to them in recent years about biased or problematic police treatment. As discussed in Chapter 5, “the Cambridge way” often referred to a progressive and service-oriented approach (although it also contains a more diverse set of meanings). While this particular term was not used by participants in the interviews for this case study, their comments did support the underlying notion that the city was, generally, quite progressive. Both the liaison and commission members reported observing that the Cambridge police were not seen as “the police.”

Still, participants were aware that this distinction was not necessarily appreciated by all members of the public. The recent “national conversation” about policing had helped to focus attention on the institutional and structural problems with law enforcement and criminal justice as they pertained to biased treatment; arguably it had additionally served to paint all officers and departments the same shade of blue. The experiences of various parts of the LGBTQ

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74 In 2015, reported Part I violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) is lower than the average rate of cities with Massachusetts cities with populations greater than 50,000 (Boston and two other municipalities for which crime data were not available were not included). An average (not including Cambridge) of 584 violent crimes per 100,000 population were recorded versus 262 for Cambridge) (Cambridge Police Department, 2017, p. 10). The CPD also reports a continued decline in violent crime since 1990 and the lowest levels since the 1960s. A “50-year low for [Part I] property crimes” (burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft) was seen in 2016 (p. 6).

75 Participants noted that other commissions such as the Human Rights Commission may be better placed to receive such complaints, but they were not aware of any being lodged there either.

76 During the December 2014 commission meeting, the liaison described the frustration he felt as a Cambridge officer in the midst of the public condemnation of police actions leading to civilian deaths in Ferguson, Missouri, and Staten Island, New York. He felt many people did not understand that the CPD was different, and it was painful.
community had produced a wary if not outright hostile attitude among some of their members—as well as other concerned individuals—towards the police as representatives of what was seen as a corrupt, biased system. As a result, it could be challenging to convey a meaningful difference between, for example, “the police” and “the Cambridge police.”

An example illustrated this challenge. An organizer of an upcoming Transgender Day of Remembrance event attended a commission meeting to request financial support and participation. During the discussion, a commission member suggested that the liaison speak at the event to convey the strong relationship between the CPD and the commission. Following a discussion, it was ultimately decided that the event was not an appropriate venue for the liaison to speak. According to the liaison, he had a subsequent conversation with the organizer in which he agreed that he should not be a speaker at the event but did not want this to suggest he did not want to attend. The organizer indicated that his attendance would be welcome but suggested he not come in uniform. The liaison took this to mean that the organizer thought a conspicuous police presence might be harmful to some attendees who had been victimized by the police or who viewed the police as part of the problem faced by the transgender community. The liaison, however, viewed his uniformed presence as a critical feature of his participation. He noted:

So I was very diplomatic. I told her, “Well, I have a very inconspicuous outer jacket that I could wear over the uniform.” I told [the organizer], “I think it’s really important that people know who I represent and that I’m there to support the event, and that I’m an ally, and I don’t think I should have to have to disguise that fact.” And [the organizer] . . . . appreciated it and said that that would be okay. (Liaison)

for him to be seen personally as biased without cause. He recounted the recent experience of facilitating a protest march through the city that had gone very peacefully (see also Feijo, 2014d). Commission members agreed that the police had treated protestors respectfully. At the point where the protestors were about the cross the Charles River into Boston, the liaison described the very different attitude of the Massachusetts State Police, who were initially going to block the protestors from the bridge. This angered him, since despite the peaceful nature of the march to that point, the State Police were proceeding as if the marchers presented an imminent public safety hazard. He was concerned that they were asserting themselves on principle rather than an accurate situational assessment and was worried that their attitude and presence would precipitate a confrontation. Ultimately the protest was allowed through without a problem. He expressed that he wished the good work more commonly done by the CPD was better understood in the community.
The liaison’s desire to wear his full uniform to events was supported by other members of the commission.

But sometimes a distinction was indeed drawn between CPD officers and the police more broadly. A story told by several participants suggested that the Cambridge police had a distinct—and more positive—reputation compared to other departments. The commission had held a meeting with a local organization that provides support and services to homeless youth, many of whom identify as LGBTQ. Young people who used the organization’s services were reported to have described instances in which police officers had harassed them. Given the organization’s location near Harvard Square, youth would be likely to encounter officers from multiple departments, including Harvard University, the MBTA, the CPD, or the Massachusetts State Police, each of which had jurisdiction over certain parts of that area. The specific nature of the incidents could not be discerned from the members’ accounts—each narrative described the details and “punchline” somewhat differently, but the accounts tended to point in same general direction.

The gist of the story was that one or more youth described police harassment. In one retelling, the liaison checked in with the youth after the meeting about the incident to determine whether it had been a Cambridge officer, joking that “it must have been an MBTA cop” (GLBT 1). Others telling the story (GLBT 5, 6, and 8) recalled that the distinction had been drawn by the youth themselves, who had admonished the storyteller that the officer in question must have either been new or from the MBTA. Despite the variety of recollections, the common message was that expectations for the behavior of the Cambridge police were high. Of course, these observations cannot speak for police behavior and attitudes or public perceptions more broadly,
and there were many other potential causes. They did, however, speak to the reputation of the CPD for a certain approach to policing.

Indeed, the commission sought to highlight the relationship with the CPD through public recognition of the liaison. The commission publicized him and his work at various events, prominently, at the annual Pride Brunch, an event the liaison and police commissioner attended in uniform (GLBT 6). The liaison reported that during the brunch that came during the tenth anniversary of gay marriage in Massachusetts he was asked to stand and be recognized several times by the commission co-chairs as well as the mayor. The publicity had led to him being recognized in the community by people attending such events.

**DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

In telling the story of the GLBT Commission, this chapter has at times taken the conceptual model’s elements out of order or addressed them implicitly. (This is also the case for the two subsequent chapters.) The present discussion ties the model to the CPD’s work with the commission more explicitly. Although the policing institutional environment has not historically been supportive of police-LGBTQ relations, societal and professional shifts have created opportunities for greater engagement. The Cambridge context was particularly supportive of such enhancements given the presence of an organized and politically active LGBTQ community. Still, relations with the police had room for improvement. Members of this community had voiced dissatisfaction with the nature of interactions with CPD officers. Organized elements of the LGBTQ community were important sovereigns for CPD leadership, and requests for a liaison to an organized advocacy group were met. Subsequently a commission

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77 As noted, neither the commission nor the CPD collected data on the effects of commission activities (e.g., the New England G.O.A.L. training) on public or officer attitudes or experiences.
enacted by city ordinance was created in part to address LGBTQ concerns with treatment by police.

The CPD’s technical field of action easily accommodated the work of the liaison. The CPD had made a broader commitment to a liaison model of community outreach. Additionally, the assignment was on top of others performed by the liaison and did not require hiring of a full-time employee or otherwise disturb existing routines of departmental personnel. The work of the commission supported by the liaison had led to training for all CPD personnel, which did put additional demands on the department’s budget and time available for other trainings. But training and the policy change made concerning personnel’s interactions with transgender individuals were in line with values promoted by community policing approaches. These measures also managed risk in the event of a negative interaction between the police and a member of the LGBTQ community.

The police commissioner at the time of the study engaged in sensegiving that was reflective of his interview statements. He was responsive to requests for a new liaison, allowed organizational changes to occur in the form of training and policy enactment, advocated (through the liaison) for LGBTQ rights on behalf of the department, and has been a visible presence, often in uniform, at LGBTQ events in the city. While difficult to say for certain, the previous commissioner reportedly did not display the same level of engagement, and sensegiving appeared to be minimal.

This study has argued that identity is key to understanding how partnerships work and are understood. The department’s experience with the commission provides useful insight. While the first liaison’s sexual orientation appears to have been used as the primary criterion for his selection, this attribute (as well as gender identity) was not a necessary consideration for the role.
As exemplified by the second liaison, a personal connection and commitment drove the CPD’s work with the commission. But these factors cannot be considered outside of the context of policing, the CPD itself, or the departmental position of the liaison. Attitudes toward the LGBTQ community have changed within policing and the broader culture in which it exists. The cultural—and arguably the police institutional—environment in which the first liaison worked was not the same as the one encountered by the second. Thus, the approach taken by the two police commissioners who assigned personnel to the GLBT Commission made decisions more characteristic of their historical contexts.

Organizational roles also appeared to matter, intersecting with personal identities. One might speculate that the original liaison was in a tough spot, given his sexual orientation and the prevailing masculinized police occupational culture that was likely present to some degree in the CPD. The second liaison found that his heterosexual orientation served as an advantage in many situations, in leveraging his dominant social status in the cause of the commission’s work. His rank also provided the authority to define police work in ways that a sergeant or lieutenant could not. Still, there were times that a more generalized policing identity was thrust upon the liaison by members of the public. This was illustrated by resistance to his uniformed presence at an event honoring transgender homicide victims.

One of the study participants (GLBT 5) suggested that the liaison’s policing pedigree may have helped inure him to pressures to behave in the stereotypical traditional police mode. The liaison was the third generation in his family to be a CPD officer (his son was fourth). This member suggested that the liaison’s long familial and personal history with the department meant few people would question his policing bona fides; there would be little pressure to prove that he knew what it meant to be a real police officer.
Sensemaking needs appeared to be surprisingly low given the historical tensions between police and the LGBTQ community. That the commission (and a previous organization) had wanted to work with the CPD and had been willing to work so closely with the second liaison suggests that the police department was viewed with a certain degree of institutional stability and legitimacy, even during a more fraught cultural period. One member opined that working with the police conferred a sense of legitimacy to the commission, an observation supportive of a comment by the police commissioner that partnership with the CPD could offer such benefits. This may have relieved commission members of the need to do much sensemaking work. On the CPD’s side, the liaison had sufficient experience in liaison roles generally that even if there were some initial nervousness related to working with an LGBTQ-focused commission the role could be framed as simply a familiar assignment, and one at which he had proven himself to be skilled.

As noted, respect and trust developed among commission members for the second liaison as he demonstrated a clear commitment to the commission’s work and maintained a consistent presence and line of communication. Participants expressed joy at discovering they had an invested collaborator, especially given the contrast between the liaisons’ involvement. While the term “trust” was rarely used by participants, it would appear to be an apt characterization of what had developed.

Still, the extent to which a “partnership” was seen to exist, it was more often seen as being with the liaison rather than the CPD overall. Participants were sometimes willing to generalize the good will established to the department or even to police more broadly, but such sentiments frequently reflected speculation instead of the overflowing positivity directed toward the liaison. Additionally, while many participants did view the relation as a “partnership,” not all
were willing to apply that label, generally due to the sense that the connection did not necessarily extend to the full CPD.

Figure 6.1 summarizes the application of the conceptual model to the CPD’s work with the commission.

### Figure 6.1 Conceptual Model Applied to the Cambridge GLBT Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concepts</th>
<th>Related issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Cambridge has been on the forefront of LGBTQ rights. Still, historically the police were seen as often insensitive and having little capacity to interact appropriately with LGBTQ individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional environment</strong></td>
<td>Occupationally, police culture has not historically embraced the LGBTQ community either in the general public or as police officers. Although working with this community fits with a COP approach, partnering with an LGBTQ group was not a natural fit given longstanding cultural tensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polity field of action</strong></td>
<td>Perhaps reflecting the political power of an organized LGBTQ community, the CPD assigned a liaison to a prominent advocacy group at their request. Several city council members identified as LGBTQ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical field of action</strong></td>
<td>The liaison position was a part-time assignment expected to take up relatively little time, and few departmental resources were associated with the position per se. The commission’s work with the liaison resulted in a training for all departmental personnel, however, which does make demands on agency resources but falls within a community policing approach. While not mentioned by study participants, training and policy implementation may also serve to protect the department and city against lawsuits in the event of a negative interaction between police and LGBTQ individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
<td>A single member of the CPD was assigned to work with the commission, although others appear to have been irregularly involved. Although the liaison assignment had become one of many with city groups, there was considerable uncertainty among commission members about the future of the position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensegiving</strong></td>
<td>The police commissioner who assigned the original liaison appeared to have decided that the role was most appropriate for a member of the LGBTQ community, perhaps viewing it differently than other similar roles. The commissioner’s involvement appears to have been at arm’s length. The commissioner at the time of the study selected a liaison based on experience and personality. He also appeared regularly in uniform at major events related to LGBTQ issues and had involved the department in training and advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identities</strong></td>
<td>Sexual orientation and gender identity intersected with the police occupational identity, CPD organizational identity, and role identity. The liaison at the time of the study had to navigate public expectations of and histories between the LGBTQ community and “the police.” Identifying as a straight White man could not necessarily overcome diffuse public suspicions, but his identities were strategically leveraged to implement programming and policy as well as in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interpersonal ways. The department arguably lessened occupational and organizational pressures by making the liaison role one of many such assignments. The liaison’s rank, experiences in the CPD, and personal history also appear to have reduced occupational and organizational pressures suggesting that working with the LGBTQ community was not appropriate police work.

Participating commission members’ individual sexual orientations and gender identities did not appear to interfere with accepting a member of the CPD who did not identify as LGBTQ but who was committed to the issues important to the commission. The involvement of a previous liaison who identified as a gay man was described in lackluster terms.

| Sensemaking | That the commission had requested a police liaison initially and had continued to work with the CPD in this way suggests that there had historically been a foundation of police institutional legitimacy along with a sense of political power among the city’s LGBTQ community. Participating members had varying tenures on the commission. While some had longer views that included the former liaison and interactions with the department, others had only experienced the more productive engagement with the second liaison and police commissioner. It was not possible to parse whether newer members were likely to focus more on an occupational or organizational idea of the police. |
| Meanings of partnership | “Partnership” was conceptualized heterogeneously. Interpersonally, trust was implied to be the primary features through reference to the liaison’s commitment to the LGBTQ concerns and the commission itself and his consistency in attending meetings and events and serving as an effective information channel. Full consensus was not reached over whether the relationship rose to the level of “partnership” or whether the relationship/partnership was with the liaison individually or the department more broadly. |
CHAPTER 7: THE CAMBRIDGE SAFETY NET COLLABORATIVE

This chapter examines the Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative, an interorganizational initiative pursuing a different approach to interacting with youth in the city. Research on Safety Net took place over the course of six months, from September 2013 through February 2014. Interviews were conducted with fifteen members of the collaborative, representing the four core city agencies as well as the two organizations that were also directly involved and invited to Safety Net meetings. The report was also informed by interviews with CPD personnel during the earlier stage of the study, observations of Safety Net meetings, collaborative materials both published and used internally, media accounts, and peer-reviewed journal articles about the collaborative’s activities.

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In the United States, cultural and legal understandings of children have been highly dynamic. How we think about the maturity, culpability, prospects for, and needs of young people continually varies. While youth (and adulthood, for that matter) is associated with age and various biological and developmental characteristics, historically the construction of “youth” or “child” has not been tightly coupled to these features; rather it has intersected with race, ethnicity, class, and other factors. Definitions of youth also differ across issue and geography. For example, the age of majority and the age at which individuals no longer fall under juvenile court jurisdiction are not always the same (indeed, a state’s juvenile transfer laws may widen the gap even more widely), and they additionally vary by state. Moreover, while there are specialized court and correctional systems associated with offending by young people, there is no such tailored police agency. Local police agencies may have juvenile units or officers who
receive special training on dealing with criminal and non-criminal incidents involving youth, but there is no corresponding mandate for these resources.

The United States experienced a cultural shift during the 1970s and 1980s to a more conservative and punitive perspective on crime. In the midst of rising crime rates, treatment and rehabilitation were viewed by many as ineffective responses to crime. Sharp increases in youth offending in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to pressure on public officials to treat young offenders more like adults (MacArthur Foundation, 2015). In this atmosphere, political rhetoric portrayed young people of color in particular as a scourge to be contained, and harsh public policies targeting young offenders were bolstered by notions of “super predators” promulgated by influential criminologists as well as political figures. Although public fears were perhaps understandable, the reactions in law and criminal justice policy and practice contradicted findings in mental health research. That field had earlier recognized the inadequacies of its own insular model in the 1970s, when a seminal commission report called for a more holistic approach to addressing youth mental health disorders across government agencies, service providers organizations, and levels of government (Marans, 1995). This paradigmatic shift looked more comprehensively at a young person’s context (family, school, neighborhood) rather than centering on a particular problem.

Even as community policing developed in the 1990s and 2000s, few police departments possessed strategies for engaging in sophisticated youth delinquency prevention efforts. This is not to say that no such models were being innovated, tested, or funded. The U.S. Department of Justice funded projects promoting comprehensive approaches that expanded the focus on youth crime beyond enforcement and arrest. One notable model, developed by Irving Spergel in the early 1990s and later bearing his name, argued that youth and gang violence prevention required,
in addition to crime suppression actions, provision of opportunities, social interventions, community mobilization, and organizational change (Spergel, 1995). Such approaches require significant collaboration between the police, other government agencies, social service providers, faith-based entities, and other community-based organizations. Unfortunately, when such programming has been implemented, the more challenging aspects—community mobilization and organizational change—are least likely to be accomplished or attempted (Gebo, Boyes-Watson, & Pinto-Wilson, 2010).

Many police departments continue to engage young people with a limited repertoire of ideas. While police cultures and training can be obstacles to new organizational approaches, it is also sometimes the case that juvenile justice agencies and other youth-focused organizations in the community do not seek police involvement in their work, given stark differences in outlooks and approaches (Bahney, Daugirda, Firman, Kurash, & Rhudy, 2014).

At the time of the study, the nation was in the midst of a national movement toward bipartisan criminal justice reform (Brown, 2015). Bolstered by research findings from neuroscience and Supreme Court decisions favorable to reform efforts, some experts have called for a reshaping of our understanding of youth offending to include a much wider age range, up to twenty-five years old (Schiraldi, Western, & Bradner, 2015). There is also a push toward community correctional options for the vast majority of young offenders (P. McCarthy, Schiraldi, & Shark, 2016). More locally, Massachusetts lawmakers proposed a bill in 2017 to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction again, this time to twenty (Schoenberg, 2017).

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78 For example, in 2005 Roper v. Simmons abolished capital punishment for individuals who committed their crimes when under eighteen in part based on brain research showing full maturity of executive functioning was not achieved until later. Miller v. Alabama (2012) struck down automatic life sentences without parole for juveniles. Because research on the juvenile brain showed it to be still developing, it was viewed as an Eighth Amendment violation to assume a young offender was “irretrievably depraved.”

79 The Trump administration has since changed the tone of federal justice rhetoric as well as the direction of policy and resources. Concerning juvenile justice specifically, in August 2017, the Office of Juvenile Justice and
CONTEXT: HISTORY OF THE SAFETY NET COLLABORATIVE

The Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative grew out of the cultural, legal, and professional context addressed above as well as the local climate. Safety Net was associated with organizational-level change at the CPD. In “A Farewell Message from the Commissioner” introducing the department’s 2006 annual crime report, the outgoing police commissioner stated that one of the ways the CPD had sought to enhance living and working conditions in the city “is through an increased focus on social services throughout the city, with an emphasis on providing safer after-school environments for children. Programs offered through [local tutoring and service organizations and a local crime task force], and other neighborhood organizations are all part of the citywide effort to keep our children safe” (Cambridge Police Department, 2007, p. 5). Although it would be unfair to characterize the department’s approach to youth crime and problem behavior based solely on this statement, it does appear to suggest a more traditional approach to youth engagement, through involving youth in productive after-school activities, tutoring, and the like. More pointedly, study participants noted that this commissioner had closed the department’s juvenile investigations unit. The reported rationale was that crime committed by minors was indistinguishable from that committed by adults; therefore, detectives should be generalists, capable of handling any kind of case, regardless of the alleged perpetrator’s age.

Delinquency Prevention in the Justice Department provided “language guidance” for its employees that in some cases appeared to promote a greater focus on individual responsibility (“youth in the system,” “offender,” and “at-risk youth” are preferred to “system involved or justice-involved youth”; “substance abuse issue” is preferred to “substance use disorder” “unless research/context specifically calls for substance use disorder” under guidelines) and the use of terminology that was less likely to suggest a systemic problem (e.g., “all youth” is preferred to “underserved youth”; “disproportionate minority contact” is preferred over “overrepresentation of minorities”). There has also been concern that particularly vulnerable groups (e.g., LGBTQ youth) are being deemphasized in agency funding solicitations (Eilperin & Sun, 2017). The president also nominated an OJJDP administrator (confirmed in January 2018) who has directly questioned the value of adolescent neuroscience in guiding juvenile justice and has emphasized personal responsibility (Lynch, 2017; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2018). Given that most juvenile justice action occurs at the state and local levels, however, it is not yet clear how much influence the shift in the federal perspective will have.
The organization’s approach to youth was viewed as too reactive by study participants. As one police participant described, “The philosophy in the police department, the general consensus was lock ‘em up or let ‘em go. And that was not a good thing” (Safety Net 2). The police are often the first to encounter young people engaged in risky behavior. Despite research showing that these youth are disproportionately likely to need mental health interventions compared to the general population, most communities do not prepare adequately for such encounters by establishing communication and collaboration links between police and psychological services, a position which Cambridge was in before Safety Net (Barrett & Olle, 2016). Safety Net represented a novel approach for those involved.

Credit for Safety Net’s genesis and vision was attributed to the police commissioner by police and non-police members of Safety Net alike. One non-police participant described the commissioner as having “put a stake in the ground,” declaring that the department was going to do things differently, in a way more consistent with community policing (Safety Net 3). They would engage in a preventative approach to young people by doing outreach, relationship building, and following through with youth and their families. This way, less would be waiting for the police on the back end, when crises arise. The commissioner “was also visionary enough to understand that they couldn’t do that alone” (Safety Net 3).

To provide a greater repertoire of options, the police commissioner created the Youth and Family Services Unit (YFSU) with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security’s (EOPSS) Safe and Drug Free Schools Program. The inclusion of “family” in the unit’s title reflected the recognition that young people’s behavior needed to be considered in this context. School resource officers would be administratively housed in this unit. The commissioner invited members of other city agencies with connections to young people—the
schools, human services, and health—to participate in the SRO candidate interviews along with the police (see also Barrett & Olles, 2016).

As members of these agencies met, discussions of the circumstances of young people coming into contact with the police and juvenile justice system led to agreement that there was a need for a stronger relationship between the police and mental health services. Participants explained that Safety Net came about to provide a more productive alternative to the CPD’s exiting options for handling children and adolescents. As the police commissioner and Cambridge Health Alliance psychologist who was a member of Safety Net describe:

We were finding that the seriousness of juvenile offenses was on the rise, and oftentimes the responses taken by the Department did not achieve the desired results of reforming behaviors. Recognizing that the behaviors we were seeing are symptomatic of larger and more complex issues, we initially looked for ways to divert juvenile offenders away from the juvenile justice system and instead refer them to social service providers. (Haas & Barrett, 2014, p. 26)

Several interview participants pointed to a finding that seventy percent of youth encountering the police and juvenile justice system have some form diagnosable mental health problem. It was these conversations from which Safety Net emerged, as those present recognized that there was no existing structure to facilitate a collaborative relationship between service providers and the police to connect young people and their families with needed supports.

Safety Net was a fraternal twin to the YFSU. They were born at roughly the same time, both developing from the police commissioner’s desire to change how the department handled problem youth behavior. The partner agencies were solicited for advice and collaboration in the unit’s creation, and this led to the targeted Safety Net Collaborative. Although the YFSU was more than Safety Net, what happened to the unit was very much intertwined with the collaborative.

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80 Participants associated different populations with this statistic during interview; this figure is discussed further on.
The core Safety Net members were city agencies: the CPD, Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP), Cambridge Public Schools, and the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), a regional healthcare delivery system that also administered the Cambridge Public Health Department. Safety Net had a three-tiered structure: the full collaborative or project level, collaborative leadership, and a steering committee driving the overall direction of the collaborative. Bi-weekly meetings were attended by the full collaborative membership who were involved in the ground-level operations and supervision of collaborative efforts. These were intended as case conferences to discuss clients’ statuses and determine next steps and provide opportunities for troubleshooting. Other relevant news and events were also discussed. This meeting was viewed by many participants as a work in progress but also as the collaborative’s “life’s blood” (Safety Net 5).

At the CPD, all YFSU personnel were involved in Safety Net, including the commanding officer of the Community Services Unit. At the time of this research, the YFSU included a sergeant, six school resource officers (recently renamed youth resource officers or YROs) who also had responsibility for the city’s youth centers, three youth outreach officers (YOOs) who were assigned to youth centers, two juvenile detectives, a civilian director of outreach and community programs, and other civilian advisors and interns. The deputy superintendent for day operations was also involved at an oversight level. The CHA representative was the clinical psychologist who had been a key influence on the shaping of the collaborative. DHSP was represented by the heads of the Youth Center Programs section of the agency. The main participant from the schools was the director of the Office of Safety and Security. The collaborative also worked with The Guidance Center, which provided home-based mental health services (which complemented the CHA’s on-site clinical care component), and the state
Department of Children and Families (DCF). Representatives of these organizations were also invited to attend the bi-weekly meetings.

Collaborative leadership included the CSU commanding officer, YFSU sergeant, director of outreach and community programs, CHA psychologist, DHSP representatives, and the school security director. Leadership met monthly, typically immediately following one of the bi-weekly collaborative meetings. Both the bi-weekly case conferences and monthly leadership meetings were generally scheduled for one hour and were held in a conference room at police headquarters. Lastly, the steering committee included the commissioner and chief administrative officer from the police; the assistant city manager for human services; and the CHA psychologist. This group focused on the higher-level direction of the collaborative. Meetings at this level were generally held on a quarterly basis.

Perhaps the most significant role change associated with Safety Net was the adoption of an officer-coordinated case management model. The police commissioner had emphasized that this initiative should be more than a referral process or “hand-off” from the police to service providers. This was to be a collaborative effort in which the police were to remain in contact with the young person—not in a traditional enforcement-centered capacity but as a coordinating mechanism that focused on lowering the participant’s risk of future offending. In this context, case management referred to the responsibility for seeing the young person through the entire Safety Net process, helping him or her to access services and troubleshoot, and contacting other collaborative members as needed.

At first, Safety Net members expected largely to be providing a pre-arrest diversion alternative for teens committing “status” or other prosecutable offenses. Participants would be connected with services, and plans would be put in place to support the young person’s progress.
However, as the YFSU officers became more integrated in the schools, they were approached about younger individuals (often pre-teens) who were of concern but had not committed a crime. A non-police member of Safety Net stated, “So, now we’re not necessarily intervening with the kids drinking in the park. It’s the behaviors that precede that. Well, what precedes that? Oh, they’re acting up in school. Oh, what precedes that? They’re incorrigible at home. It’s the more you get. . .you keep going further down” (Safety Net 3). The fact that Safety Net was attracting a younger population than anticipated and that many exhibited mental health and other problems led to an early shift. While the diversion component had broadened the department’s earlier approach and remains part of Safety Net’s toolkit, it became clear that the scope of the initiative would need to be expanded further into “issues that the police department had no resources to address” (Barrett & Janopaul-Naylor, 2016, p. 134).

The importance of officers’ work in the youth centers grew as the collaborative recognized the need to engage with a wider swath of youth outside of the schools. This created more opportunities to reach youth in informal settings and to support prevention efforts. Efforts not only expanded the target ages and types of behaviors addressed but attention to a wider range of clients’ needs as well. Interest in a youth’s family grew in recognition that behavior often followed from problems at home. In addition to home therapy and family counseling, clients’ family members could be connected with job assistance as well (Safety Net 16).

As the Safety Net approach broadened from a diversion program to include prevention and intervention efforts, the psychologist helped ground the approach in empirically-based theoretical models, primarily Yale School of Medicine’s Child Development-Community Policing Program (CD-CP) (Barrett & Janopaul-Naylor, 2016). The CD-CP program began in 81

81 The Kennedy School report also discusses national grant programs that “align with Safety Net activities” (Kamins & Shapton, 2012, p. 18): the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (SS/HS) sponsored by the U.S. Departments
1991 through joint efforts by the Yale Child Study Center and the New Haven Department of Police Service. A multi-agency collaborative response put into action immediately following children and families’ exposure to violence, it is based on the observation that police are usually the first to encounter those exposed to violence but generally lack the training and resources to respond meaningfully to their trauma, and mental health providers typically are not present at the pivotal early stages of trauma to provide the most effective response (Yale Child Study Center, nd).

Early on, the psychologist, police commissioner, and lieutenant in charge of the YFSU visited the program in New Haven and were able to sit in on one of the group’s meetings. Safety Net shares with CD-CP the view that police and mental health providers as well as other organizations are critical to prevention and intervention efforts. Moreover, Safety Net employed several components of CD-CP, including cross-training between police and partner agencies, regular meetings to review cases of children and families involved in the collaborative, as well as home visits and other forms of follow-up (Yale Child Study Center, nd). Officers were also provided with access to the psychologist and mental health services by phone and pager so that these resources were available whenever needed, a practice that came out of the visit with CD-CP.

**THE SAFETY NET PROCESS**

Safety Net encompassed three focal points in a pyramid structure, with each theoretically encompassing fewer youth as one moves upward. Prevention was the base level and focused on establishing a cultural effect for all Cambridge youth. Agencies engaged in activities to build trust with youth and to model appropriate behavior. At this level, Safety Net essentially operated of Education, Health and Human Services and the Justice Community Prevention Grants Program (CPG) sponsored by OJJDP and funded by Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.
in the background for most youth. Schools provided a safe environment for education, social programming, and social and emotional support by teachers and staff. Human services similarly contributed by maintaining a safe place for the city’s youth to engage in organized sports and other programming, serve as the mayor’s summer employment sites, and provide mentorship and guidance. Police in the YFSU contributed to the safety of the school environment, built relationships with students, and engaged with young people in the city’s youth centers and other venues (e.g., coaching, city events). The health alliance’s clinical programming and health clinics provided venues for the prevention of delinquency by addressing known risk factors.

The second and third tiers functioned as entry points for specific individuals. The second level involved intervention. Here, youth exhibiting risk factors for delinquency were connected with a service plan before actual delinquency or crime occurred. Referrals to Safety Net may come from anywhere, but the schools and youth centers (as well as parents) were seen as particularly well positioned given the number of young people encountered on a daily basis. When signs of emotional distress or acting out in non-criminal ways were observed, the youth could be referred to Safety Net by parents; teachers or other school staff members, including youth resource officers; youth center staff, including YROs or YOOs; or by clinical staff at the health alliance. However, multiple children engaging in similar problem behaviors were not necessarily all referred to Safety Net; it depended in part on a child’s individual circumstances and history. In one situation, for example, only one of two students caught with marijuana was referred by the school to Safety Net. This reportedly frustrated the school’s YRO, who wanted both to be referred. According to a police participant, although the police could directly solicit

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82 Safety Net is also a potential option for young people above the age of majority, hence the use of “crime” as well as “delinquency.”
the other youth’s involvement in Safety Net, the YROs and YOOs generally tried to avoid this when there was no illegal behavior taking place.

At the top of the pyramid was diversion, which referred to a set of “constructive consequences” outside of the juvenile or criminal justice system as well as services applied when a young person committed a prosecutable offense. The police were most likely to bring youth into Safety Net at this level. YFSU officers learned about such individuals directly, in communication with patrol officers or justice personnel, or through review of police reports from the previous day by the YFSU lieutenant or sergeant. A young person would be offered the opportunity to participate in Safety Net, with the understanding that he or she could avoid involvement in the juvenile or adult justice system. Whether an individual was offered diversion depended on the particular factors of their offense and their history, but efforts were generally made to solicit as many young offenders as possible. A police participant noted that there were no hard-and-fast rules for who was eligible for involvement because Safety Net wanted the flexibility to be able to make decisions on a case-by-case basis. It could become more difficult to include a client in activities and services if that individual had open cases and a court had imposed restrictions on movement such as house arrest, but this did not necessarily mean the end of contact with Safety Net members. “We don’t brush our hands and walk away” from such clients, said one non-police participant (Safety Net 5).

Although decisions about client inclusion in Safety Net were characterized by some elasticity, the collaborative was in the process of formalizing a process that provided guidance for its members. The director of outreach and community programs recently developed a multi-page process flow chart, which laid out the steps to be taken from when a young person was referred to the CPD through when the client was no longer in formal contact with the
department. Although the timing of other partners’ involvement was broadly noted, the chart primarily focused on steps to be taken by YFSU personnel. What follows is a description of this process. The chart described current practice but also reflected a formalized ideal. Like most practices, the process could be messier in action than on paper.

Upon initial referral, a client might be worked with informally. In the event that Safety Net was deemed potentially appropriate, additional information would be gathered on the child and family through a review of departmental and other records to learn about any previous or current cases, the extent of any truancy, and whether there was a history of abuse or neglect. There would then be a discussion between the YFSU sergeant and officer about the youth and paperwork would be created or added to regarding the current situation. A home visit was then required to learn more about the child and his or her family and to ascertain what other services they were receiving from which agencies. If, at this point, the youth appeared to be an appropriate candidate for inclusion in Safety Net, an offer would be made to the family. Safety Net was a voluntary process but one dependent on parents formally approving the child’s participation. This required that a parent sign a release form, allowing the police and other collaborative partners to discuss information other than that protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) (that is, HIPAA protections were not waived). If parents agreed and signed the release, the case would become a formal part of Safety Net. Otherwise, the case would be addressed through standard YFSU practice. This might still involve referral to services and other contacts, but the youth would not be the focus of the full collaborative process.

For youth who entered Safety Net, police officers or detectives in the YFSU served as their case manager. The YFSU member completed an intake sheet and worked with the unit
sergeant to update the department’s records management system with the youth’s information. A determination was then made as to whether the youth was to be addressed as an intervention or diversion case. Again, intervention cases were ones in which no crime or status offense has been committed. If one had been, it was considered a diversion case and additional steps were taken within the Safety Net process that dealt with the creation of and reference to a diversion contract in addition to a youth service plan.

If a Safety Net participant were twelve years or older, an assessment of the likelihood of future delinquency or crime would be conducted using the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) or YLS, as it was generally called by study participants. The YLS is an adaptation of a widely-used adult risk/needs instrument used in community and institutional correctional settings (Flores, Travis, & Latessa, 2003). Eight domains are covered by the YLS: “Prior Offenses and Dispositions, Family Circumstances and Parenting, Education and Employment, Peer Relationships, Substance Abuse, Leisure and Recreation, Personality and Behavior, and Attitudes and Orientation” (Campbell et al., 2014, p. 4).

The adoption of this instrument in 2013 was intended to assist in determining whether an individual is a proper fit for Safety Net and their level of risk. It was also intended to help the case manager develop a plan and set of objectives for the young person going forward. The CPD appeared to be the only police department known to train officers on this instrument (Barrett & Janopaul-Naylor, 2016). The YLS was a further step toward enhancing the department and collaborative’s capacity to tailor their response to youth, even (or particularly) within the diversion group. The YLS has not been validated on children under twelve; younger children involved in Safety Net had their risk factors and needs identified, but this information was not used to complete a YLS.
When a YLS was warranted, officer case managers gathered information and completed the instrument but did not immediately score it. The case and YLS were presented at the bi-weekly case conference where other partners weighed in and the psychologist had an opportunity to scrutinize the YLS and further guide the officers. During or after the meeting the YLS was modified and scored. Officers identified high, moderate, and low risk factors and drafted a youth service plan, which were used to provide clear goals and accountability for the client. A diversion contract was also developed and signed by the participant. After four months, the YLS was redone and the service plan revised if needed. If the diversion contract was completed, the youth might be formally exited from Safety Net; otherwise the contract might be modified in light of any changes to the YLS and service plan. If diversion failed, formal charges might be brought to bear.83 In the event that prosecution was ultimately pursued for a diversion client, a juvenile detective was involved rather than the YROs or YOOs. This was done in order to avoid a negative perception of these officers in the schools and youth centers (Safety Net 2).

Intervention clients might also fail to fulfill their goals, but if no prosecutable offense had been committed, they would simply exit Safety Net. The goal of the collaborative was then to follow up on the youth without the more formal assessments and accountability plans.

Before the YLS was put in play, officers engaged in a lengthy period of training on filling out the instrument. A non-sworn police participant said, “We spent a year training on that because we knew how much of an undertaking this was going to be and this is so far removed from what officers are typically trained to do” (Safety Net 13). Officers were trained as a group

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83 A police participant noted, however, that failure to complete division does not result in prosecution. “We don’t prosecute that case. That case. We don’t tell them that, but we don’t prosecute that case. And that’s because if they couldn’t go through with our diversion, we’re going to see them again. And when we see them, they don’t get a diversion. They get the full weight of the law. Let’s go to court and talk to the judge” (Safety Net 2). The participant went on to say that, given the way the juvenile judges tended to work, it would probably take several more arrests for prosecutable offenses for the youth to receive a sanction.
as well as in one-on-one meetings to learn how to use the software, become familiar with the terminology of the YLS, and to think through how to create goals based on the risk factors identified. Officers later had the opportunity to complete the process on their own and present the case.

Using such an instrument to quantify risk was an unfamiliar approach for most officers; the notion of risk reduction (as opposed to behavior elimination) was the focus of many discussions. A police participant described an example in which the officers wanted a client’s goal to be stop smoking marijuana. It was suggested in the training that more manageable, incremental objectives could help the client avoid a sense of failure in the event he or she was not able to achieve this all-or-nothing goal on the first attempt. For instance, a more reasonable approach might be to start with not smoking before school. If this were achieved, the goal might be changed to not smoking on school days. Clients would build confidence with each small accomplishment, increasing the likelihood that they would continue in the right direction.

Interview participants noted that this approach stood in stark contrast to the previous set of options that were limited to arrest or “brooming” a young person (sweeping them away, letting them go). Importantly, Safety Net was not simply a referral mechanism; several SNC members spoke of how police in other departments might help connect youth to services but then would “hand them off” and perhaps not follow up about the individual or case. Case management was intended to provide a formal process for goal setting and accountability, coordination of services, consultation among partners about clients, and client follow-up.

At the time of research, the YFSU had a grant-funded employee who had been working in a support role with the officers, assisting them with case management practices, helping them to complete the YLS, accompanying them on home visits and to meetings, and providing support
in related ways. This was a pilot program to explore the potential usefulness of having a longer-term social service provider working at the CPD. The role had been deemed a success, and the department was in the process of interviewing candidates for a social worker position, which would be split between the CSU and domestic violence unit.\textsuperscript{84}

A critical aspect of Safety Net was that in addition to the personnel directly involved in Safety Net from the police, school, and human service departments a multitude of other personnel played key roles with profound effects on the performance of the collaborative. Most prominently, patrol officers would encounter youth when they were absent from school or at the city’s recreation centers and needed to have adequate knowledge and buy-in associated with Safety Net so that they would recognize the broader set of options available to youth and be willing to contact YFSU personnel. The decentralized nature of the schools and youth centers and the number of facilities were complicating factors, with relationships and understandings needing to be cultivated in each. As a non-sworn police participant described:

> Each of the schools and youth centers have a different idea of what they want the officer’s function to be. And because of that there’s varying degrees of information sharing and collaboration at each individual school and youth center. So we have seen a few problems, but it’s a learning opportunity. So when something happens, it’s an opportunity to say, “Okay, here’s what we did, here’s what we didn’t do, and here’s our plan for next time.” (Safety Net 13)

In each of these agencies, personnel not directly involved in Safety Net would need to recognize the different role that YFSU personnel were playing in the community and be willing to work with them in this new capacity.

A participant noted that when the YFSU was established it was recognized that although a special unit would be working regularly with other agencies and organizations, this would

\textsuperscript{84} A licensed social worker was ultimately hired by the department in January 2015 “who is responsible for coordinating services and providing mental health, trauma and domestic violence-related resources for victims of crime, youth and families” (Feijo, 2015a).
affect the whole of patrol, who would need to know that there existed a different way of handling encounters with young people: “You’re going to bring this child home and then you are going to refer this kid’s case to the Child and Family Service Unit who are going to follow up”” (Safety Net 3). To this end, the department provided several trainings focusing on officers’ knowledge and competencies on a range of topics related to interacting with youth. Department-wide trainings included “Policing the Teen Brain,” which teaches officers about the distinct ways that youth may respond to police as a result of neuro-scientific and developmental differences in youth compared to adults (Bostic, Thurau, & Drury, 2015). The impact of mental illness, trauma, and cultural factors were also addressed. Officers were educated in ways to apply this knowledge in de-escalation strategies. The entire department was also trained in multicultural understanding and reducing implicit bias (Barrett & Olle, 2016). Youth resource officers had gone through training provided by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), a prominent non-profit organization focusing on “school-based policing” (National Association of School Resource Officers, nd).

More specific to Safety Net, the psychologist “developed and delivered a series of four trainings, 2 hours in duration each which were integrated into the YFSU officers’ schedule to cover multicultural competencies, addressing disproportionate minority contact with police, juvenile mental health, and healthy adolescent development” (Barrett & Olle, 2016, p. 24). The trainings “focused on the fundamentals of youth development, recognizing and understanding youth mental health, and the principles of connecting and communicating with youth” (p. 24). Trainings were integrated into officers’ annual in-service training schedule. Additionally, cross-trainings were periodically held with the police and youth center staff in DHSP. An early training took place with a wider array of officers in the CPD as the police commissioner was starting to
reconfigure the department’s approach to youth. Subsequently, joint trainings involving CPD and DHSP personnel had taken place.

The YFSU lieutenant also worked at selling the unit and Safety Net to patrol officers and supervisors in multiple ways. He addressed in-service training to remind officers about the unit’s work, Safety Net more specifically, and how YFSU officers were of use to them when encountering youth exhibiting problematic or illegal behavior. He and the unit sergeant also reviewed officer reports from the previous shift or day and the Crime Analysis Unit bulletin. If there was an incident involving a young person, they would generally attend roll calls to address the case and be personally available to the officers. The involvement and perspectives of officers and non-police personnel outside of the main collaborative body are addressed further on.

PARTNERSHIP

Safety Net was characterized by a complex set of relationships that are going through a challenging process of change and innovation. The shift in the CPD’s approach starting in 2007 presented opportunities but perhaps inevitably surfaced tensions. Interviews suggested several ideas about the perceived nature, benefits, and challenges of the relationship. Trust was prominent and closely connected to issues of communication and also based on several underlying premises, most critically the extent to which partners shared a common understanding of young people and appropriate interactions with them, the level of participation and sharing of responsibility, and the perceived willingness of partners to share information. In terms of how participants viewed the nature of the relationship, most characterized it as a “partnership,” but there were many shades of this concept.
Characterizing the Relationship

Communication of Purpose and Trust

Trust was important on three main levels: between the agencies participating in Safety Net, within each of the participating agencies, and between the collaborative and the community, particularly the youth and families being invited to participate in Safety Net. The establishment and development of trust were closely tied to the communication of purpose. A variety of questions about the purpose of the collaborative ultimately boiled down to the more direct question asked by the non-police agencies and community members: can we trust the police?

Across agencies. The main ongoing trust-building project across agencies involved convincing members of the non-police partners that the CPD was actually pursuing an approach not grounded in enforcement and arrest. Included here were both members who attended meetings and were directly involved in operational decisions as well as the broader swath of employees of these organizations that did not attend collaborative meetings.

Trust building across the agencies was generally reported to be moving in a positive direction. There was a sense among participants that Safety Net represented a long-term commitment to change and that instant results should not be expected. Responding to whether the Safety Net participants had developed a level of trust, a police participant recounted that after recently presenting on Safety Net at a major policing conference, the police commissioner, deputy superintendent overseeing the YFSU, and the lieutenant in charge of the YFSU were approached repeatedly by attendees who were incredulous that such an initiative was possible. That having any communication between the police and city departments working with children and adolescents was seen as a success suggests how uncommon an idea Safety Net is within policing, how low trust may be across these agencies, and how significant the challenge was for the CPD and Safety Net partners. Some issues of trust and communication affecting Safety Net
were at this foundational level, while others were associated with interorganizational dynamics around participation and information sharing. These are addressed below.

Although the police commissioner’s new, collaborative vision was welcomed in 2007, it was accompanied by skepticism as to whether the police could be trusted to follow through. Officers’ contact with and involvement in the lives of the city’s youth was being expanded; Safety Net fundamentally relied on the officers who work in schools and youth centers. School resource officers are common in schools across the country, but their presence is not always welcome. At one level, there can be concern that the assigned officers are not the best fit for work in the schools. A recent *New York Times* article quotes the director of NASRO as saying that some departments look at these positions as a place to “park” officers who have been on the job for twenty years and that “bad resource officers fall into three categories.”

“Hostages,” those who are ordered to work in schools; “retirees,” older officers who are nursing their pensions; and “vacationers,” who like having school holidays off, though many work as regular patrol officers during the summer. (Saul, Williams, & Hartocollis, 2018)

There is also the more fundamental question of whether the presence of officers in schools in and of itself is beneficial, as research has found that as schools’ use of law enforcement officers increased, so too did the recording of more serious crimes and the referrals to law enforcement for less serious behaviors (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). In recent years, “viral videos” have shown officers in schools responding to perceived student misbehavior with outsized aggression (Downey, 2016). More specific to Cambridge, there had also been concern among some non-police participants that the police would default to enforcement-based tactics when they were not appropriate.

Overcoming these concerns and demonstrating that Safety Net held benefits rather than risk for youth was a challenge. Sitting at the Safety Net table were individuals whose
professional orientations focused on providing positive development strategies for youth, whereas the police had less experience and knowledge in this area. The CPD had encountered concerns about the effects of an initiative in which the police were a key player. For example, a police participant described how an attendee at a conference presentation on Safety Net accused the collaborative of contributing to “net-widening” (Safety Net 2). At times, suspicions were closely tied to direct and vicarious experience with the police. Some human services department personnel working in the youth centers were reported to have experienced negative interactions with CPD officers during their own childhoods and were reluctant to see the police in a positive light and to work with them. In some cases, however, a lack of trust was the impetus for working together. A non-CPD participant described the comments of a former DHSP staff member at an early cross-training with the CPD:

I remember she said, “I’m invested because I don’t want to see you put my young person on the pavement outside the youth center, put him down on the floor,” and that that also highlighted that there are staff members that have their own issues with police and that here she’s saying, “I don’t want you to do that.” (Safety Net 15)

For youth center staff who had had negative interactions with the police, these experiences had colored their expectations, at least initially. But these individuals also saw an opportunity to prevent future problems through this initiative.

Reportedly, trust grew through the police demonstrating a consistent commitment to the Safety Net approach. During an annual door-to-door campaign to inform public housing residents about youth services, human services personnel were initially wary of conducting the campaign while paired with a police officer, but these attitudes changed.

At first, it was kicking and screaming, and I think now it’s really evolved to an enjoyable experience because they understand that the officer’s not gonna take down a warrant, they’re not there to go into the house because they smell something, it’s not a punitive experience. (Safety Net 15)
Similarly, the cross-trainings involving the CPD and DHSP staff had been useful mechanisms for building trust. They were being used not just to support effective communication but to build trust in a local and national environment that is often critical of the police. A police participant noted that the cross-trainings could be difficult for officers but that they were important to the healthy functioning of the collaborative (Safety Net 2). Another described a steady building of relationships and trust with the teen center staff as an organic process that did not need to be forced. The earlier lack of trust was seen as stemming from insularity (Safety Net 16).

Another intersection between trust and communication was the willingness of the schools and youth programs to share information about incidents or youth or to refer young people experiencing problems to Safety Net. This had been an ongoing problem on two levels: willingness to provide information on youth across partner agencies and the nature of legal privacy mandates. Police members had concerns about partner agencies’ inclination to refer youth to Safety Net and whether they were consistently forthcoming about relevant incidents that occur at their facilities. Although changes within the police department had moved increasingly toward greater community engagement, the extent of information sharing from non-police agencies was sometimes hindered by a reluctance to give the police more control over a young person. This perceived reluctance to share information with the police about potential Safety Net clients was a source of frustration to the CPD participants. An associated concern relates to role clarity: what was and was not appropriate for each partner’s function within Safety Net? For example, the police emphasized that their role in the schools was not to impose discipline on students, and they were alarmed by a situation in which the schools had reportedly been using the idea of Safety Net as a threat associated with student misbehavior. Given the challenge of
reframing the role of the police in working with youth, this was not the way the department wants to be seen.

In a study of Safety Net by graduate students at the Harvard Kennedy School, the authors observed an issue germane to challenges around communication and role clarity among Safety Net members as well as with the public. The report recommends greater attention to clearly identifying and communicating the goals of Safety Net. The authors had found that members of the collaborative typically described Safety Net “either in terms of activities, such as ‘connecting youth to resources,’ or as an abstract positive outcome for youth, such as ‘helping kids stay on the right track’” rather than the purpose of the activities (Kamins & Shapton, 2012, p. 17). “Collaboration and information sharing seem to have become the end goal of Safety Net, rather than a strategy to achieve tangible outcomes for youth” (p. 17). They note, furthermore, that many “collaborators” had never heard of Safety Net. In order to reach youth and to establish trust in the agencies coming into contact with young people, greater clarity of purpose was recommended.

Although experiences with Safety Net by youth and their families as well as by personnel from participating agencies making referrals would likely be a more critical determinant of trust toward the collaborative, getting to this point would be more challenging if people did not have a clear idea about what Safety Net was trying to do in the first place. To communicate its purpose, the collaborative developed a mission statement, posted on the CPD website and in Safety Net materials.

The mission of Cambridge Safety Net is to foster positive youth development, promote mental health, support a safe community and schools, and limit youth involvement in the juvenile justice system through coordinated services for Cambridge youth and their families (Cambridge Police Department, nd-b).
As noted earlier, Safety Net additionally appeared to be moving toward greater formalization by mapping its processes more clearly and implementing program plans that were connected to assessments using the YLS. Study participants also spoke of efforts to measure Safety Net outcomes on various fronts.

Safety Net also encountered limitations on the disclosure of specific types of information due to legal confidentiality requirements, such as those included in HIPAA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The complicated nature of confidentiality requirements applying to certain types of information led to frustration across agencies as the participants worked to figure out what information could be shared with whom under what circumstances. But the sharing of information was a symbolic process in addition to a technical concern. Some participants voiced concern that these strictures were at times being used to avoid sharing information. Confidentiality was also a concern for the police, as they were constrained in what they could say about a client’s case. Comfort with information sharing was thus a concern across all of the agencies depending on the type of information.

Where trust had developed, the information sharing process appeared to have been eased, even when confidentiality requirements prevented a two-way flow of information. A non-police participant described the responsiveness of the police partners to requests for information on a child or to intervene when there appear to be “red flags.” This took place in the context of privacy constraints. “They’ve been very respectful in knowing that I can’t necessarily always do the same because of HIPAA and they’ve been able to work with that with me” (Safety Net 7). Indeed, collaborative members found ways to assist one another in their work to support a Safety Net client’s case while accommodating confidentiality requirements.
We don’t get a lot of personal information back from the school, because we can’t. FERPA and all that. But you hear from the house deans or from their teachers through your informal contacts in your school, you know, “Yep, he’s doing great, much better, paying attention, not causing disruptions.” So, a lot of it is the personal one-on-ones or the group discussion regarding an individual. (Safety Net 2)

These informal interactions offered helpful appraisals. The willingness to provide exempted information reportedly increased as those with responsibility for that information not only gained familiarity with technical requirements and restrictions but also grew more comfortable with Safety Net. To this point, one non-police participant said that there were few communication “sticking points,” but turnover could be problematic due to both of these issues (Safety Net 7).

**Trust from the Community.** As with the participating agencies, trust-building with the community was important to Safety Net. In order for youth to be involved in Safety Net, parents needed to sign a form allowing for information about their child to be shared among the collaborative agencies. Getting releases signed was sometimes a challenge because of existing distrust of the police. Negative perceptions of the police could be intergenerational, making them difficult to overcome. Members of immigrant communities could also be wary given their experiences with police in their countries of origin. Communicating the purpose and value of Safety Net to parents was therefore quite complicated in certain circumstances.

The community also included service providers outside of the collaborative who were not familiar with Safety Net or the YFSU and who might not understand that a different approach was being taken by the CPD with regard to youth. A police participant indicated that reaching out to newly involved agencies and organizations to explain the YFSU and Safety Net was an important part of the process.
Accountability

Participants spoke about a number of topics that were collectively discussed under the umbrella of accountability. The key individual issues included the way that power and voice were distributed across the collaborative and the extent to which partner agencies were perceived to be pulling their weight and providing the necessary support to other partners.

Power and Voice. Policing research commonly finds that the police dominate partnerships or more subtly steer collaborative efforts in directions that fit police definitions of appropriate problems (Herbert, 2006). Chapter 5 described the police commissioner’s desire to share ownership of partnerships in which the department was involved and to promote the equitable distribution of responsibility for decision making across member organizations. Indeed, for the CPD to have credibility and legitimacy in working with youth through a positive development approach it would need the imprimatur of non-police agencies, which would likely be difficult to achieve through dominance.

The police did appear to function as a collaborative rather than controlling member of Safety Net. It was equally apparent, however, that the CPD served as Safety Net’s central locus of influence. The collaborative’s origin lay in the vision and efforts of the police commissioner. The lieutenant who ran the Community Services Unit was recognized as Safety Net’s director of operations. Front-line sworn police personnel (YROs, YOOs, juvenile detectives) functioned as the case managers for youth involved in the collaborative. The bi-weekly case conferences and monthly leadership meetings were held at police headquarters, and agendas, while bearing a Safety Net logo, listed the CPD first among the four city agencies. To the extent that Safety Net had a web presence, it existed on the CPD website; a link to a description of the collaborative was posted on the department’s “Community Resources” page. No reference to Safety Net was
made on the DHSP website. The Cambridge Public Schools site provided a link to the CPD’s Safety Net page on a list of “Mental Health and Counseling Services,” and “Cambridge Police Department” was noted in parentheses next to the link, explicitly attributing ownership of Safety Net to the police department. Cambridge Health Alliance materials similarly located ownership of Safety Net in the CPD, as in a reference to “The Cambridge Police Department’s Safety Net Collaborative” in a recent annual report (Cambridge Health Alliance, 2014, p. 31).

Still, that Safety Net originated and had its center of gravity in the CPD did not appear to reflect police dominance over the initiative. As one non-police participant noted, “It could be the Cambridge police running the whole thing, but they step back and everybody gets involved” (Safety Net 17). This dynamic appeared to have been baked into the collaborative from the beginning. The police commissioner brought multiple agencies to the table when creating the YFSU and several participated in the school resource officer interviews.

Substantive voice across partners remained evident at the time of research, which was taking place shortly after a significant rethinking of the collaborative by its members. The major impetus for this shake up appeared to have been the pursuit of greater formalization of the approach to working with clients and client assessment. As it grew evident that the collaborative was developing in ways that would take officers even further from traditional policing, YFSU positions were opened up again, requiring existing unit members to reapply (if they still wanted the position) and providing the opportunity for other officers within the department to apply. This was described both as a way to find the best candidates for an evolving position and to give existing members the opportunity to reflect on the unit’s changes and decide whether they still felt it was a good fit for them. As with the original set of interviews for YFSU positions, the re-application interviews were not conducted solely by the department; the partner agencies were
invited to take a prominent role. A police participant commented that this was not a typical police interview process.

What makes Cambridge unique is they have a panel of not just police personnel that are involved in the interview. In the interview they had members of the school department, local clergy, city offices, human services, and everybody on that panel kind of has a say as to who the best candidate will be. You know, do they think that we will fit in with what they’re doing, are we a good fit for the unit. That was a new experience. . . . In [municipality], the job was posted and you talked to the captain and then, “Okay, [officer’s last name] you got it.” (Safety Net 16)

Even within the CPD this was not business as usual. As another police participant described, “Usually, with the specialized units it’s usually kind of just the head of that unit, whether it be the deputy or the superintendent or what have you. So, yeah it’s a little nerve wracking” (Safety Net 4). The process, which took place in 2012, resulted in two new officers coming on board and two leaving the unit.

Structurally, the police also made themselves accountable to the other agencies by participating in the leadership and steering committee levels that did not simply include police personnel. A police participant summed up the distinction between controlling the collaborative and serving as its main organizational force: “This is not a police program, but we are pretty much the glue that keeps it together” (Safety Net 2).

**Shared Responsibility and Provision of Support.** The extent to which participants were seen as contributing their fair share was an important issue for members. There was a perception among several police participants with case manager responsibilities that they were bearing more than their rightful share of responsibility in terms of their workload with clients. Other partners might offer some guidance but this was often seen as insufficient. Several police case managers indicated feeling adrift despite support from the psychologist and training on case
management and other subjects. Case managers often wished that members of the other agencies would offer their professional expertise and guidance more often.

At the same time, non-police members could become frustrated with what they saw as a lack of structure to police case managers’ approach. One participant discussed this concern in the context of the YLS. That is, while such instruments were common in human services settings, they were not as familiar to law enforcement personnel, who were characterized as trying to bend the YLS to their existing approach rather than trying to understand its potential contribution to the process. Not surprisingly, the YLS had not been a panacea for bridging organizational cultures around the value and use of such an analytic tool. This appeared to be an area where participants were perhaps not communicating clearly about their respective needs.

Non-police participants also described a lack of firm scheduling around when officers planned to be at the youth centers. Officers had wide discretion in how they spend their time, and some were seen as inadequately adept at self-structuring their activities. There was a sense that some of the initial police participants of Safety Net had been less reliable compared to the current group:

Some people do really well with very unstructured environments and can figure out, “Hmm, well I think success looks like this and this is what I’m going to do to get there.” Other people say, “Hmm, nobody’s watching. I don’t have to, I’m not being held accountable.” (Safety Net 3)

Youth center personnel were troubled by the lack of certainty concerning when officers would be coming by. DHSP staff were reportedly amenable to whatever schedule the police were comfortable with but wanted greater certainty once one was solidified. There seemed to be some communication challenges around this, as the police voiced frustration that they were willing to provide personnel but that DHSP was uncomfortable with irregular visits by different officers and wanted people who could come regularly. This made scheduling more challenging for the
police. However, CPD participants appeared to acknowledge these concerns, and efforts were reportedly being made to manage the expectations of youth center personnel and set more concrete accountabilities.

The ambiguity around scheduling was related to a deeper issue about differences between police and human service work. A participant noted that in human service work, there were generally clearly defined goals and accountability for achieving those goals, whereas the police seemed to be more accustomed to being held accountable for processual responsibilities—for example, writing reports and responding to dispatched calls for service. Speaking as if directly to the police, a non-police participant stated:

We’re feeling uncomfortable when you ask us, “How’s it going?” because we don’t know what you’re measuring. How is what going? Like, what are we measuring? And it was very difficult for them because it was like, “Well, this is unquantifiable.” And they would say that all the time. Well, I get it, but like in [human services work] it feels unquantifiable, but there are ways in which we can quantify, and I know that’s not what you guys are used to, but there’s a difference between nothing, low expectations and here are the expectations. (Safety Net 3)

This participant was reporting that it was unclear whether asking “how’s it going” was applying some arcane manner of assessment—one that was as unfamiliar to this participant as quantification was reportedly for the police—or a dodge.

The schools were cited by some participants as needing to be more regularly involved and communicative. As described earlier, schools within the system varied as to their buy-in and willingness to participate through referring students to Safety Net or otherwise informing the collaborative of incidents. A police participant suggested that “I think the more buy-in for each school into the program will kind of solidify the circle of the partnership and of the program” (Safety Net 11). However, it is important to note that the bi-weekly and leadership meetings
were held in the morning at the police department, which was seen as an impediment to school personnel attending, especially the security staff.

**Nature of the Relationship**

The above discussion highlights numerous features of the Safety Net Collaborative that were viewed as critical to that relationship either through their presence or absence. They include trust, effective communication, a mutually beneficial relationship, shared responsibility and accountability, a common vision, and voice. However, knowing that these characteristics were important to partnership generally does not speak directly to whether participants understood Safety Net as a “partnership.”

Participants did generally agree that Safety Net constituted a “partnership;” however, some participants discussed partnership in more dynamic terms than others. For example, a member of the CPD indicated that partnership was an emergent status that ebbs and flows based on the quality of communication between members (Safety Net 4). More commonly, participants indirectly commented on the dynamism of partnership. For example, a non-police participant identified Safety Net as a partnership but noted that it could be improved through greater definition of roles and “more clarity about expectations from all sides” (Safety Net 3). A police participant similarly identified role clarity as an important feature of partnership.

Equal or shared voice was frequently mentioned as an important to partnership. Safety Net members addressed this topic in a number of ways. As noted earlier, one non-police participant acknowledged that the CPD was the lead Safety Net agency but praised the department for not dominating the initiative (Safety Net 17). Another indicated that Safety Net was a partnership and that all participants were equal partners but then immediately cited an example of how partners were not all treated equally because the regular case conferences were not held at a location or time that was feasible for more of the participant’s staff to attend. A
third member responded to the question of whether Safety Net was a partnership by saying, “Yes. Absolutely. I mean partnerships are never equal, so I think we’re always tipping and balancing the scales, but yes, a partnership indeed” (Safety Net 7). This initially seemed to suggest that partnership naturally involves a power differential. Later on, however, when asked what would potentially make Safety Net more of a partnership, this participant appeared to amend the earlier assertion, indicating that the participant was desirous of collaborative leadership to seek input from that organization on Safety Net’s direction. While it may be that partnerships do not always offer equal opportunity for voice and input, ultimately this member was looking for more ways to contribute strategically to the collaborative.

Although partnership could be discussed as a kind of baseline for a productive relationship, it was also spoken of as a transcendent state in some circumstances, as an emergent quality that is reached over time through as members grow closer. One manifestation mirrors how CPD personnel at times used adjectives to modify their comments on partnership, for example, by referring to “true” partnership. Another member, from outside the CPD, began describing partnership as involving a mutual benefit but quickly shifted to a conceptualization more focused on a personal level of connection with other Safety Net members (Safety Net 5). The personal connection was not necessarily one of friendship but involved a sense of warmth and an ability to appreciate the other’s perspective. The aim of the collaborative was seen as becoming a more fully common or shared vision. This was seen as relying on an emergent process. Transcendence also came in the form of members’ willingness to view their relationships as long-term commitments that offer greater stability of expectations. A non-police participant described situations in which short-term “losses” were taken on because of confidence that they would be balanced later.
I will say that I actually do send staff out to family’s homes with these officers to try to convince families to sign up for community-based services and we take a financial hit for that because they haven’t yet signed on for the, they haven’t done intake with us. So, we’re going out there and say now we just spent two or three hours with this officer out in the community and that’s two or three hours of productivity lost. So, they know that we will also go above and beyond for them and that to me is a partnership. (Safety Net 7)

The common thread through these examples was that they were based on trust. Each of them relied on the perception that their fellow collaborators would, at a basic level, fulfill their responsibilities. Built on that foundation was a personal level of engagement with the other partners and mission that suggested a chemical reaction, where something new emerges from a combination of individual partnership elements. This process required an indeterminate amount of time and was not guaranteed to occur. Indeed, it was not clear that this reaction had taken place uniformly across Safety Net and probably should not be taken to characterize the collaboration as a whole.

Discussions also suggested that understandings of partnership were focused on the dynamics among members, that they were internal process-based understandings rather than being directed toward outcomes for the clients. This is not to suggest that client outcomes were not important to Safety Net participants; when Safety Net’s process, aims, and challenges were addressed, its effects on clients were certainly key to the initiative. Rather, the point is that comments on the meanings of partnership as a concept tended to be centered on how members interacted and less often, for example, on interactions with clients, clients’ families, or the wider community.

IDENTITY

A recent report on law enforcement leadership’s role in juvenile justice reform observes that “communication can be the hardest part of working together—even when it seems like everyone’s saying the same thing” (Bahney et al., 2014, p. 22). This is due in part to the
intersection of identity and communication in interorganizational work. The police and social service providers often have different perspectives on the nature of youth problem behavior, use different language to frame and discuss it, and devise quite different methods for addressing it. This was a challenge that Safety Net members had to address. Police personnel and staff at the other participating organizations often held quite different perspectives on youth and the nature of wayward behavior as well as the methods and measures used to address young people’s problems. As noted above, this had led to some challenges in communicating effectively across organizations.

**Occupational and Role Perspectives: Negotiating “Police Work”**

Sworn personnel who were part of the YFSU and Safety Net contended with significant challenges to their identities as police officers. Asked about whether there was a difference between patrol and working in the schools, a YRO commented:

> It’s a huge difference, yeah. It’s a different job completely. Patrol is primarily reactive, so, dispatch gets a call, there’s a problem, dispatch tells us, we go handle it. Reactive. Occasionally, that does happen with us, but primarily our job is proactive. So, we want to try and identify the kids before somebody has to call the police on them. We want to try and break down those barriers in the mindset of us versus them before it becomes a problem. And kind of change that whole relationship that city kids have historically had with the police. (Safety Net 16)

This observation reflected the nature of the YRO role at the time of this research; the nature of the department’s presence in schools and approach to school-based policing had changed over the years. Participants reported that previously not all the schools had been covered with a full-time officer because the unit had fewer personnel. At that time, school resource officers’ jobs were reported to mostly involve handling reports and responding if an incident occurred at a school. This changed with the police commissioner at the time of this study. Now there was a sense that officers were “to be a part of the fabric” of the schools (Safety Net 16).
If the YRO’s role was “a different job completely,” the question is whether it was still considered police work. Being part of a special unit that did not generally respond to routine calls for service but engaged in case management along with human service agencies is far from the typical image of a police officer. Given the occupational hostility police have shown the notion of social work it is not surprising that this role change was difficult. Reactions by officers from outside of the CPD to Safety Net and the YFSU’s efforts reflected the separation of these worlds. For example, at a workshop in 2012 at which Safety Net officials presented on their experiences to representatives of other juvenile crime and diversion programs from around the country, officials from one visiting police department reportedly stated that they would never want their officers to be “social workers” (Safety Net 2 and 5).

Such tensions of occupational identity were present within the CPD as well. There had been a concerted effort on the part of CPD police leadership and other collaborative leaders to help officers adjust to the role they were being asked to enact. The message being delivered to Safety Net officers was that they were to be case managers, not social workers and that this was a real distinction. They were not handing in their badges, and their role constituted meaningful police work. The extent to which members of the YFSU voiced concerns about not doing “real police work” was reported by a police participant to have diminished. Language was important here. A non-sworn police participant described how the term “non-traditional policing” was used by YFSU officers at times to refer to their role.

I don’t like the term “non-traditional policing.” I hear this all the time: “It is non-traditional policing,” but I hate that because it gives them a scapegoat. This is non-traditional policing, so it’s okay that it’s taking longer to work. So I would say that it’s proactive policing because that’s essentially what you’re doing. You’re trying to figure out what’s happening and address it from happening in the future, and you have to be very proactive to do that. (Safety Net 13)
It was noted that this was also the case with officers outside the unit who were working on initiatives that fell outside the typical police role, when actions needed to be more “person-centered.” “Proactive policing” was seen by this participant as providing not only a more productive image but one that carried with it a sense of accountability.

Integrating Safety Net and the work of the YFSU into the department more widely was a work in progress. According to a police participant, although Safety Net had been around for several years, it was only within the last year or two that patrol officers had become aware of it (Safety Net 10). Commonly, this participant reported, officers encountering a juvenile would email a member of the YFSU with whom they were familiar or whom they remembered seeing at a school or youth center to suggest they take a look at the case. However, officers did not fully understand fully what the Safety Net process entailed, and the extent to which patrol officers made contact with the YFSU concerning young people they encounter varied.

Each morning, the CSU lieutenant and sergeant of YFSU combed through the previous day’s reports to see whether any individuals appeared to be a good fit for Safety Net. Given this process, the reliance on officers to contact the YFSU directly was diminished; however, this did not apply to more informal interactions with youth where an officer did not submit a report. Individuals who were part of Safety Net were flagged in the department’s records management system. A police participant noted that if the officer took the time to run the name of the juvenile encountered, this information was visible and would serve as an indicator that the officer should contact the YFSU. This did not always happen, however.

Police participants described an interaction during a training within the CPD on Safety Net and the YFSU that speaks to the challenge of changing traditional attitudes toward addressing youth behavior. The training involved communicating that organizational resources
existed for officers interacting with youth. In addition to arresting or “brooming” a young person they could contact the YFSU and leverage Safety Net’s more comprehensive capacity. A patrol officer was reported to have said that if he had to fill out a police report, it might as well be an arrest report (Safety Net 2 and 13). The YFSU lieutenant told the officer that he would not question the officer’s judgment in his decisions on the street; however, he would tell him that youth who get arrested did not tend to do as well as those who are not arrested because they ended up with fewer opportunities.

This was part of the culture change that was being worked on internally. Finding officers who were equipped to handle role conflict and who had a more expansive conception of police work meant homing in on such personnel as the collaborative and officers’ responsibilities changed. Having the partner agencies involved in interviews of YFSU personnel was a key feature in the facilitation of this process. Still, officers coming into these positions were being asked, as a non-police member stated, to “go in there and relate” (Safety Net 3), without the professional training and background to do so. They received further training once in the unit, but it was serving to counter the prevailing culture rather than build on existing preparation. There was an understanding that the Safety Net approach remained a new endeavor for all of the groups involved and it would take time to determine the best way to screen, train, support, and evaluate unit personnel; but it was also recognized that an officer’s general desire to work with youth was not sufficient. This role was seen as requiring a substantially different mindset—one that could be grown into perhaps, but a certain underlying capacity was needed.

**Occupational and Community Perspectives: Negotiating Professional Cultures and Community Expectations**

Relative to human service providers and educators, the police typically approach youth in a different manner. There is a different worldview which is manifested through language among
other channels. A participant described a conversation with a police chief from another jurisdiction who was interested in the Safety Net model. The chief indicated that he, like many other police executives, knew that connecting youth to services is more effective than arresting them. Their greater challenge, he noted, was figuring out an appropriate process and how to build relationships with the necessary agencies. To help him think through the process, the participant asked the chief to consider how he referred to people under eighteen when speaking to his local human services agency. When he answered “juveniles,” the participant challenged him to think about using “children and adolescents,” explaining to him that

“When you say ‘juveniles’ to social service providers, public health practitioners, clinicians, [it] has a negative connotation, but if you say you want to work with children and adolescents it could kind of change the way they are hearing the message.” He’s like, “I’ve never thought about it like that.” (Safety Net 13)

The same obstacles were also present within Safety Net between the CPD and other partner agencies. In order to work effectively with these partners, the CPD had to convince them that its new approach was indeed something more than the same old policing. The Harvard Kennedy School report echoed the need for effective communications between the police and other social service agencies (Kamins & Shapton, 2012, p. 18). The police needed to communicate that the purpose of Safety Net “was not just diverting a kid out of the criminal justice system, but finding out why and seeking out those questions as to why and what is going on and what’s happening there,” and, more radically, “not so that we could take a criminal response, because that’s not our mission here” (Safety Net 2). This needed to take place with the non-police collaborative members and the community generally.

But, as noted, histories between the CPD and youth in the community—some of whom are now working with DHSP or another Safety Net organization—were not always positive. The CPD and DHSP recognized the need to address the different cultures and problematic histories
and held cross-trainings between the two agencies. These training included a broader swath of personnel than would ultimately be part of Safety Net. An exchange at an early cross-training with DHSP and YFSU personnel illustrated an important distinction between law enforcement and human services orientations that manifested through the use of language. A DHSP participant described an example of this disconnect:

We’re sitting and talking about different perspectives, and one of the police officers kept saying, “Well, those are the bad kids. The bad kids do that.” . . . and I just remember I was having a physical reaction of like, “Okay, okay,” and then it came up again. “Well, those are like the good kids, those are the bad kids,” and I was like (whispering) “Okay, okay, I have to say something.” So I raised my hand, and I’m like, “Alright, so here’s something that you should understand, is that in youth development . . . there are no bad kids. There are kids that make bad choices, but to give them that label is dangerous.” (Safety Net 15)

One of the police participants commented that this discussion had led the participant to consider taking a different perspective on youth and their behavior. When asked whether there had been any concerns about communicating or working together across the different organizations’ culture, the participant said:

At first, because cops have a very specific way of speaking and other people sometimes, you know we’ve got to learn to adjust to other people’s personalities. . . For instance . . . we were in a meeting early on and somebody said, “Ah, he’s just a bad kid.” And the people at [partner organization], and maybe some of the other departments, they were like offended. They were really offended by that. “There are no such thing as bad kids, they’re kids who make bad decisions.” And we’re looking at each other like, “No. That’s a bad kid.” . . . It was different mindsets and we kind of worked all that out and we’re on the same page with just about everything now. (Safety Net 16)

A non-police participant supported the observation that this idea had gained traction with the police collaborative members. The participant noted that in recent days an officer had reportedly said “‘He’s just a bad kid right now. He can be a good kid!’” (Safety Net 13). The participant reflected, “So like they see a little bit differently now even though they sometimes use the same language” (Safety Net 13).
Police partners were also being asked to work with less familiar forms of information and decision-making processes and to embrace the notion that their work can be measured effectively. As noted earlier, police participants’ views of the YLS were ambivalent, with several participants grudgingly noting its usefulness but still wary of framing the work they did in this manner. At times officers expressed wariness about the capacity to put numbers to their efforts. A common perception of data collection and measurement was that important aspects of police work were not amenable to such evaluations. There was an associated feeling among some that this type of endeavor was necessary to feed the “bean counters” but had little practical value.

Conceptually, the police often wanted to treat the YLS as a global risk tool rather than its narrower function as a predictor of juvenile delinquency specifically. A participant (Safety Net 5) described how officers often wanted to invoke the psychologist’s professional capacity to “override” the conclusion of the assessment when they felt that the YLS had failed to accurately describe their own risk assessment. At times, the psychologist would emphasize that although the officers might correctly be concerned that the young person was at risk for self-harm or other injury, there was low risk of contact with the police or juvenile justice system.

Lastly, a cultural issue related to data and information involved what was viewed as a notable event to be shared. A police participant noted that the police participants tended to view negative events as important to share but generally neglected positive occurrences, for example, the successful completion of a diversion contract. This was information that needed to be conveyed as well, and it was an ongoing project to clarify such issues.

**DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

Safety Net emerged out of a cultural and legal context that often continues to view young law breakers as little adults or serious criminals in the making who need to be handled in the
same manner as adults. The policing institutional environment has generally followed suit. Certainly, this practice is not universal in the field, but the level of institutional distinction between how adults and youth are to be treated is less formal than in other areas of the criminal justice system. The sense among participants was that the officers previously were limited to strict enforcement or disinterest. While this study did not analyze patterns of who tended to receive which response, research often finds that young people of color experience harsher responses to their behavior (including within educational settings). This tracks with the history of the policing of young people, in which female police personnel were often tasked with working with youth, but when young people—especially young African Americans—were characterized as having an adult capacity for forming criminal intent, youth behavior became a focus of masculinized policing as well (Miller, 1999).

As criminal justice research joins other fields in recognizing the developmental psychology influencing youth behavior, police practitioners largely continue to apply a very basic set of ideas. The police commissioner from the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s had closed the juvenile investigations unit, pushing detectives toward a generalist approach. Moving to a generalized investigations function might have reflected attempts to implement community policing, which can emphasize the idea that officers are generalist problem-solvers. Still, this would seem to emphasize organizational efficiency at the expense of the nature and needs of young people. In contrast, the subsequent commissioner sought more targeted ways of addressing youth problem behavior and crime, creating a special unit specifically focused on youth and families. In the process, Safety Net was established as a specific initiative spearheaded by the YFSU.
Developing a more sophisticated set of options for working with youth meant expanding the CPD’s approach to include other agencies in close contact with children and youth in the city. Given the department’s more traditional, enforcement-based interactions with the city’s youth, the CPD could not simply develop and implement a new strategy and set of tactics on its own. The commissioner recognized a wider expertise was needed, and the department’s motives and efforts would need to be vetted by these agencies for them to be seen as legitimate in the wider community. The commissioner invited health, human services, and school personnel to take part in the development of the YFSU and the new initiative. Agencies’ leadership were sovereigns in this process. These sovereigns were specifically engaged through meaningful consultation in terms of CPD’s hiring for the YFSU and through regular strategic planning of Safety Net.

Internal agency constituencies were also important sovereigns. Safety Net was not an initiative in which the participating members could simply implement a plan and interact with their clients. The collaborative relied on the core member organizations’ wider set of personnel to provide referrals. Without their buy-in and participation, relatively few city youth would be identified for inclusion of the full range of wrap-around services and case coordination.

Safety Net was based on research addressing youth development and involvement with the criminal justice system and inspired by theoretical models in use elsewhere. Recognition of this research had led to the expansion of the CPD’s technical environment and to related organizational changes. The multi-level approach taken by Safety Net—the pyramid structure moving from background support to intervention to diversion—meant that its technical field of action was city-wide. Whether in school, youth centers, public place, or the home, the collaborative was looking for referrals from adults observing young people in all of those spaces.
The department also had assigned officers to schools but the creation of the YFSU led to a greater number of SROs (now YROs) and YOOs. Some costs appear to have been offset by state funding, but the department had made a long-term commitment to Safety Net and the staffing of the YFSU.

The department’s approach involved organizational change, both structurally and culturally, even if the latter particularly was a work in progress. A special unit was created to accommodate the police commissioner’s vision. Although the main coordination was performed by the YFSU, the expectations for handing youth interactions by officers more broadly were changing as a necessary correlate of the collaborative’s efforts. Trainings addressing youth development and behavior were introduced both in the YFSU and department-wide. Involving people from outside the CPD in making personnel decisions for the YFSU was not a typical way of engaging external stakeholders. The case coordination approach and multi-level hierarchy was also being adopted by other outreach-oriented initiatives, primarily in the Community Relations Unit.

Sensemaking needs were high in Safety Net. Bringing the police together with agencies possessing expertise in youth development and a focus on strength building rather than catching and sanctioning youth involved a significant culture clash. Professional cultures and identities intersected with a history of negative interactions between the police and city youth, some of whom are now professionals in the youth service field. Participating agencies, particularly the non-CPD members, needed to be persuaded that the police could be partners in this endeavor. CPD personnel had to be able to widen their understanding of their profession so that the viewpoints, approaches, and language of their partners were comprehensible and valued. How to conceptualize misbehaving young people was a central issue. Sensemaking needs were also high
in the YFSU, as its members strove to make their current work feel compatible with powerful occupational identities. Patrol work is still the gold standard of a core policing identity, and many aspects of their role in the YFSU and Safety Net were in tension with patrol’s traditional, reactive approach.

Although calibrating the relationships among the partners was an important ongoing endeavor, the police did appear to appreciate that in most ways it was they who must shoulder most of this change, as it is they who were moving closer to how the other agencies and organizations approach children and youth. The need for the police to bridge gaps was understood early on. Sensegiving was being conducted by the police commissioner as well as YFSU leadership. The commissioner conspicuously involved other agencies and stakeholders in the move to reinvent the department’s approach to youth, involved himself in the steering committee, and had been a vocal marketer of the initiative. At the unit level, the YFSU lieutenant and the director of outreach and community programs had worked to manage the occupational, organizational, and role identities of sworn personnel in the unit. YRO and YOOs continue to struggle with the tension between traditional and more collaborative notions of policing. The lieutenant engaged in both discursive and symbolic sensegiving. Discursively, he provided explicit direction and information to his personnel. He also worked to communicate his support for them as police officers, tying their non-traditional (or proactive) roles to their more deeply rooted conceptions of themselves as sworn officers and crime fighters. The lieutenant was also engaged in sensegiving in the wider department.

Trust and accountability were described as being particularly important to the collaborative. Trust applied to relationships at several levels: among the collaborative members, between Safety Net and the public, and between Safety Net and personnel within those
organizations that were not directly involved but whose buy-in and participation were critical to Safety Net’s success. Trust was based on being able to effectively communicate the purpose of the initiative, a challenge most closely tied to perceptions of the police. Because Safety Net was asking a wide variety of stakeholders to trust the CPD and to allow the police to become increasingly involved in youths’ lives, it was critical for the police to demonstrate its motives and follow through. The backing of the collaborative members was indispensable to legitimizing the CPD’s efforts. The police Safety Net participants were perceived as trying to walk the walk in their pursuit of a new approach, even if there were challenges along the way. Moreover, the CPD had provided leadership without being overbearing. Police personnel outside of the YFSU needed to buy in to provide referrals of the more serious cases; youth center and school personnel saw a wide variety of young people on a regular basis and were needed for referrals of clients that range in their specific level of need. Trust was also closely connected to communication challenges; as trust increased, legal privacy restrictions were less often used as a blanket excuse for avoiding information sharing.

As noted before, the presence of certain qualities is not necessarily tightly coupled with view of whether an initiative is understood as a “partnership.” In the case of Safety Net, most participants did indicate they saw Safety Net as a partnership. This was generally viewed as an emergent quality based on the attributes noted above. However, partnership and its associated elements were viewed as dynamic, with perceptions of the initiative changing to some degree as the state of relationships ebbed and flowed. Members could, theoretically, differentially perceive Safety Net as a partnership or not, but in practice it appeared that Safety Net had achieved a status where variation took place within the label of partnership rather than across its threshold. In this vein, partnership could manifest at a basic or foundational level, but it could also reach a
higher level. When a level of personal warmth and professional trust had been achieved, the collaborative was described as exhibiting a kind of transcendent quality of “true” partnership.

Figure 7.1 summarizes the application of the conceptual model to the CPD’s work with Safety Net.

**Figure 7.1 Conceptual Model Applied to the Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concepts</th>
<th>Related issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Like many departments, the CPD did not exercise a wide range of responses to youth problem behavior. Officers regularly chose between arrest or admonishing youth with no formal follow up. The previous commissioner had closed the juvenile investigations unit, reportedly arguing that youth crime was not distinct from adult crime and that detectives should be generalists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional environment</strong></td>
<td>Until Safety Net, the CPD largely reflected the larger set of traditional policing values and assumptions about young law breakers, and these remain important influences on officers’ thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polity field of action</strong></td>
<td>Leadership at several city agencies were key sovereigns in this process. For the police department to be successful, it needed to convince them that the police were not simply relabeling a traditional enforcement-oriented approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sovereigns were also found internally among the organizations involved. Patrol officers could be reluctant to view youth behavior as contextualized and to change routines. Youth center staff, and school administrators, faculty, and staff were sometimes concerned that Safety Net did not represent change and would bring youth closer to the criminal justice system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents of potential Safety Net clients were also an important source of pressure, as the initiative would not work without reassurance of police motives. Support by non-police partners was critical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical field of action</strong></td>
<td>Safety Net expanded the CPD’s field of action by focusing on prevention in high-risk cases. It also focused on child development research and theory in ways generally unfamiliar in the policing context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The CPD had engaged in organizational-level change around Safety Net. This change was connected to the establishment of the YFSU. The Safety Net model relied on a special unit to coordinate and manage cases. Its approach and hierarchical form were being modeled by other initiatives (i.e., in the Community Relations Unit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of YFSU positions had changed in consultation with Safety Net partner organizations, which were closely involved in selecting personnel for the unit multiple times. The department’s records management system had also been changed to accommodate information being collected on Safety Net clients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sensegiving | Significant sensegiving efforts were deployed by the CPD internally and externally. The police commissioner spearheaded the creation of the YFSU and Safety Net. From the beginning he had solicited input and participation from other city agencies, demonstrated a commitment to a shift in the CPD’s approach to youth, had been personally involved in the steering committee, and had served prominently as an advocate for the initiative and the spread of its model into other areas of the department.

An important sensegiving function was also taking place within the YFSU, as unit leadership and non-sworn staff strove to shape members’ notions of their roles as legitimate police work. YFSU supervisors and non-sworn staff were continually striving to shape officers’ understandings of their work as real police work while also giving them space to change assignments if it was too far outside their comfort zone. |
| Identities | Various identities were important to Safety Net. Leadership personnel displayed more comfort with changes, while YFSU members struggled to maintain their occupational identities as real cops while engaged in work that diverged significantly from patrol duties and traditional policing. Patrol officers were slow to embrace Safety Net. Professional outlooks varied between the police and other organizational members with regard to how problem youth behavior was understood and communicated about, the value of structured measurement tools and quantifying efforts, and other aspects of work styles. |
| Sensemaking | YFSU personnel were being asked to reassess what police work means and how to value the mindsets and approaches of other agencies in reducing youth problem behavior. Their core professional training had not prepared them for their roles, so a number of tools were being applied in the Safety Net context. A key feature of sensemaking at the time of the study was growing more comfortable with uncertainty and change in their role expectations. |
| Meanings of partnership | Trust (based on effective communication of purpose and consistency) and accountability (based on power, voice, shared responsibility, and provision of support) were discussed as important features of a successful collaborative. Trust, the overarching feature, was needed between collaborative members, between Safety Net and the public, and between Safety Net and personnel from the member organizations who were not direct participants. Communication and information sharing were complicated by legal privacy protections, but the extent to which such protections were perceived as cumbersome was mediated largely by the level of trust among the parties involved. Where trust was high, people found ways to get what they needed through other appropriate methods rather than simply being denied any useful insight. The CPD was widely seen as the lead agency but also recognized as generally not dominating or controlling the initiative. The police in particularly wished for more involvement and direction from other members. |
The qualities noted were present to varying degrees and were continual works in progress.

Most participants described Safety Net as a “partnership.” This was generally viewed as an emergent quality but was not a static or singular quality. Partnership (and indeed trust) was viewed as dynamic—depending on the state of relationships; Safety Net’s existence as a “partnership” could ebb and flow. Additionally, partnership could manifest at a basic or foundational level, but it could also reach a higher level. When a level of personal warmth and professional trust had been achieved, the collaborative was described as exhibiting a kind of transcendent quality of “true” partnership.
CHAPTER 8: THE PORT/AREA FOUR

This final relationship examines the efforts by the police to engage a geographically-based population, that is, people living in, working in, and visiting the neighborhood known as Area Four or The Port. Over five months, from October 2014 through February 2015, ten interviews were conducted with CPD personnel, representatives of two organizations operating in the neighborhood, members of a neighborhood association, and community members. Additional information was gleaned from media accounts, reports from city agencies, and other publicly available materials.

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Neighborhood partnerships embody the most traditional and common notion of partnership as envisioned by community policing. Neighborhood-focused policing predates community policing, of course, as iconic images of officers strolling a foot beat characterize a popular idealized vision of American policing. Community policing seeks in part to resurrect an era before the emphasis on rapid response to calls for service helped create distance between officers and the people in their area of responsibility. However, there is considerable evidence that the halcyon days of early policing did not exist, especially for people from marginalized racial and ethnic groups. For example, Walker (1984) criticizes Kelling and Wilson (1982) for portraying broken windows policing as a return to an era when the police were intimately connected to and highly respected by the community, before police cruisers, radio communication, and the allure of professional status pulled them away. In fact, this was a greatly corrupted period in which the police were unalloyed tools of political machines and held in low regard even by members of the dominant ethnic group from which they came (Walker, 1984).
H. Williams and Murphy (1990) similarly critique Kelling and Moore’s (1988) depiction of three major “eras” of policing for failing to address how “slavery, segregation, discrimination, and racism have affected the development of American police departments—and how these factors have affected the quality of policing in the Nation’s minority communities” (p. 1). Therefore, while there is often nostalgia for earlier forms of policing, modern community-based approaches are not a rediscovery of a lost past. Rather, “such a revitalized form of policing would represent something entirely new in the history of the American police. There is no older tradition worthy of restoration. A revitalized, community-oriented policing would have to be developed slowly and painfully” (Walker, 1984, pp. 88-89).

Examining the idea of partnership between the police and a neighborhood is inherently challenging, as it requires confronting another highly abstract concept—community. Who is considered part of the community and who is excluded? How varied are the perspectives that exist and how can these be identified and accounted for? Greene and Taylor (1988) observe that the constructs of community and neighborhood were not adequately operationalized by early community policing advocates, and the points of and rationale for intervention often went unspecified. This rocky terrain has implications for geographically-based police partnerships.

This chapter provides insight into the heterogenous nature of partnership involving the police, demonstrating the diversity of perspectives on what it means to work with the police and the multiplicity of important actors both within and outside of the department.

CONTEXT: THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The neighborhood known as “Area Four”85 was not always so named, and, indeed, it has once again relinquished this moniker. Some history: since 1793, this geography had been part of

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85 The neighborhood is also referred to as Area 4 or Area IV. There is no consistency, even within official city reports.
the larger neighborhood called “Cambridgeport” (“The Port,” for short) until the Cambridge Planning Board separated the city into thirteen planning areas in 1953 (Feijo, 2015b). Some of the designations coincided with existing neighborhoods; for those that did not, the number stuck, at least for a while. The *Cambridge Chronicle* identifies five such neighborhoods including Area 4 (Feijo, 2015b), but only one other (Area 2/MIT) appears to still be in regular use, and Area 4 has been most prominently branded. Over the years, the generic name rankled some residents, who felt this numerical description belied the close-knit quality of the neighborhood. Although the name was used by the city, neighborhood, and police, some residents had come to know it as a police designation only, perceiving it as denigrating to be formally identified in this way (Levy, 2015b). A movement to officially change the name began in 2003.

Despite the energy of advocates, there was no unanimity regarding the desire to rename the neighborhood. An upscale pizza restaurant and café opened in 2011 bearing the neighborhood’s name “as a signifier of cool” in a place long known for being “tech-driven” (Levy, 2015b). Charles Sullivan, executive director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, indicated at the time that he was not surprised by the lack of agreement, noting “Place names are remarkably fluid in Cambridge, where the population turns over rapidly and there are few definitive geographic boundaries” (Levy, 2015b). In 2015, the Cambridge City Council voted eight to one to rename Area Four “The Port,” one of two names selected by city councilors from options suggested in a survey of Cambridge residents (the second being “The Old Port”) (Levy, 2015a). The neighborhood is therefore referred to as The Port in the remainder of this chapter except where interview participants or other sources call it a different name.

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86 The name change has also been dated to the 1940s (cf. Levy, 2015b).
A study by the city’s Community Development Department published in 2010 describes the neighborhood as mainly residential (over half of its land) with “a healthy mix of other supporting uses” (Cambridge Community Development Department, 2010, p. 17). Nearly one quarter of the neighborhood is commercial; the rest includes educational institutions (parts of MIT, public and private K-12 schools), public open space, parking, and other uses. Exhibit 8.1 displays the contours of The Port and indicates the neighborhood’s location relative to the rest of the city. For reference, the main campus of MIT is located in area 2, along the Charles River separating Cambridge and Boston. The Harvard Square “T” station is at the meeting point of areas 6-10.

**Exhibit 8.1 The Port Neighborhood, Cambridge, Massachusetts**

Source: Cambridge Community Development Department (2016, p. 24)
In 2010, The Port’s residential population was 6,792, which accounted for 6.5 percent of the city’s total population of 105,162 (Cambridge Community Development Department, 2016). The Port is a diverse neighborhood, racially, ethnically, and economically. The proportion of Black residents is 2.4 times greater than the city overall (27.8% vs. 11.7%) and the percentage of White residents is just over three quarters that of the city (50.5% vs. 66.6%). The percentage of Hispanic residents is 62 percent greater compared to the city (12.3% vs. 7.6%). Education and economic indicators are lower compared to the city average. Of residents 18 and over, 18.7 percent had a high school education or less, compared to 15.4 percent of the city overall, and 68.8 percent had a bachelors or graduate degree compared to 74.7 percent in the city. The striking difference is median family income, which is 27.6 percent lower in The Port ($72,177 vs. $99,642). Poverty is also higher. The percentage of female-headed households with children is 65 percent higher than the city average (63.5% vs. 38.5%). The poverty rates of families and people are also higher in The Port: 20.1 percent vs. 10.2 percent for families—nearly double the city rate—and 21.1 percent vs. 15.0 percent, a rate 41 percent higher than the city’s. Figure 8.2 summarizes these data.

At the time of research, Cambridge was experiencing a commercial development boom (Weintraub, 2013), with much of it occurring in Kendall Square, which overlaps somewhat with The Port. Kendall Square, “an area roughly defined as everything within a 10-minute walk of the Kendall T station,” had become an enormous draw for high-tech business (Blanding, 2015). When industry left the area in the 1940s, MIT, which is located in Kendall, began developing it.

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87 The figures provided below are taken from the Neighborhood Statistics Profile published by the city (Cambridge Community Development Department, 2016). The authors use data from the American Community Survey 2010-2014.

88 A Boston Globe article cites a starker contrast: $59,384 a year, compared with $96,127 (Johnston, 2014), 38.2% lower.
leading the federal government to see the area as a promising location for a NASA scientific
campus. The city cleared land in anticipation, but the project fell through, with Kendall being
laid barren and known by some as “Nowhere Square” (Blanding, 2015). Through the city’s
subsequent determination to attract electronics companies from the Route 128 corridor and
MIT’s strategic efforts, Kendall Square rose to its current heights in the innovation economy.

This had created tensions in neighborhoods like The Port, as poverty and disadvantage
sit—sometimes literally—in the shadow of corporate wealth as building become a constant fact
of life. The Boston Globe reports that, in the midst of this commercial boom, a local homeless
shelter was at capacity and a food pantry was serving three times the number compared to a
decade earlier (Johnston, 2014). Residents were concerned with higher housing costs, loss of
affordable local commercial establishments, and increased traffic (Johnston, 2014). The
innovation economy had also generated more tax dollars, funding for social programs, and
opportunities for job training and employment, but these did not address the systemic problems
facing many residents. Moreover, fewer jobs for locals were in the offing than might be
expected, as firms typically contracted to outside firms many jobs that would be accessible to
residents with lower education levels (Johnston, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Port</th>
<th>Cambridge</th>
<th>The Port compared to Cambridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>6,792</td>
<td>105,162</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black residents</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>237.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White residents</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic residents</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>161.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school education or less</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>121.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors or graduate degree</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median family income</td>
<td>$72,177</td>
<td>$99,642</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed households with children</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>164.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family poverty rate</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>197.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual poverty rate</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>140.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across neighborhoods in the city, The Port consistently ranked above average in counts of reported violent and property crime. The Port ranked second in the number of street robberies and aggravated assaults based on five-year weighted averages of data from 2010-2014. The neighborhood ranked fifth in residential burglaries and in larcenies from residences in 2015. The police department correlated the higher than average rate of housebreaks to the neighborhood’s higher than average population density. Included in The Port were multi-family homes, large apartment buildings, and two public housing developments. Thefts from motor vehicles were sixth highest in The Port in 2015, and the neighborhood ranked third in auto thefts based on a five-year average. Drug crime had long been higher in The Port relative to other areas and ranked second in “drug incidents” in 2015. The CPD attributed this to the neighborhood including Central Square, a busy residential and commercial center that “tends to be a hotspot of drug activity” (Cambridge Police Department, 2016, p. 74).

However, when rates are calculated using each neighborhood’s individual population as the denominator, The Port consistently ranked first across crime type. An exception was residential larceny, for which it ranked third. That the CPD’s crime reports provide counts rather than rates of reported crime in city neighborhoods is likely due to a number of factors. For example, each neighborhood has a small number of residents, ranging from 832 to 12,991 and averaging 8,089, and the number of incidents for many crime types is also small (statistically speaking).

As will be discussed further on, homicides in The Port—unsolved homicides in particular—continued to be an important source of tension between the neighborhood and police.

89 Data on rape was not provided by neighborhood. The five-year average of rape across the city was 22 reported incidents, with the vast majority being acquaintance rape, domestic rape, or contact rape (e.g., the offender “picked up” the victim at a bar or otherwise lured the victims into a situation where they could be attacked). Generally, one or two “blitz” rapes were reported each year (Cambridge Police Department, 2016, pp. 21-22).
The city had averaged two homicides per year since 1990, down from almost five per year between 1960 and 1989. Between 1990 and 2015, there were “56 people murdered in 51 incidents” (Cambridge Police Department, 2016, p. 18). Ten murders occurred in The Port specifically between 1990-2015, comprising 18 percent of the city’s total (Cambridge Police Department, 2011, 2016). The department indicated that there was a total of forty-eight cases, fifteen of which were “still under investigation or remain unsolved” (p. 18). Of the fifteen, six cases date from 2000 and four involve murders that took place in The Port (27%): one in 2015, two in 2002, and one in 1991. These homicides and unsolved cases, while numerically are quite low statistically, had led to ongoing criticism of the police by some in the neighborhood.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD SERGEANTS PROGRAM

Policing neighborhoods, unlike relationships with communities of interests, have no distinct point of origin, and so it is between the CPD and The Port. In this sense, the relationship has existed since there was a neighborhood and a department to police it. As with any neighborhood in the city, interactions with the police may be with regularly assigned patrol officers, patrol officers specially or temporarily assigned to the area in anticipation of or response to an event or incident, detectives investigating a crime, police personnel at a public meeting regularly scheduled or in response to an incident, or various personnel from special units at a public event, in a youth center, at school, or during a home visit. How to proceed, then?

The point of entry to the relationship between the police and The Port was the CPD’s Neighborhood Sergeants Program (NSP). This program began in the 1990s under the previous police commissioner as a quintessential community policing initiative. Its purpose was to provide a supervisory point of contact for members of each neighborhood in the city. According to the department’s web site:
In order to have a more diverse group within the police department participating with the outreach activities in the neighborhoods, a system of geographic responsibility was established in 1997. The officers involved are assigned to each of the City’s neighborhoods (Neighborhood Sergeants) and each of the five sectors (Sector Lieutenants). These supervisors are primarily responsible for much of the outreach and problem-solving activities in their neighborhood or sector. (Cambridge Police Department, nd-a)

The NSP offered a broader view of the community than might be achieved by starting with patrol. The personnel involved possessed both supervisory and patrol-level experience. It also represented a targeted engagement initiative focused on community partnership.

Sergeants were originally assigned to these roles because the department could not fill the spots on a voluntary basis. As a result, some personnel in that role were not invested, and it was once again made a voluntary position. There appeared to be no formal training associated with the program. When asked about NSP activities, a police representative stated that it was “not a huge amount” of work (Port 9). Activities typically involved the sergeants helping to organize a neighborhood meeting or two each year and attending various other meetings that were held by other organizations or groups in the neighborhood. A police participant noted that many of the neighborhood sergeants looked to get on the agenda of a neighborhood association at a regularly scheduled meeting rather than hold their own, which was seen as involving a lot of work for a very small audience unless a serious crime or trend had occurred.

In The Port, regular updates were provided during monthly meetings of the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition, a longstanding neighborhood association. The fifteen-to-thirty-minute presentation would cover crime trends and other notable events in the area and the city as well as comparisons between the level of criminal activity in The Port’s and other neighborhoods and why those differences might exist. Attendees would also have the opportunity to ask questions. A typical audience attending the meeting was reportedly between fifteen and thirty people; if, for
example, the meeting featured a special guest, attendance might jump to fifty or sixty. A serious crime problem or incident such as a series of shootings or homicide might also generate higher attendance.

Neighborhoods were reported to vary widely in their level of organization and activity. Plans to revamp the NSP were being made in light of the implications of this variation (Port 9). The Port was known for being a more active neighborhood, and the sector lieutenant and neighborhood sergeant assigned to the community were highly involved. There were few opportunities for regular information sharing or formalized interactions among neighborhood sergeants and sector lieutenants from the different parts of the city. Meetings among them were rare events. Coordinating regular meetings was described as too challenging because personnel had different shifts and there would be a need for overtime to pay those not on duty at the time of a meeting (Port 10).

Constituents of The Port had several ways to contact the neighborhood sergeant and sector lieutenant. NSP sergeants’ emails were listed on the CPD website; this channel reportedly saw regular but not frequent traffic, bringing in an email once every week or two. The lieutenant and sergeant also sought to engage community members at Area 4 Coalition meetings. At these gatherings, the lieutenant handed out his business card, which included his cell phone number and email address. He had found that although he received very few calls to his mobile phone, people seemed to appreciate the gesture, knowing they could contact him if needed. People also reached out directly to the neighborhood sergeant. The lieutenant noted that people had come to see the two of them as a team over the years.
PARTNERSHIP

The relationship between the CPD and The Port was understood in numerous ways. It was often characterized by tension but also exhibited meaningful engagement. The more abstract comments made in interviews with CPD personnel in Chapter 5 about the department’s recognition of the need to change its more traditional, enforcement-based approach grows more tangible when looking specifically at The Port. Police leadership’s spotlight on greater community engagement, problem solving, and embracing diversity shines brightly here in some respects but not everything is illuminated. Strong relationships had formed between certain community constituents and the police; however, suspicion, tension, and seemingly intractable hostility were reported to exist in the same space as trust, comity, and change.

What emerged from interviews and other sources of information was a diverse narrative in which trust building was occurring along different tracks, with different groups, at varying speeds. Along one track was the NSP, which was described nearly universally by non-police participants as a positive and productive initiative that owed its success in The Port to the high level of engagement by the sector lieutenant and neighborhood sergeant working in the neighborhood for nearly a decade. This relationship was primarily with community organizations. Along another track was the neighborhood’s relationship with CPD patrol officers and investigators. Although characterized as slowly improving, there were historical and current concerns that complicated trust-building efforts, particularly with younger people of color.

Characterizing the Relationship

Building Trust and Communication: The Neighborhood Sergeant’s Program

The NSP represents an important step forward for the police department’s relationship with The Port. Attending the meetings of various neighborhood organizations and associations reportedly helped NSP personnel build relationships and trust among these groups (Port 10). A
non-police participant talked about the ways in which the neighborhood sergeant and sector lieutenant had gained the trust of the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition. This came through their consistency in attending coalition meetings and demonstrating their interest in getting to know people and their desire to help. There was a sense of their sincerity of purpose; participants from the coalition felt confident that accurate information about the police department’s actions or role in an event would be provided. This was particularly helpful during challenging periods, such as the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing, as the perpetrators’ family lived in the neighborhood, which was the scene of much law enforcement activity.

The creation of the NSP under the previous police commissioner contributed to a marked shift in how the group relates to the CPD (Port 2). Before the program’s advent, the department would assign individual officers to connect with neighborhood groups. This was characterized as more informational, with an officer sent “just to come to the neighborhood meetings and give reports and updates and be a little bit of a liaison . . . the officers didn’t necessarily see themselves as part of the group” (Port 2). When the NSP was created, it was seen as a turning point by this participant.

It created a more formal relationship. . . . They came formally to the organization and said, “I am your neighborhood sergeant, I will be at all of your meetings, here is my cell phone number, here is my work number, you can call me if you, if something comes up.” It was a whole different kind of relationship . . . So whenever that began, that was the point at which there was a total shift in how we related as an organization to the police. (Port 2)

A member of the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition indicated that trust was enhanced by the perception that the sergeant and lieutenant were honest. In this context, honesty referred to the willingness to criticize the behavior of other police officers who had behaved badly. A tangible manifestation of the coalition’s trust in the NSP was demonstrated by the coalition giving the sector lieutenant access to the group’s email list. The coalition had created an email list that
included about three-hundred people in the neighborhood in order to enable the exchange of information. It was moderated by two coalition members to prevent incorrect or inflammatory messages from being sent out. The sector lieutenant was permitted to post directly without going through the moderators, providing a direct and unfiltered communication channel to the people on this list.

One of the concerns noted by policing scholars is that neighborhood associations may not be representative of the larger community. Current members and police participants observed that this was also true of the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition, whose members were described as older and less diverse than the neighborhood’s population. However, The Port was an active community with numerous organizations and groups meeting; representatives of various groups reportedly attended other groups’ meetings or served on their boards, and the police did not only attend the coalition’s meetings. Another important example of the NSP’s trust building was the relationship forged with a prominent neighborhood organization, the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH), a settlement house founded in 1902 that now provided programming to assist and empower “vulnerable individuals and families in Cambridge and beyond” (Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, nd-b). At the time of research, the sector lieutenant served on the MFNH board of directors and was not the first to do so. An earlier sector lieutenant had also served on the board and, in a testament to the relationship, was posthumously made the namesake for an annual award—the Lieutenant Kenney Spirit Award—given by the organization “to a Cambridge resident who most embodies the spirit, values and devotion to the Community that Lieutenant John Kenney gave to Area IV, the MFNH and Cambridge” (Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, nd-a).
It was more difficult to view the police department monolithically given personal relationships with officers. A police participant noted that the groups they work with in The Port always called the neighborhood sergeant and sector lieutenant by their first names rather than using their ranks and last names. This was viewed as a positive display of trust: “We’re now people, we’ve at least broken down that barrier and we’re recognized that way” (Port 10).

*Reckoning with the Past and Forging a New Path: Policing in The Port*

The relationship between the CPD and The Port was not limited to the Neighborhood Sergeants Program. As noted, a wide variety of activities takes place in any neighborhood. Two important types of activities are typical patrol and interactions occurring as a result of major incidents of violence. Stories emerging from interviews and news accounts suggest that the nature of both types of interactions had changed for the better over the last fifteen or so years but that problems also remained. Participants addressed the problematic nature of some officers’ engagement with young men of color. There had also been a number of unsolved homicides and a perceived lack of police attention to shootings and other violence occurring in the neighborhood. This section describes these tensions and then Discusses ways in which the relationship between the CPD and The Port was said to be evolving.

During the 1980s and 1990s, there was reportedly a greater enforcement focus to policing in The Port. Drug crime was a high priority, but the community was not seeing the same attention paid to solving cases of violent crime or to working with the community to prevent such incidents. A non-police participant described the relationship between The Port and CPD as “adversarial,” particularly with younger individuals (Port 3). There was a perception that undercover work and raids were being emphasized while murders in the neighborhood were not being solved. As a result, the participant described, “Over the course of the ‘90s, you have
people in the community kind of going, ‘Okay, what’s going on here?’ (Port 3). There continued to be a perception of overpolicing and harassment among some in the community. While participants noted that in some cases negative feelings toward the police go back generations, in the present day it was perhaps the younger residents, particularly young men of color, who were most distrustful of the police. As a non-police participant explained,

There is still those that do not trust the Cambridge Police Department at all. Just keeping it real. There are those that think that there is still a racist element in the Cambridge Police Department that is targeting specifically young Black men in the Area Four community. So, that is an aspect of the community relationships. Although it’s working, it’s still a lot of work to be done to gain the trust of young men of color in this community. It’s a tough one. I will say that to these young men it’s their perception, but the reality is perception is real, quite frankly. So if these young men are perceiving, for lack of a better word, injustice being done to them, there’s not much you can do but try to change that perception, because that perception is real to these young men. (Port 7)

Participants described accounts of general perceptions of harassment as well as more specific examples of problematic policing. Young residents of color interviewed by a local newspaper described being profiled and harassed regularly (Feijo, 2014a).

Violence and concerns about the police department’s handling prevention and handling violence were critical issues in The Port. Such concerns went back decades, and two unsolved murders committed recently in The Port speak to community frustrations. In June 2012, a 16-year-old girl was shot in a drive-by incident, and another drive-by shooting killed a 22-year-old man in July 2014. Both victims were African American. Investigators into the young man’s murder have stated that his shooting was not random, while the high school sophomore was not the intended target (Feijo, 2015, Feb. 19). Whatever the circumstances, although multiple individuals were present at both scenes, in neither case had witnesses come forward. Fear of retaliation, desire to protect others from attention by law enforcement, not wanting to get
personally involved, and mistrust of the police were among the reasons given for this prolonged silence (Feijo, 2015a).

A week after the July 2014 shooting, the police commissioner, a deputy superintendent, the CPD’s lead investigator on the case, and the Middlesex County district attorney attended the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition meeting to speak about the homicide and the efforts being taken in its aftermath (Feijo, 2014b). The police commissioner told the audience that foot patrols would be increased in Area Four and two adjacent neighborhoods. “‘When something like this happens,’” he said, “‘we feel like we let you down, and we don’t want to be in that position. . . . We are here to support you. We are here to protect you. We are here to serve you, and those words mean something to us’” (Feijo, 2014b). One coalition member participating in the study saw this as a purposeful attempt by the CPD to publicly display the department’s accountability to the neighborhood. But community members at the meeting were upset and frustrated. They called for a heightened police presence, noting that they do not see officers in the neighborhood as often as they used to; one resident indicated that in the last half-dozen years she had only seen foot patrols after a crime had occurred. Although the police commissioner insisted that foot patrols had been assigned to the neighborhood as long as he had been with the department “people shouted, ‘No’” (Feijo, 2014b).

Greater police involvement was not universally desired. In an article in the Cambridge Chronicle appearing a month following the murder, young neighborhood residents of color expressed reservations about increasing the police presence in the area (Feijo, 2014a). A study participant from the Area 4 coalition present at the meeting with CPD leadership described the different perspectives on police promises of increased presence and visibility in the wake of the shooting.
[A deputy superintendent and the police commissioner] were saying, “You’re going to be seeing a lot more police presence in the neighborhood” . . . and people were ambivalent about that. We don’t want to feel like we’re kind of being overseen. So on the one hand, yeah, we could feel safer with seeing police around in cars on foot, on bicycles. On the other hand, is the police presence in our neighborhood increasing to watch us? So it was a total double-edged sword. (Port 2)

Community members were said to have challenged CPD leadership, calling out questions like “How do we know we can trust you?”

Another non-police participant brought up this ambivalence, suggesting that there appears to be a growing feeling that a greater police presence would be a helpful action but that the July 2014 homicide had perhaps obstructed the progress that had been made between the neighborhood and police (Port 1). Referring to this murder, another participant indicated that “the whole city” knows who did it (Port 8). Indeed, CPD officials had noted that between fifty and one-hundred people were present at the time of the shooting (Feijo, 2015a). The CPD’s director of communications indicated that in both this case and the June 2012 homicide the victims’ closest associates and those at the crime scene were not cooperating with the police (Feijo, 2014e; Saltzman, 2014). Moreover, a non-police participant noted that for both homicides “there was a sense where everybody knew . . . that somehow nothing happens,” that these crimes would go unsolved (Port 1). The participant described a conflict experienced collectively by the community in which they understood the reasons people might not want to report their information to the police but also lamented the fact that in the absence of this information the crime was unlikely to be solved (Port 1).

Certain investigatory efforts by the police may play a role in continued mistrust. Non-police participants also discussed a situation following the July 2014 murder in which the CPD had distributed posters with the names and photographs of young men from the neighborhood who had criminal records. It was said to be intended as an alert to community members that,
given their pasts, these individuals may potentially be involved in retaliation for the shooting. A participant working at a neighborhood non-profit organization working with some of the individuals pictured indicated that the poster had been put up not only in Cambridge but in the greater Boston area. The organization’s clients were described as distressed because they felt they were being unfairly characterized and put at risk as they were trying to put distance between themselves and past behavior and maintain employment.

However, while tensions and suspicions remain, interactions between the police and neighborhood have also changed in positive directions over the years. A non-police participant described a critical shift following a fatal shooting in 2002 in The Port (Port 3). The murder had taken place at about 7:00 p.m. on a June evening (Cambridge Police Department, 2012, p. 21); many people were described as being close enough to have heard or seen the event, but nobody came forward with information. The resulting frustration among many residents led to community organizing efforts. These included a forum with the police commissioner at the Boys & Girls Club, the preparation of a “community manifesto” describing community priorities, the establishment of community liaison and street outreach positions at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, and the Area 4 Pride Day, an annual event that continues to the present. For a time, residents in The Port also reportedly had the opportunity to meet with the officers who wanted to serve their next six-month shift in the neighborhood. This was a community-based effort to educate residents on the structure of CPD patrol shifts and to hold officers accountable to people on their beat as well as providing an opportunity to get to know some of them. This process no longer takes place.

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90 This murder remains unsolved as of April 2018 (Cambridge Police Department, 2018).
A new perspective was taking shape in the community, one in which the police could be a partner rather than an adversary. A number of non-police participants noted problems with violence and the nature of policing in The Port but argued that community members recognize this evolution, and residents are reportedly more willing to assist the police. Non-police participants noted that the community’s reaction in the wake of a drive-by (non-fatal) shooting in a local park was dramatically different than in the past. One indicated that “despite how upset they were, they said we wouldn’t have even been in the same room together [with the police] ten years ago” (Port 1). This was a “phenomenal shift for a community that no one talked to the police” (Port 3). The idea of the police was shifting to that of a community service that residents could work with and whose priorities they could help direct (Port 3).

Recent events appeared to support these comments. Information provided by the public was reported to have contributed to the arrests of suspects in two murders that occurred in 2015. Cambridge Day quotes several CPD sources who attribute public cooperation to the CPD’s efforts to improve community relations, particularly in The Port (Levy, 2015c). Better relations were thought to have led community members to feel more comfortable communicating with police about the recent murders. A participant employed by a neighborhood nonprofit described the vastly improved approach the CPD had taken to working and communicating with the community.

The Cambridge Police Department has come a long way in terms of how they deal with communities of color. I will say that . . . I like the commissioner. I think that he has done a wonderful job trying to set his department up to be…partners in the Area Four community. (Port 7)

Some departmental efforts focused specifically on The Port; others are broader initiatives, such as the creation of the Youth and Family Services Unit, the Safety Net Collaborative, homeless and mental health outreach, the Youth Police Academy, and other efforts (Feijo, 2015a).
While crediting the CPD for these new initiatives, it would be myopic to attribute improvements solely to changes in the department’s approach. The cultural shift in attitudes toward the police in the early 2000s was described as driven by the community rather than the police (Port 3). Regarding the recent willingness of community members to provide information on murder cases, a CPD deputy superintendent suggested that frustrations from the lack of information on other unsolved murders contributed to closer ties among the police and businesses and residents of higher crime areas in the city (Levy, 2015c). This contrasts with the notion of departmental community policing efforts as the impetus for cooperation. Moreover, these steps forward should not suggest that police-community relations were now wholly amicable. As a non-police participant stated, “There’s still a lot of anger and a lot of fear. I don’t know that people feel protected as they should” (Port 1). Although there had been improvements, people in the neighborhood were also upset about the fact that violence was occurring and the nature of the CPD’s response.

The intersection of progress and continued tension was visible following the July 2014 shooting. In the wake of this homicide and in the tradition of grassroots organizing after the 2002 murder, a group of the victim’s friends created an organization to spur positive action in his memory. Originally named after the victim, the group changed its name to The Goree House, a reference to the House of Slaves on Gorée Island, Senegal. Participants offered different estimates of the group’s core membership, ranging from eight to fifteen. They reportedly also worked with Harvard Law School students. According to the group’s Facebook page, their

91 While the island and its buildings were involved in the transit of enslaved Africans, the nature and extent of the location’s role are subjects of controversy. What is not disputed is the symbolic value of the island as an important “place of memory” (Fisher, 2013).
mission was “to improve the quality of life in our community.” They further explain, “Something important that has come out of the murder of Area IV Cambridge resident [victim’s name]. Recently, many of the Area IV young adults, who were good friends with [the victim], have started an organized grassroots movement to uplift the young people in the community.”

In the summer of 2014, Goree House organized a community event in conjunction with the MFNH shortly after their friend’s murder. A street outreach worker from the MFNH was mentoring the group, several of whose members were familiar to staff. Participants noted that early on the group was reluctant to engage with the police despite overtures by the CPD. However, influential people in the community subsequently tried to encourage them to be more receptive to these offers. A police participant explained that the group made contact with the CPD by email the day before the event but did not expressly invite the police. It appears that someone in the neighborhood had advised them that since the police were trying to work with them and could come to the event whether or not they were invited, why not use the opportunity to engage with them. The group was reported to have named a few officers they wanted to attend (Port 9). A community participant helping to support communication between Goree House and police argued that the CPD’s approach was distinct from how a more traditional department may have handled the situation. In anticipation of the event, the police wanted to know what Goree House members would prefer the police to wear (e.g., uniform vs. informal department clothes like polo shirts). The participant’s reaction was, “Where else in the world does the police ask” (Port 3)?

92 https://www.facebook.com/TheGoreeHouse/info/?entry_point=page_nav_about_item&tab=page_info accessed 7/7/16
Nature of the Relationship

Participants discussed their views of the meaning of partnership, whether their organization or the neighborhood itself had a “partnership” with the police, and whether this relationship, however characterized, was with the department as a whole or with specific individuals. As discussed above, trust, communication, and a balancing of how police intervene in community members’ lives featured prominently in how participants described relationships between the police and neighborhood. When asked specifically about the nature of partnership, many participants focused on the need for mutual engagement and benefit. How this was operationalized, however, differed across interviews. This was also intertwined with thoughts about the extent to which a relationship was linked to the CPD as an organization.

A non-police participant employed by a local non-profit organization initially spoke of a need to create a program with another group for a partnership to exist. Upon further discussion, the participant indicated partnership did not require the actual creation of a program but rather “an ongoing agreed upon formalized connection” (Port 1). Such a relationship would involve consistency, a common focus, and a set of shared goals. This participant described a number of different relationships with the CPD, including one with an officer from the Youth and Family Services Unit. This officer, who was raised in the city, had participated in the organization’s programming when growing up, and knew another employee of the organization from childhood, was a frequent presence and point of contact when questions or trouble arose. Other officers also came by regularly. The participant had also had positive interactions with the sector lieutenant from their attendance at various meetings in the community. As the participant noted, “I do feel like there’s a trust that’s ongoing because of the history and the knowledge that they have of the neighborhood and of the organization” (Port 1). Still, this did not translate into a “partnership” with the CPD.
I wouldn’t say that there has been an ongoing agreed upon through-line relationship with the Cambridge police. I think, yes, we know who you are, we can be called, but I think that’s more dependent on individual [people]. I think a partnership is institutional, and it’s not about like, you know, does [the participant] know [officer’s name]? . . . I think a partnership is about institutions coming together on a common goal. (Port 1)

This sentiment was reflected to some degree by the fact that although the participant knew the sector lieutenant as a result of being at a number of common events this individual had no knowledge of the NSP and had not heard of and did not recall having met the neighborhood sergeant.

Another participant, an employee of the MFNH, used a different term than partnership to describe the organization’s interactions with the CPD but spoke of this relationship in very positive terms. “I think it’s a very strong working relationship and I think that it’s worked for the benefit for not only the Margaret Fuller House, but also the Cambridge police and most importantly for the community” (Port 5).

A member of the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition talked about partnership as requiring “a two-way street” and being “a mutual relationship that involves trust and respect” (Port 2). The neighborhood sergeant and lieutenant had “definitely forged what I would call a partnership,” this participant reported. But there were questions over whether and how this connected to the CPD as an organization, again raising the question of whether this was a personal or institutional connection (Port 2). For another coalition member, it can be said that individual relationships led this participant to generalize positive perceptions to the police department. When asked whether interactions with the neighborhood sergeant and lieutenant had led to a change in how the police department was viewed, the participant responded “Absolutely” (Port 6). “I never thought all police were terrible people honestly,” the participant said, “I just had no positive experiences with police ever. I was very active in demonstrations against Vietnam, I’ve had, they were trying
to hit me with [inaudible], and I’ve been arrested a couple times, so that was my lefty orientation towards the police. . . . I appreciated them coming when there was a problem, but I just had no reason to particularly think about them in a positive way” (Port 6). Despite these positive characterizations, however, this participant was less certain about the quality of the department’s relationship with the neighborhood itself (Port 6). Although a positive set of personal experiences had led to a sense of “partnership,” this characterization was narrowly construed as between the coalition and the department. This contrasts with the other coalition member’s observation that a partnership requires a more institutionalized connection. Both members saw benefits of the relationship while also pointing out additional potential areas for attention.

The police participants described the NSP relationship with the neighborhood as beneficial but were critical observers, both of the police and the community. They did not characterize these relationships as partnerships in full or at all. One indicated that the relationship can be a partnership “at times” and lay much of the responsibility for the ebbing of this quality at the door of the department (Port 9). There was a sense that opportunities are being missed to more productively engage the neighborhood. Another police participant felt that the relationship is not a partnership, because it lacks the quality of being a “two-way street,” particularly with regard to information being provided to the police. There was insufficient “return value” (Port 10). This was connected to trust; although reasonable limits on the provision of information were recognized, it was not viewed as acceptable for community partners to then “slam the cops for not doing the work when you’re not giving them any help or any information or even just point them in the right direction” (Port 10).
IDENTITY

A recurring theme affecting the relationship between the police and neighborhood involved negotiating the police occupational identity in different roles. Tensions between the police department and neighborhood seemed to contribute to the depersonalization of police officers, where the police identity was perceived as diminishing the inherent humanity of the individual. The police identity was multifaceted and involved—but was not limited to—such factors as the uniform (whether or not it was worn, whether a less formal version like a departmental polo was worn), the presence of a gun, whether the officer grew up in the neighborhood, and the manner in which an officer communicated with the public.

For the police, it could be challenging to know precisely how to thread this needle. Sworn personnel wanted to be able to represent their department and be seen as fully human by the public, but particular settings could lead them to examine these facets as separate domains. In the *Cambridge Chronicle*, a member of the CPD command staff who had worked in the neighborhood as a counselor before joining the department in the 1990s discussed how the shift to her role as a police officer alienated the youth with whom she had worked. “‘You are now the enemy,’” a young person is quoted as saying (Feijo, 2014a). A member of the department described the process of figuring out how to best present oneself at a community association meeting and suggested that carrying a weapon was more closely connected to the participant’s identity as a police officer than being in uniform (Port 10). When members of a community association asked that the participant not wear his firearm, it was uncomfortable to comply: “Well, it is part of my job, it’s who I am, you know?” Ultimately the participant agreed. The challenge was wanting to “still be a representative of the police department but yet make sure that they knew I was an actual person” (Port 10).
Relationships in which trust had developed could be complicated when the uniform—or in some cases “riot gear”—was more prominently displayed. One member of a neighborhood association recalled when the police arrived at the scene of a protest.

Here’s [the sector lieutenant]’s in charge and here’s [the neighborhood sergeant] dressed up in the storm trooper outfits that they have and they come marching in and I’m thinking “Oh my god, this is horrible,” because this is exactly the police presence I don’t want to see is this militarized, it was creepy. And I happened to be standing not far from where [the sector lieutenant] was, and given that context, I said to him, “Am I allowed to say hi to you?” and he burst out laughing. He said, “Of course.” And for me, it just broke that internal tension . . . just having that human interaction with [the sector lieutenant] where he made me less nervous. (Port 6)

The capacity for the neighborhood sergeant and lieutenant to criticize the actions of their fellow officers also lowered barriers. Here, trust came from these officers’ ability to possess a more nuanced sense of professional responsibility than steadfastly toeing the blue line. Their condemnation of colleagues’ poor behavior served to increase their perceived “humanness” while also burnishing their perceived high standard of professionalism. While these non-police participants saw closer relationships as enhancing officers’ status, a police participant offered a different experience. He related a conversation in which community members indicated they were upset by a perceived lack of officers walking in certain parts of the neighborhood. When the officer named specific officers doing so, residents reportedly said, “No, we’re not talking about them. . . . We know [that officer] . . . we’re talking about the other cops” (Port 10). The officer’s interpretation was that once community members identified with an officer, they no longer conceptualized that person as a police officer.

In a neighborhood where police-community relations had been often characterized by distrust, the development of trust may endow an officer with a position of privilege but also erode the officer’s identity as an officer to members of the public. It is impossible to draw any conclusions in this research context about whether or how such a shift in public perceptions
affects an officer’s professional identity and actions; however, this observation may have implications for interacting with the community given the many facets of an officer’s job. For example, will a trusted officer retain that trust after making an arrest or being involved in an altercation with someone from the community? If an officer’s identity in the community is based more on “soft” policing, does the public view enforcement actions as illegitimate or too “cop-like”?

Similarly, although the nature and expectations of policing in Cambridge had changed considerably in recent years, not all officers had adopted a more community-oriented approach. Police officials noted that there was often miscommunication between the police and members of the public and that oftentimes officers wanted to speak with young people, not because the officers had suspicions but to get to know them and explain what the police are doing (Feijo, 2014c). However, encountering “old school officers” might spoil the efforts of the “new school officers,” leading youth and other residents to avoid contact with police and view their attempts at contact skeptically (Feijo, 2014c).

**DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

While community policing is a multifaceted concept that relies on its particular context to give it shape, a core feature is its focus on how the police interact with the neighborhoods within its jurisdiction. The police are viewed as a means by which these various geographically-based communities can build, enhance, or maintain the informal social control that is key to an area’s health and problem-solving capacity. This theoretically occurs through partnership between the police and neighborhood, as they work together to come to agreement on local norms and a shared sense of priorities.
However, this is no easy plan, since neither the police nor particular neighborhoods can be understood properly if viewed homogeneously. A clear consensus rarely exists across and even within neighborhood groups about the appropriate foci of police efforts. And the police are involved in neighborhood affairs in numerous, not necessarily convergent, ways. Moreover, it is certainly not clear that the nature of patrol has shifted significantly from how it was conducted during the Progressive Era. The CPD appeared to be struggling with the complexity of policing a diverse neighborhood in its patrol and investigative capacities. This is not to condemn either effort overall in The Port, as data collection was insufficient to make such claims. More narrowly, findings suggest that some segment of community members had pointed out practices that ran counter to the police commissioner’s collaborative vision and challenged the department’s legitimacy. As with the other partnerships addressed, the gap here appears to be related to a lingering traditional approach in which there are more concrete distinctions made between police and the community they serve.

The Port neighborhood in Cambridge was arguably one of greater complexity than most in the city. It was a diverse area that had seen significant development in recent years associated with its proximity to MIT and the innovation economy. It had for decades experienced higher rates of crime compared to other neighborhoods. Unsolved homicides from earlier times as well as more recent contributed to a sense of abandonment by the police, while some residents also objected to over-policing of young people of color. Numerous accounts in local newspapers supported the comments of interview participants in this regard. There appeared to be an incremental shift taking place over the last decade-and-a-half toward greater communication and engagement between the CPD and neighborhood, but it was not occurring evenly or in a linear fashion. The NSP was a longstanding and positively received program, but regular patrol efforts
and investigations received lower marks among some residents and stakeholders. Indeed, participants and news account often characterized beat policing in The Port as harassing.

Although created before the appointment of the police commissioner present at the time of the study, the NSP arguably fit quite well with his overarching strategy of widespread engagement of organized elements within the city. There were several non-profit and neighborhood organizations that served as sovereigns for the CPD. Like the relationship with the GLBT Commission and other city entities, connecting with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House and the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition, for example, provided a helpful connection to the department—even if the nature of this connection was not always clear, as noted above. A larger set of community residents came out to neighborhood meetings following incidents of violence but may not serve as consistent sovereigns. Moreover, community messages were not always consistent. In the wake of a recent homicide, community members sometimes differed in their views as to whether an increased patrol presence was necessary or counterproductive. The study did not delve deeply into tensions between longstanding Cambridge residents living in The Port and newer residents drawn by tech- and pharma-related jobs. It is likely that commercial and industry leaders were key sovereigns as well, but interviews did not generally address them.

Conceptualizing policing in The Port as primarily taking place through the patrol of a confined geographic area is too narrow. To be sure, patrol—and the interactions it involves with community members—was a prominent and critical feature of any department’s operations. It is not novel to observe that policing takes place at numerous levels, but it is useful to reiterate it here, as it emphasizes policing’s heterogeneity of practice and highlights the tensions and contradictions occurring in The Port.
With regard to the technical environment, it is unclear precisely how the range of policing efforts in The Port compared to other neighborhoods. Patrol, NSPs, crime analysis, investigations, and other efforts took place in each neighborhood across the city. Community policing funding from the federal government and state was reportedly plentiful during the 1990s and had made possible many public gatherings in support of community engagement. The perception was that when funding dried up, the programming largely ceased, although new events have sprung up (e.g., Area 4 Pride Day). While the NSP applied a classic community policing program, it appeared that youth engagement in the neighborhood might be more rhetoric than reality among patrol efforts. The department recently started providing in-service training on procedural justice and legitimacy, which applies to the concerns of bias and harassment voiced by community members in The Port.

In terms of integration into the department’s fabric, it does not appear that the NSP was structurally or strategically connected to patrol, investigations, or special unit initiatives like Safety Net. The NSP personnel assigned to The Port had experience in investigations and crime analysis, but the possession of such skills was by happenstance rather than any specific formal mechanism.

Similarly, sensegiving appeared to be minimal or conflicting. Although the NSP promoted the police commissioner’s vision of community collaboration, the extent to which its operations and planning were coordinated across other neighborhoods or with other departmental units in the same neighborhood is unclear. Top police leadership strived to convey a message of concern and investment in the neighborhood when violence demands a response, but the desired effect could be diminished when questions arose about everyday policing by officers in The Port. If conceptualized as coming from NSP personnel, The Port sergeant and lieutenant provided a
consistent presence and engaged approach to working with neighborhood sovereigns. The longevity of a positive relationship with the NSP in The Port perhaps serves sensemaking’s retrospective process in ways that offer community members a vision of the CPD’s legitimacy, even if problems continue to exist.

The number of participants does not allow for a comprehensive exploration of identity in The Port; however, data collection pointed to a broad theme of humanization/dehumanization. In media accounts, young people of color in The Port, especially males, had stated that they were regularly racially profiled and harassed by the CPD. These perspectives that were generally supported by non-CPD participants. Discussions of the police spoke more to the notion of “reputation,” which speaks to how one is seen by others as opposed to “identity” which refers to how one sees oneself.

In terms of sensemaking, media accounts and interviews suggest that the public’s perceptions of the police were complicated. Comments by police personnel indicated that some members of the public saw the police as the enemy or as otherwise problematic. One CPD participant suggested that once the public grew familiar and comfortable with an officer, that individual was no longer seen as the police. Officers’ dress and gun were also noted as important both to the public’s perception of officers’ humanity and to officers’ occupational and perhaps organizational identities. This comment was cautionary, conveying that any effort to assert authority or coercion as an officer would serve to diminish the officer’s status in the public’s eyes.

Like other partnerships examined, how the relationship was characterized did not necessarily reflect ideas about “partnership.” The relationship between the CPD and The Port was characterized as one involving significant tension over a long period but that was in some
ways also changing, slowly, for the better. The NSP had been a boon to the neighborhood and the department’s relationship with The Port. There appeared to be less affection and trust between the neighborhood and patrol officers.

Despite having relatively few interview participants, interviewees offered a variety of ideas about the nature of partnership and whether this label applies in The Port. Participants’ comments included thinking that (1) there was partnership between the CPD and specific organizations but not the neighborhood more broadly, (2) there was partnership with the NSP personnel but not the CPD overall, (3) the CPD had a good relationship but no “partnership” with the neighborhood lieutenant because a “partnership” was seen as institutional not personal, (4) the NSP-neighborhood relationship was dynamic—a partnership “at times” but not always (a CPD participant saw lost opportunities by the department), and (5) the NSP-neighborhood relationship was not a partnership because it lacked mutual return on investment for police, especially with regard to information sharing. Figure 8.3 summarizes this discussion.

**Figure 8.3 Conceptual Model Applied to The Port**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concepts</th>
<th>Related issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>The Port was a site of complexity and contrast. It was more diverse than the city overall. Longtime residents shared the neighborhood with innovation economy transplants. High levels of development on its fringes reflected its proximity to MIT and Kendall Square. Crime in The Port was higher than in other neighborhoods, and there was higher poverty and lower educational attainment compared to the city as a whole. Tensions existed between the police and some neighborhood residents, particularly young men and youth of color. Perceptions of overpolicing (e.g., harassment) and underpolicing (e.g., ineffective prevention and investigations of violence) existed side-by-side. In particular unsolved homicides and violent incidents continued to stoke tensions. The NSP was a bright spot and had been heralded by important community voices but generally occurred at the organizational rather than street level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional environment</strong></td>
<td>Neighborhood-based policing is the classic locus of community-oriented policing. But neighborhoods or other geographic areas of any size are sites of great complexity, because nearly every form of policing takes place there.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Moreover, patrol remains the province of traditional policing approaches (i.e., “real police work”) and is resistant to change. The CPD struggled to provide basic policing services in more collaborative ways.

**Polity field of action**

Neighborhood organizations are important sovereigns for police leadership. The NSP provided departmental contacts at level of middle management. There were also vocal community members not necessarily associated with organized groups who came out in the wake of violent incidents, but these may not be stable enough to be considered sovereigns. A possible exception was a group of young men of color who recently organized a neighborhood advocacy group following the murder of their friend, providing a new if uncertain pressure on the police.

**Technical field of action**

It is not clear whether resources dedicated to The Port differed notably from other those applied to other neighborhoods. Community policing funding had once reportedly made numerous public gatherings possible, but these were perceived as less frequent as federal and state money has dried up. The NSP reflected a classic community policing approach, but allegations of biased policing of youth of color might require more attention if agency values of community engagement were to be seen as more than ceremonial.

**Department**

The CPD appeared to be engaged in numerous efforts that are at best minimally connected. The NSP offered a higher-level set of contacts and interactions than seeking out officers on the beat. But the NSP and patrol did not coordinate activities, nor did it appear that NSPs from different neighborhoods regularly communicated to share information and gain from each other’s experiences. High profile partnerships such as Safety Net also did not seem to be working with the NSP.

**Sensegiving**

Sensegiving is challenging to describe given the limited number of participants. The police commissioner and leadership attended community events and spoke at meetings following major crime incidents. Given what appeared to be a lack of coordination across CPD efforts and longstanding concerns about the nature of patrol activity in the neighborhood, leadership’s sensegiving efforts might be characterized as inconsistent or lacking, both internally as well as with people living, working, and visiting The Port. If the NSP is looked to more specifically for sensegiving about the CPD’s approach to The Port, the sergeant and lieutenant’s consistent and responsive participation in community organizations’ activities were intended to convey a highly engaged vision of policing.

**Identities**

Again, the number of participants does not allow for a comprehensive exploration of identity in The Port. Data collection pointed to a broad theme of dehumanization, however. In media accounts, young people of color in The Port (esp. males) stated that the CPD had been racially profiling and harassing them, perspectives that were generally supported by non-CPD participants.

Discussions of the police spoke more to the notion of “reputation,” which speaks to how one is seen by others as opposed to “identity” which refers to how one sees oneself.

**Sensemaking**

Media accounts and interviews suggest that the public’s perceptions of the police were complicated. Comments by police personnel indicated that some
members of the public saw the police as the enemy or as otherwise problematic. One CPD participant suggested that once the public grew familiar and comfortable with an officer, that individual was no longer seen as the police. Officers’ dress and gun were also noted as important both to the public’s perception of officers’ humanity and to officers’ occupational and perhaps organizational identities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meanings of partnership</th>
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<td>Like other partnerships examined, how the relationship was characterized did not necessarily reflect ideas about “partnership.”</td>
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Despite having relatively few interview participants, there was a variety of ideas about the nature of partnership and whether this label applies in The Port. Participants’ comments included thinking that (1) there was partnership between the CPD and specific organizations but not the neighborhood more broadly, (2) there was partnership with the NSP personnel but not the CPD overall, (3) the CPD had a good relationship but no “partnership” with the neighborhood lieutenant because a “partnership” was seen as institutional not personal, (4) the NSP-neighborhood relationship was dynamic—a partnership “at times” but not always (CPD participant saw lost opportunities by the department), and (5) the NSP-neighborhood relationship was not a partnership because it lacked mutual return on investment for police, especially with regard to information sharing.
CHAPTER 9: ANALYSIS

The previous four chapters explored conceptualizations of partnership within the Cambridge Police Department and three specific initiatives that were characterized as partnerships by the police commissioner and others within the department. We are now in a position to compare and contrast these partnerships and to consider what they tell us about the connection between the police commissioner’s vision of partnership and understandings of partnership in the CPD and externally more broadly.

CROSS-PARTNERSHIP ANALYSIS AND CONTEXTUAL GROUNDING

Institutional Environment

The institutional environment of the Cambridge police appeared to be split—broadly—in two. A set of values related to community engagement, data-driven analysis, procedural justice, and public legitimacy is most visible at the leadership level. At the line level, a more traditional set of values about what constitutes legitimate policework continues to exert greater influence.

Broadly characterizing the influence of the police institutional environment, Crank describes, “Police officers make decisions from an individualizing, responsibility assigning, instrumental rationality in which to frame issues of culpability and justice” (Crank, 2003, p. 201). Officers assume that problem behavior comes from rational choices rather than one’s broader context as well as the situational pressures shaping choices in the moment. Although there may be no single police occupational culture, a broad worldview of people choosing a career in policing may reasonably be expected to differ in key ways from that of people working in public health, education, and the like.

Although these values and assumptions seem to be more prevalent at these different ends of the organizational hierarchy, the distinction between personnel is not perfectly clean; some
line officers expressed community-focused sentiments, while traditional notions of policing continue to influence leadership in various ways. Given the national policing environment, in which professional era policing still drives many if not most departments while community and problem-oriented policing is practiced around the edges, this is consistent with the larger field.

What is distinct in Cambridge is the extent to which leadership, driven by the police commission, was actively pursuing a collaborative approach characteristic of a more modern idea of policing. While this study did not directly observe other police departments, participants often described the Cambridge police’s approach as different from that of many of their peer organizations. Concrete actions taken by the CPD often contradicted reactive approaches. Where the garment’s stitching was more visible was in the experimentation and lack of strategy for clearly communicating a different set of values throughout the organization. This should not be taken as criticism as much as recognition that the department has been forging ahead in uncharted territory. Change is messy.

Each partnership reflected the tension between paradigmatic understandings of policing. Although the CPD may have been more open to formal collaboration with the LGBTQ community than many other departments back in the 1990s, the fact that only one officer had reportedly been willing to publicly identify as gay and the way the liaison was selected suggest a limited embrace. This is more characteristic of a machismo culture engaged in incremental growth. By the time the second liaison was assigned, the broader social culture had shifted and with it, to a degree, the police institutional culture. The notion of working with the GLBT Commission had become one liaison assignment among many, and it was no longer expected to be filled by an openly LGBTQ officer. The institutional environment had changed sufficiently to incorporate a previously abject group merely a part of the bureaucratic structure. Not that it had
changed entirely; training and policy change were still seen as vital steps so that the police (and the larger city administrative culture) would treat LGBTQ individuals with respect in their official interactions. LGBTQ individuals’ status as legitimate members of the community remains a work in progress, even in Cambridge.

Safety Net also reflects the persistence of a traditional set of policing values focused on youth at the situational level at the moment that they break the law being challenged by an institutional outlook that embraces behavior as highly contextualized. Only in the department’s recent history has it engaged meaningfully with other city agencies and community partners to think about youth offending as a symptom to be addressed rather than an opportunity for officer discretion. The focus among leadership and within the YFSU is now on young residents’ risk for offending, and their actions in this direction do not appear to have simply repackaged an enforcement orientation. Various efforts, such as giving outside non-police agencies decision making power over police personnel decisions, is anathema to professional policing. Still, the professional values and assumptions underlying Safety Net are new and perceived as novel within both the CPD and the field more broadly. Partly as a result, Safety Net is localized administratively within a special unit and is still being sold to the officers in patrol.

Safety Net illustrates the power of the institutional environment in shaping occupational norms. Officers were being asked to shift a fundamentally unexamined understanding of children and youth. Their tendency to view young people in categories of good or bad taps into the institutional value of the law. The other Safety Net agencies and organizations hold professional understandings of youth that are based on psychological knowledge of youth developmental processes and sociological knowledge about the impact of social context on group behavior. Their professional institutional environment does not prioritize the law as a way of
understanding youth; while individual accountability is not ignored, a broader worldview underlies these identities.

It is perhaps in The Port where the tensions between the older paradigmatic approach to policing and the police commissioner’s vision reflecting a more inclusive set of institutional values are most visible. Policing in The Port could be characterized as quite traditional. The NSP is a fairly commonplace community policing-style program that, like the department’s other liaison assignments, is highly dependent on the specific individuals occupying the roles. Fortunately, the NSP personnel working in The Port at the time of the study were quite engaged, with the lieutenant serving on the board of an important community organization, as his predecessor had. Unlike the other partnerships examined, the CPD’s work with The Port is not focused on a particular demographic group or problem. Like policing in many neighborhoods, it is multifaceted and unwieldy, involving all of the various functions of the department.

Nationally, there were nearly 53.5 million contacts between police and members of the public 16 or older in 2015 (Davis, Whyde, & Langton, 2018, p. 9). The vast majority of contacts involved police-initiated actions (traffic and street stops, arrests), traffic accidents, or resident-initiated contacts in which a crime or non-crime event was being reported. Only 3.1 percent of total contacts involved participation in neighborhood watch or other anti-crime programs. This means that contacts much more frequently take place on the street with patrol officers. It is safe to say that the experience in Cambridge is unlikely to differ dramatically. As a result, even though the NSP has built trusting relationships with many of the organized neighborhood constituents it is interactions with patrol officers that dominate this particular partnership. There is concern among some in the neighborhood that young men of color are being regularly
harassed by officers. This would certainly contradict both the commissioner’s vision and the Safety Net approach to youth who are at risk for or are engaged in offending.

Local Context

CPD accounts describe a city landscape that changed significantly, if incrementally, over more than three decades. In initial interviews, CPD personnel often focused on two main tracks: leadership by the longstanding city manager in both his fiscal stewardship and his purposeful building of a collaborative administrative team heading city agencies, and the departmental reforms and evolution that resulted from the shift from civil service police chiefs to appointed police commissioners. These factors were seen as creating an organizational and municipal culture of collaboration that was buoyed by an ample city budget, offering slack resources to agencies to engage with external partners and to make use of the many services available within and around Cambridge. Participants often described Cambridge as a unique city with a particular style of policing, one that recognized that there were myriad vocal groups demanding a responsive police department.

Participants were asked about the changes they had seen during their careers at the CPD. These conversations also often addressed the broader city context. As numerous participants had grown up in Cambridge, many provided insights about how the city had changed over several decades. As professional era policing was being criticized nationally, the CPD was also changing. In the early 1990s, the department started to rhetorically embrace community policing and engaged in several structural changes that were ostensibly intended to support a shift toward greater community engagement and problem-solving. Among the most prominent were efforts to reduce the insularity of CPD leadership. Appointing police commissioners from outside the

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93 Police participants rarely spoke about the city council.
department brought in chief executives who were not professionally raised in the Cambridge bubble. Ending promotions to the rank of captain began the process of phasing out a position that had long been seen as a career-topper, where one could finally put up one’s feet (apparently literally, according to some accounts) and wield power with little accountability.

The police department’s leadership (i.e., commissioners) sought to institute reforms and lead the department away from traditional policing toward community engagement. Commissioners were described as “change agents” by study participants. Still, other facets of the department have not moved in sync with top leadership, and it took several years for what was described as a resistant leadership structure to retire for a leadership culture change to take place. It should also be noted that some non-police participants observed that even the appointed commissioners did not always fully embrace community input and engagement. It does not seem like a coincidence that the partnership-focused agenda was taking place under the commissioner at the time of the study and not before. He was likely brought on because he was seen as having the capacity to identify opportunities for change and to implement them, but this seemed to be contingent upon the structural changes that offered him a viable path. For example, if the captains had remained, their presence—both in terms of their authority in the hierarchy and cultural sway—might well have undermined another change agent.

In terms of the specific partnerships, each started in the midst of tensions between the police and the “communities” with whom they would work. The police liaison role to the LGBTQ community was requested because of perceived insensitivities and poor treatment of these community members by police. Safety Net came about in recognition that youth in the city have not always been treated appropriately when they are exhibiting problem behavior. Given more sophisticated understandings about youth development and the circumstances of youth who
come into contact with the police, it was recognized that the police had been defining youth through a narrow legal lens focused on their overt behavior. This approach was failing struggling young people and, because of historical racial disparities in criminal justice practices, was perceived by some in the city as discriminatory policing.

The department’s approach produced an environment of distrust toward the police among the agencies serving as Safety Net’s core membership. Certainly, the police were also suspicious of these agencies, but the direction of change was toward human service, education, and public health perspectives, not toward law enforcement. It is important to note that it was the police commissioner spearheading change. This may partly be an effect of having a commissioner appointed from the outside than a locally-raised chief.

It is difficult to comment directly on the circumstances under which the NSP started. It is likely that many neighborhoods have had relatively sanguine or positive relationships with the CPD, but The Port has not. So, while the NSP was not created specifically to address relations with The Port, it was implemented in a neighborhood with a contentious relationship, similar to the other partnerships.

**Polity Field of Action**

Partnership does not just happen. The default organizational strategy of police departments arguably remains insular. In particular, looking to strategies and tactics beyond enforcement is a stretch for many if not most departments. The experience in Cambridge suggests that there are both pushes and pulls that, on one hand, pressure the police to engage in collaborative work and, on the other, provide a culture that allows for collaboration to take place.

The city manager was often credited with purposefully building a city management team that was highly competent and able to work together. It is not possible to say whether his
The police commissioner’s comments were pointedly focused on the community as sovereign. It is unlikely if not impossible that the entire community plays such a powerful role; however, the commissioner appeared to be using the broad idea of community influence and accountability to guide the department toward widespread engagement. He mentioned numerous specific groups being served by various collaborative initiatives. Indeed, the city is composed of various groups who have organized and become vocal in promoting their causes, pressuring the police to work with them to address their concerns. The “Cambridge way” speaks to the organized public as sovereigns who have created an environment demanding of a collaborative policing approach.

The department’s work with the GLBT Commission came about in part because a well-organized and politically active constituency (i.e., the LGBTQ community) requested a CPD liaison. Given what is known about these origins and the present-day operations of the relationship, it is unlikely that the liaison position came about through an analytical process by the CPD. There were no data being collected specifically on issues of concern to this community, and the request took place during a time when being LGBTQ held even more risks both physically and socially compared to today. This was only one group and initiative, but it illustrates the influence of a vocal broader community expecting responsiveness from the police (and city).

Safety Net’s experience suggests that sovereigns were perhaps most critical in terms of their demands on the police to put their money where their mouth was. Safety Net was described by the police commissioner, other police personnel, and non-police collaborative members as
coming from the commissioner’s desire for a more productive organizational approach to working with youth problem behavior in the city. Despite the unanimous bestowal of credit to the commissioner, the situation is likely more complicated. One would imagine that the public and city agencies had made their displeasure with the department’s interactions with young people, perhaps even expressing this during his interviews for the position. However, in some cases there was also great reluctance among both leadership and line staff at these agencies to work with the police given this history. This would suggest pressure from sovereigns, but a somewhat muddled set of demands.

What appeared to be clearer was the role of these sovereigns in conferring legitimacy to the department’s efforts. The police commissioner recognized the need for key city departments to work with the CPD if desired strategic changes were to take place, as the department would be seen as engaging in surface change without the imprimatur of the city’s human service, public health, and school leadership. This was important at both the leadership and line levels of these agencies. The Department of Human Service Programs and Cambridge Public Schools also have personnel who have been reluctant to embrace an initiative involving the CPD. Here we can see efforts on the part of the YFSU and other departmental stakeholders to act with agency to alter sovereigns’ ideas about police legitimacy. The CPD appeared not only to recognize the Safety Net agencies as important sovereigns but to demonstrate the good faith required by giving them even greater influence over the department, for example, through real influence over personnel decisions in the YFSU and deference to the clinical expertise of the Cambridge Health Alliance psychologist. The message was that the police were to change in the direction of their partners, not for partners to accommodate police needs, decisions, or worldviews, even though the
initiative was centered in the CPD. In one sense, then, the police were being required to follow rather than lead.

The public is also a key sovereign to Safety Net itself. The collaborative needs the support of the city’s parents and guardians of young people still living at home, who want a more supportive approach to their children. Without it, clients’ families will not sign the required release. Although this impacts Safety Net, this should be seen primarily as suspicion of the CPD. Concerns about Safety Net are connected to the potential for punitive action by the police in specific cases and, more broadly, for net-widening. Distrust of the police can be multi-generational in Cambridge as elsewhere, affecting families’ willingness to participate.

A countervailing pressure has come from internal sovereigns at the CPD. Collective bargaining agreements have made patrol relatively more rigid compared to special units in what can be asked of personnel. Safety Net and other collaborative initiatives have generally been the province of special units as a result of the influence of patrol and the unions in part because they do not reflect what is traditionally considered real police work. Departmental and YFSU leadership have been striving to work around these confines to some degree by educating patrol officers about how Safety Net and how it can support their work in terms of reduced workload and other benefits.

Within The Port, the CPD is responding to the many sovereigns present in many neighborhoods, including a diverse population with different perspectives and needs, neighborhood and local organizations, and a variety of commercial enterprises. An important issue to consider regarding Port sovereigns is that the department appears to convey different messages to the same constituencies. Because there are a variety of CPD units with different roles operating in the neighborhood, at times people experience contradictory messages. For
example, general city-wide communication by the department and strong statements of neighborhood support by CPD leadership following violent incidents can be contradicted by negative interactions between community members and patrol and investigative personnel. Perceptions of harassment and suspicions that the department is not doing enough to prevent and solve violence in the neighborhood do not stand still; they are noted across people and groups in the neighborhood and beyond, affecting sovereign’s assessments. This suggests that certain groups (e.g., lower income people of color, especially young males of color) have not achieved sovereign status in the department or at least not with all internal components.

Because the department’s engagement with The Port is a more diffuse relationship, encompassing many forms, there is greater room for conflicting needs and sovereigns. The residents are variously organized. The Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition functioned as an important voice but was by some members’ admission not representative of the wide range of groups living in The Port. Neighborhood-based organizations like the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House also spoke for the community. MFNH is in a unique position in that they have had a sworn CPD representative on their board for many years. But these organized voices appear to be heard mainly by the neighborhood sergeant and sector lieutenant in the NSP. Whether these voices regularly reach patrol officers and other CPD personnel is not known, but NSP personnel described a low level of coordination between them and other departmental efforts. Because patrol officers were not interviewed about The Port, this study cannot speak directly to their experience of sovereigns in their sphere of activity. It is likely that their supervisors’ expectations are most salient in directing their actions.

In sum, sovereigns need to be considered at several points in a department’s organizational approach to collaborative efforts. Sovereigns can influence at least three aspects
of partnership: (1) the choice to engage in collaborative work, (2) the scope of membership (those with whom the department partners), and (3) actions taken by participants. The first refers to the powerful voices calling for the police to engage in partnerships, either as a core organizational strategy or in specific instances or to avoid doing so. The second involves the particular people, groups, or organizations expected to be involved or excluded. Sovereigns may or may not be direct participants (or potential ones). Lastly, actions taken (or not) by an initiative’s direct participants are likely to be influenced by sovereigns’ expectations. The specific sovereigns involved at each point and the extent of overlap are highly bound by context.

Technical Field of Action

The CPD’s technical field of action was characterized as benefiting from the city’s stable and robust financial position. Cambridge’s flush coffers and wealth of local organizations and resources were touted from the police commissioner on down through the organization in general terms as well as in ways that positively affected the department’s capacity for collaborative work. The source of the city’s literal good fortune most frequently cited was the longstanding city manager. Shortly before the city manager was appointed (he was the assistant city manager for several years beforehand), the state passed Proposition 2 1/2 in 1980, which limited the amount of money jurisdictions could raise through property taxes (Massachusetts Department of Revenue, 2007). As a result, in 1981, Cambridge’s bond rating was suspended by rating services concerned that the city would be unable to make its payments (Lewis, 1990b). Ratings have increased since then, and in 1997 the city received Moody’s Investment Service’s highest rating and an AA+ rating from Standard & Poor’s (Emery, 1998). In 2018, the city reported 19 straight years of receiving the highest ratings from the three major credit rating agencies, Moody’s, Standard & Poor’s, and Fitch Ratings (City of Cambridge, 2018). Higher bond ratings signal to lenders that cities are low-risk borrowers, leading lenders to issue better borrowing terms (e.g.,
lower interest rates), spurring community investments and development. This has allowed Cambridge to fund numerous municipal projects (Liu & Yang, 2015).

The bond ratings and their associated quality of municipal resources was tied directly by some CPD participants to the quality of policing. Personnel were expected to provide “triple-A service,” which suggest the kind of customer service-style policing similarly evoked by references to “the Cambridge way.” This language also dovetails with the police commissioner’s use of investment metaphors in regard to partnership. The strength of the city’s finances was tied not just to the quality of services but to the department’s ability to provide a set of services that other departments might find challenging. Personnel spoke of being able to assign personnel to a variety of endeavors beyond basic policing tasks, such as being able to assign detectives to regional or grant-based initiatives, whereas other local departments were described as often having trouble maintain this kind of extra-jurisdictional work. In addition, given collective bargaining agreements stipulating that patrol be fully staffed before personnel can be assigned to special units, the fact of a consistently staffed Community Services Unit with its dual sub-units dedicated to targeted outreach to youth at risk for or engaged in offending (Safety Net), homeless individuals, people experiencing mental health concerns, seniors, and the business community is a testament to the department’s budgetary security.

Some CPD participants specifically argued that, while useful, ample slack resources were not necessary for collaborative work. For example, the CSU/YFSU lieutenant heading Safety Net acknowledged the benefit of a resource-rich environment but said he encouraged other departments to work in whatever capacity they could with the resources available in nearly every

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At the time of the study, the unit was staffed by 24 individuals: 17 officers, 2 detectives, 2 nonsworn personnel, 2 sergeants, and a lieutenant.
municipality, such as the schools and agencies that can identify and assist youth experiencing or at risk for behavioral problems that bring them into contact with the police.

The GLBT Commission had to work within budgetary constraints, but the initiatives involving the police liaison did not appear to be hampered by the commission’s limited funding. This may well have been the case were the commission in a community with fewer resources; a police department may have been unable to implement the trainings in such circumstances. It is less clear what part the department’s budget played in The Port. Assigning supervisory personnel to liaise with a neighborhood would not appear to require significant resources.

The technical environment also includes the research and ideas relevant to policing and public safety being produced in the field. Although these ideas are theoretically available to any department, it would be naïve to suggest that there are no constraints on their access and implementation. Even if leadership is interested in developments in the field, to some degree agency resources may limit the available time and staffing required to engage with them. Cambridge had a police commissioner with the ambition and capacity to appreciate and implement collaborative initiatives. To the extent obstacles arose, they arguably involved the organizations’ structural constraints related to how patrol personnel may be used.

Each of the three partnerships fit well within community policing perspectives. Safety Net is also expressly engaged in a problem-solving approach, as it has expanded the focus on youth misbehavior from one focused on traditional police work to a contextualized, collaborative effort. The technical environment of the CPD expanded as a result of its collaborative work. Research on the psychological and emotional health of youth played a significant role in promoting Safety Net. The police liaison to the GLBT Commission reached out to prominent transgender advocacy organizations when preparing the department’s gender identity policy.
Department

Findings suggest two key themes concerning the police department’s organizational mechanisms related to partnership: that partnership in the CPD is the province of special units and within the higher echelons and that partnership initiatives differ in the degree of their integration within the department.

**Partnership as the Province of Special Units and the Higher Echelons**

The police commissioner framed partnership as something the department was increasingly trying to do but recognized that this was not standard practice, either in the field generally or in the CPD specifically. He directly discussed using partnership in terms of an evolving process that had no blueprint and required the department to expect ambiguity and change as they experimented and needed to rely on their ability to apply lessons learned. It is necessarily uncertain. Issues related to the characteristics of partnership (e.g., trust, etc.) are related to but also distinct then from issues of implementation (i.e., how can we best work with external groups for this particular initiative or for a type of initiative). The notion of working collaboratively is thus recognized as an approach that is unfamiliar and requires trial and error.

As learning occurred, the department seemed to find particular models that it perceived as effective or useful: (1) initiatives housed in special units that relied on the wider department (esp. patrol) for effective implementation and a multi-level hierarchy and (2) a liaison model where high ranking or select personnel are assigned to work with a multitude of constituencies organized around specific issues. The liaison model also applies to the NSP, which also assigns one or two personnel to serve as a communication channel with a particular target group (neighborhoods in this case). The liaison model in particularly speaks to the commissioner’s admonition that building strong relationships is a key mechanism for creating productive partnerships (these could arguably be closer to partnerships in some cases, but partnership and
relationships were also viewed as dynamic, so their emergent qualities can ebb and flow). While assigning personnel to serve as a point of contact and source of support is by no means an innovation, the CPD does appear to find this approach useful in broadening community engagement efforts, building relationships, and developing partnerships. The GLBT Commission and Port liaisons appear to be particularly shining examples of this model’s potential.

CPD personnel took note of where partnership was focused and who was being tasked with collaborative work. Discussions with participants in the first part of the study suggested that partnership is a key piece of the police commissioner’s agenda but that this agenda was more amorphous outside of leadership. There are more direct messages about partnership at higher levels, leadership personnel are expected to work with many agencies and organizations and are accountable to the police commissioner, who serves as a powerful sovereign. Below the command staff level, and particularly in patrol, there appear to be less direct pressure to work collaboratively, as departmental structures work selectively to incorporate partnership. Both polity and technical structures tend to emphasize typical patrol duties, with more direct collaborative work reserved for special units.

Although a comprehensive accounting of policy, training, performance review, and other structures was not conducted, information gleaned from interviews strongly suggest that structures promoting skills on how to partner with external entities and performance structures rewarding collaborative experience and skill are minimal at best in most of the department. Expectations for collaborative work were more visibly built into leadership responsibility. The nature of their roles was explicitly oriented toward working with other city agencies and representing the department in organized or formal settings. More formal partnerships were
typically pursued through the use of personnel who are removed from the rank-and-file in some manner.

The initiatives examined found direct collaborative efforts taking place outside patrol. It might reasonably be argued that three examples do not represent the much larger universe of partnerships in which the CPD is involved and that selection and other biases affect the validity of such claims. Still, there is something to consider here. The police commissioner had directly stated during his interview that partnerships are generally the province of special units, as it is these personnel who have the time, expertise, and focus to collaborate in a meaningful and ongoing way with other agencies, organizations, groups, and individuals. Other CPD participants spoke about the advantages of special units as the locus for partnership given their general freedom from having to respond to dispatched calls for service. Patrol officers were said to have widely varying interests in and capacities for engaging in more collaborative activity. Additionally, participants noted the department had not significantly changed its expectations and incentives to prioritize collaborative work in patrol. It appears reasonable then to conclude that while there are exceptions due to individual ambition and interest partnership in the CPD is understood to be the province of specialized units and personnel in supervisory and leadership positions rather than patrol.

We immediately need to add nuance to this statement. Safety Net is an important example of how partnerships may be primarily organized by special units but such work is not confined to the personnel within them. The YFSU is intended to function as a hub and screening mechanism for the department’s work with at-risk youth and young people involved in problematic behavior. Although referrals also come to Safety Net from outside the department, having patrol officers on board is important to communicating the core message of Safety Net—
that youth in the city are seen as works in progress with complex needs and should be supported rather than merely subjected to enforcement tactics or dismissed. Safety Net’s success is expected to be limited if patrol treats young offenders simply as criminals with the same capacity for intent as adults, since city agencies, local organizations, and the public will be more likely to observe a disconnect between the department’s messages. The YFSU lieutenant and sergeant have addressed in-service training classes about Safety Net, attended and spoken at roll calls, and have otherwise made themselves available to patrol officers curious about the initiative or how to handle a particular young person. New recruits are also introduced to Safety Net when they arrive at the department after completing the academy. Such efforts seek to change attitudes and the handling of interactions with youth but do not fundamentally shift patrol structures or routines.

Patrol represents the most traditional organizational component in a field often resistant to change. It is perhaps not surprising then that the CPD has frequently pursued change in special units. But the cultural cannot be separated from the structural. Departmental unions also require attention, as they serve as internal sovereigns and have impacted departmental policy in ways that affect partnership. Collective bargaining agreements in place at the CPD require that patrol units are fully staffed before special units are given personnel. This clearly demonstrates a priority on patrol (and its routines, cultures, and identities) as the more significant undertaking. There are also rules governing assignments within patrol that do not apply to special units. Patrol assignments (e.g., patrol areas) are based on seniority, whereas special units can use other criteria to select and assign members. This allows special units to prioritize specific skills and interests over simply an officer’s tenure at the department. Making collaborative work the province of special units is understandable with this structure in place. This may be problematic if patrol and
special units are at loggerheads about the way to handle an issue, but, alternatively, having a small group of personnel functioning as direct contacts may be a reasonable approach to resource allocation if the larger patrol contingent can be brought on board.

As noted, neither the recruit academy nor the promotional exams to the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant are tailored to Cambridge despite the qualities seen as distinguishing it from other departments. Discussions were taking place between the commissioner and unions about customizing these processes for Cambridge; at the time of the study these discussions were in the early stages, with progress appearing to be slow.

**Structural Variation in Partnership Integration**

In addition to where partnership takes place within the department, there is the question of how partnerships are linked to the department. Examinations of specific initiatives suggested that they are differentially tied to the department through observable structures. Safety Net appears to be increasingly integrated into the department and tied to both polity and technical structures. In terms of polity structures, the initiative involves a unit that was recently created specifically to pursue a different approach to youth problem behavior and involved a continuous reworking of roles within as Safety Net and the unit itself changed. These changes were made collaboratively with other Safety Net agencies. Cross-trainings were conducted to help police and non-police participants integrate their cultures and more clearly communicate. Unit leadership regularly sought buy-in from other departmental sectors. The police commissioner worked with the collaborative’s psychologist to promote Safety Net to local and national audiences through the production of a video on the department’s web site, interviews with media, presentations at professional conferences, and practitioner and academic publications. Safety Net is also being used as a model for other outreach initiatives in the CPD. While Safety Net and its
model apply most directly to a core group of participants, they require the involvement of a much wider set of internal stakeholders as well as the wider public. It seems to be increasingly integrated into the department and, indeed, shaping the department’s approach.

As the collaborative progresses, its efforts are more closely tied to technical structures—trainings are conducted on myriad subjects related to youth development, work flows are increasingly being routinized, sections of existing case management software are being added to include Safety Net data, a technical instrument was introduced to guide decision making, and efforts are being made to measure the collaborative’s efforts statistically.

The police liaison to the LGBTQ community has a long departmental history (two decades). Examination of this relationship suggests some important shifts, primarily in polity structures. Its early incarnation involved the assignment of the lone openly gay CPD officer to a vocal constituency as a result of pressure from that group. Liaison roles appear to have become more common, with the police commissioner at the time of the study requiring command staff and other select personnel to represent the CPD with myriad city groups as a matter of course. The character of the GLBT Commission liaison role thus seems to have changed as the department’s related structure changed around it. While the selection process seems to have remained the same (the police commissioner asked a member of the department to take the assignment), the underlying decision making no longer reflected an essentializing framework.

One is tempted to characterize the position of liaison to the LGBTQ community as a formal departmental structure because of its long history, but this may promise too much. At the time of research there was a perceived lack of clarity regarding the specific connection between the GLBT Commission and the CPD. Although participants universally characterized the relationship with the liaison as highly productive, even extraordinary, they were uncertain
whether the relationship extended beyond the liaison. Expectations for the liaison role had been amorphous from the start and continued to be driven by the personality and initiative of the incumbent. There had been minimal if any discussion about the fate of the position in the event the present liaison had to leave the assignment. There did not appear to be any prevailing reason to expect anything to happen to the role. As with its origins, there continues to be a powerful and vocal LGBTQ community in Cambridge, including within the city council, that would very likely object to suggestions that it end. Still, there seemed to be a need for the position to be more solidly planted in the department’s structure (e.g., a specific set of role expectations, a process for selecting a new liaison when needed, etc.).

In terms of technical structures related to this initiative, training was created and provided to all CPD personnel as well as to all city employees and members of other agencies in the region with which the CPD works. The department had made an organizational accommodation to provide this training. However, although training and policy had been generated, no efforts have been made to assess their effects. While at the time of the study efforts were being made to evaluate Safety Net’s effects, no such efforts appeared to be underway concerning the effects of the LGBTQ training.

It is challenging to address the nature of the CPD’s relationship to The Port, because this exploration did not look at one specific set of interactions as was the case with the GLBT Commission and Safety Net. This case study was focused on the neighborhood’s relationship with the police department in whatever way this was perceived by non-police participants; it used the NSP personnel assigned to The Port as a point of departure, but this was not an exploration of the NSP only.
Some of the participants were employed by organizations with very close ties to the department through the NSP. Others were involved with a neighborhood association that also has a longstanding, if different, relationship with the NSP. But some participants had not interacted with the CPD through the NSP, and even the participants that had also had experiences with and opinions of the department beyond this more formal program. Including a neighborhood in this study was valuable in that it demonstrated the numerous types of interactions taking place between the department and community. The present study suggests that although the CPD appeared to be attending to The Port on multiple levels, Greene and Taylor’s (1988) critique may apply. Police activities in the neighborhood seemed disconnected and pointing in different directions. The face of the department presented to the public was quite different depending on the organizational unit and personnel as well as the audience with whom they were interacting.

The personal and organizational intersected in important ways. Although NSP personnel’s interactions with other neighborhoods were not directly observed, interviews strongly suggested that the relatively success of each NSP is almost entirely based on the individual initiative of the personnel involved. The NSP seemed to be unmoored in many ways from the rest of the CPD. Its creation during the tenure of the previous commissioner did not appear to be associated with formal training or expectations other than to hold periodic community meetings. Moreover, police participants reported few formal linkages to other units or functions in the department. These were by happenstance or active efforts and sometimes characterized as frustrating.

Sensegiving

The CPD’s police commissioner engaged in sensemaking internally within the department, among members of collaborative groups involving the CPD, and with the public at large. The police commissioner spoke of a vision of partnership that is widely engaged, with
community members, other city agencies, local organizations, and the various commissions, boards, and associations that operated in the city. Partnerships are built on trust and involve a mutual benefit for participants. They help to bring down barriers between the police and those entities that can help the police accomplish their goals more effectively. These included reducing the number of offenses occurring, of course, but also enhancing the department’s prevention and intervention capacities. Capacity building was seen as improving the department’s own knowledge and expertise in addressing problems but also growing more adept at leveraging other entities’ capacities. Leveraging did not mean handing off responsibility. The police were to remain involved to learn how to become better problem solvers in that area.

But it appeared that although both discursive and symbolic messages were being employed within the department, neither was as effective as intended. Participants described direct messages that working with outside groups or individuals was valued and observed that the commissioner and command staff were continuously involved in collaborative work. Ultimately, however, structural and cultural factors did not permit messaging to disperse equally throughout the organization.

Partnership was relatively shapeless outside of leadership and special units tasked with collaborative work. Although notions of trust and reciprocity were commonly cited characteristics across the department, these attributes do not communicate specific directions about how to incorporate partnership into daily routines. Partnership had not been expressly defined and operationalized in these other contexts. For patrol, notions of partnership seemed to support traditional ideas of knowing the people and businesses on the beat and treating people respectfully. Those in the higher echelons of the CPD spoke of working toward a way of communicating to patrol that collaborative work could be acknowledged in the same way as
traditional performance indicators such as arrests and citations, but they noted this had not been clearly articulated or systematically communicated to the rank-and-file.

The signal of the commissioner’s sensegiving is more direct with leadership, who are required to liaise with various groups and to interface at higher levels with other agencies and organizations as well as with the public as departmental representatives with authority to speak for the organization. Working with external agencies, organizations, and other actors is a regularly expected part of the role played by command staff personnel. In terms of external audiences, by placing those in leadership positions (and some in supervisory roles) in regular contact with this variety of groups, the commissioner is communicating to these groups that the department is interested in their missions, sees itself as a committed participant in a wide range of community issue, and wants to communicate the importance of its efforts to members of these groups by sending high ranking personnel.

In public view, the commissioner was partnering in ways that convey the importance of community engagement. He was personally involved, leading by example and visibly involving his leadership in such work. There were also attempts to make a wide cross-section of personnel visible at community functions. The commissioner discussed the need for a mutually beneficial situation, but he also recognized the value in casting a wide net. Through liaison assignments and many other initiatives, he had sought to connect the department with the community in a wide variety of capacities. This is both a values statement and a problem-solving approach. He had emphasized that it is difficult to build partnerships effectively without existing relationships (a problem-oriented approach), but this approach certainly communicates more generally that the department is open and responsive.
Partnerships vary in the extent to which they reflect the commissioner’s sensegiving efforts. Safety Net has the commissioner’s attention, and he has made clear commitments to the collaborative. This initiative exemplifies the commissioner’s metaphors of evolution and the necessity of ambiguity. This is visible through unit leadership’s embrace of change (or the selection of leadership already comfortable with ambiguity and change), an idea that unit personnel struggle with. In order to gain the trust of the other city leaders, especially agency heads, he needed to engage in discursive sensegiving, clearly explaining how and why he was trying to change the CPD’s approach. Symbolic sensegiving was also important. The commissioner recognized that how he and the department operated in different spheres needed to convey a consistency of intent. Symbolic efforts can also be seen within Safety Net, as the department appeared to embrace other partners’ input at a meaningful level.

The exploration of specific partnerships also provided the opportunity to observe sensegiving with these initiatives. Sensegiving was also a critical role of leadership and other personnel within the YFSU. Given the pressures of internal sovereigns, the commissioner’s sensegiving had been drowned out to some degree. This required more focused efforts by supervisory personnel closer to line personnel. The CSU lieutenant spoke directly with his personnel about the nature of their roles, that they were not giving up their more traditional police powers or responsibilities, the important and targeted character of their work, and that change should be expected in this unit as they learned more about how to do their work effectively. Civilian personnel were also important in assisting officers in the unit to process how their work fits within the policing cultural narrative and how they could see themselves fully as police while doing work that crossed occupational boundaries.
It should not be overlooked that a major sensegiving effort was being conducted within Safety Net by the non-police partners, particularly the DHSP members and the CHA psychologist. While the police commissioner and CSU lieutenant had communicated the commitment of the department to this new approach, it was incumbent upon the specific YFSU personnel functioning as case managers to make this real through their actions. The non-police members often worked in explicit ways to get police members to examine their deeply held assumptions about young people and related issues.

Discursive and symbolic sensegiving were also evident in relation to the GLBT Commission. The police commissioner’s efforts were primarily symbolic. He had responded to the commission’s concerns about the initial liaison, assigned a new high-ranking liaison with much more extensive experience working as a liaison with city commissions, permitted new policy and training in the CPD, lobbied the State House (through the liaison’s delivery of remarks on the department’s behalf) in support of transgender rights, and attended major LGBTQ events such as the annual Pride Brunch. The commissioner’s approach to assigning the liaison at the time of the study also communicated to the liaison that this was an important assignment but not one fundamentally different from any other liaison role.

Although the commissioner had spoken directly to the members of the commission, the discursive sensemaking primarily fell to the police liaison. Through his regular attendance and participation at commission meetings and work with the co-chairs on initiatives, he operated as a readily available communication channel to the CPD as well as an advocate for the commission’s work. Of course, these efforts can also be characterized as symbolic. As the discussion of the liaison’s identity described, the combination of his commitment and various statuses suggested a rare level of engagement between the police and the LGBTQ community.
In The Port, the commissioner’s sensegiving is highly variable. Those in contact with the NSP have connected the productivity of this relationship to a higher-order message from the top of the CPD. However, the ongoing suspicions regarding investigative efforts and overpolicing of people of color are in tension with discursive efforts at community meetings or more general departmental rhetoric.

How the commissioner’s sensegiving efforts were received by the larger community was a more difficult question given the scope of this study. It is clear that his concern about communicating a consistent message to the public was well founded. Some participants and media accounts reported that young people of color have indicated being treated by the department as though they were not legitimate members of the community.

Findings thus suggest that sensegiving in the context of police partnerships needs to consider its discursive and symbolic approaches and how these are to be specifically deployed at different levels: within the organization, at the partnership level, and with the community. As the Safety Net example demonstrated, sensegiving may need to take place in a swirling cross-current for some participants.

Identity

As expected, identity was important to understandings of partnership in a variety of complicated ways. Because there appeared to be dueling institutional environments as discussed earlier, the notion of organizational identity grows more complex. The pull of a particular occupational culture and identity appeared to depend on which environment was more prominent. The salient environment was connected to rank as well as assignment (i.e., special units vs. patrol). Interactions across professions within partnerships also serve to highlight the tensions or pulls between different cultural assumptions.
Within the CPD, leadership personnel’s occupational identity is more tightly coupled to an organizational identity. The police commissioner, command staff, non-sworn leadership, and certain supervisory positions in particular are intimately involved in setting the policy and tone of the department, which requires them to focus on issues fundamentally related to organizational identity. The identity being constructed contrasted with the traditional occupational culture but tapped into the more progressive cultures developing since the mid-1960s. Interviews with and about patrol officers suggest that line officers are more invested in traditional occupational identities related to a culture prioritizing enforcement and crime fighting, a familiar feature of the broader occupational culture. While leadership is arguably connecting to another viable police culture, it is rarer and also tailored to a jurisdiction. It could be argued then that patrol is more closely tied to occupational culture, while leadership is more tightly coupled with an organizational identity. Thus, role is implicated in the strength of one’s organizational identity within a broader occupational identity.

As suggested during the CPD interviews, within the partnerships examined, perspectives differed in ways associated with one’s place in the organization. In each of the partnerships, there appeared to be key sworn advocates or champions (i.e., the police liaison to the GLBT Commission, the Safety Net lieutenant, and the NSP sector lieutenant in The Port) who were confident in their approach and have a sense of the long-range benefits. They recognized the limitations of a more traditional policing and were willing to buck entrenched cultural expectations.

The superintendent working as the GLBT Commission liaison had engaged in numerous roles within the department over his career and had developed an expansive idea of policing. He did not appear to be steered by any pressure to express a traditional police identity.
Net, the officers struggling most with shifting police identities were those closer to the front lines. Supervisors and, indeed, the police commissioner, were less troubled by the contrast between traditional policing and the youth-focused approach. The CSU lieutenant was a vocal advocate for a problem-focused policing that would use whatever knowledge and tools were available to support young people’s ability to stay out of the criminal justice system while increasing public safety. His approach was quite pragmatic and amenable to change. Distance from the front line seems to be evident in the other partnerships as well. The police participants of the NSP, particularly the lieutenant, seemed to have eschewed insular notions of policing.

In addition to the tensions over police occupational identities, partnership members needed to contend with the intersection of professional identities and worldviews. While there was surprisingly little identity or culture conflict between the police liaison and the GLBT Commission, Safety Net experienced significant differences that continued to be worked out. Perhaps most prominent was the assumption by the police that youth should be judged by their actions (a good or bad kid), which contrasted sharply with the human services perspective held by other partners that did not label the worth of a child by decontextualized behaviors. Police also tended to rely more on intuition and experience and were uncomfortable with efforts to quantify efforts and with the probabilistic approach underlying predictive instruments.

Identity conflicts could be mitigated by trust in certain circumstances. Safety Net participants spoke of how communication barriers associated with different professional worldviews softened once familiarity and trust grew. Area 4 Coalition members described trust and communication as self-reinforcing. A theme that came up in a few instances did suggest that familiarity and trust could sometimes seem to reduce the non-police participant’s conception of
the officer as being the police. The study was not able to pursue this line of inquiry very far, but it bears noting for future research.

Early police cultural scholarship was interested in personality traits of police officers. Researchers continue to argue about the extent to which police culture exhibits homogeneity or heterogeneity, particularly as the police have grown more diverse. Given that research has found significant variation in culture across police organizations, it would seem that occupational culture and identity are in many ways products of organizations and their respective cultures. That is, occupational culture cannot exist independently of specific organizations.⁹⁵

But role identities are influenced by occupational culture both directly and indirectly (through organizational culture). The deeper that differences in role-based identities are investigated, the more that self-selection and other factors increasing the probability of inhabiting certain roles require attention. That is, to what extent do people apply for or get assigned to roles that reflect underlying personality traits or similar experiences? To what extent are they successful in the role and how is this determined? Exploring these questions requires a clear understanding of the role’s nature as well as what someone brings to the role.

The comparison between the GLBT Commission liaisons serves as an important example, but the other partnerships also suggest the need to think about the specific individuals inhabiting collaborative roles. Safety Net officers had sought out opportunities to be in the schools and youth centers and have, in many cases, stayed on in the midst of enormous changes to the nature of their work. As with nearly all police departments, all started in patrol but most of their colleagues did not apply for these types of positions. What factors led to this skewed

⁹⁵ There are of course other influences on occupational and role identities, including mass media and political ideology. But the organization has great power to filter these influences through who is let into the department, how they are trained, and what they are rewarded for.
distribution? Regarding the NSP, the Port sector lieutenant took a particularly active role, serving on a local organization’s board of directors in addition to other activities. However, this study does not claim insight into who seeks out NSP positions or why, given the focus on only one iteration of the program.

In the CPD, it appears that as people rise to the higher levels of the organization their identities have grown more expansive. Command staff members described their career trajectories, often noting that they began with a more enforcement-oriented professional framework and were skeptical of shifts toward a new way of policing. Still, they came to see engagement and partnership as much more preferable and logical compared to the enforcement-based, insular approach taken before. In some cases, support for a partnership approach was shown through more tangible factors such as involvement in providing training or experiences as liaisons. (Support for partnership was not necessarily the same as support for community policing. A member of the command staff and some participants at middle-management had bristled at the notion that community policing was much different from simply good, professional policing.) While this is likely the story of many police leaders as COP and POP gained purchase, it is by no means the case for all or, one could argue, most. Participants in leadership spoke of their belief in and commitment to an engaged, responsive, and collaborative policing, even if the exact nature of partnership was not immediately clear.

This composition of leadership is not natural or politically neutral; rather it reflects organizational and municipal processes, as people with particular skill sets and philosophical commitments were the ones promoted through a process that included other city leaders. As suggested earlier, it is considerably easier to shape leadership in the CPD, as civil service exams to become a police officer or rise to the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant and recruit training are
not controlled by or tailored to the Cambridge police. Special units are also easier to control than patrol. Line personnel in special units like the CRU and YFSU thus exist in a conflicted environment. They are being asked to cultivate an occupational identity that is in tension with the vast majority of their peers who may not see their new role as “real police work.”

The interactions between role and personal identities are brought to the fore in the GLBT Commission liaison. He appears to have come to the commission with a certain stability of identity—but an expansive identity—related to what a police officer is and does. A stable identity that holds a narrower notion of policing would likely have failed here. In Chapter 6 it was noted that the liaison held a high rank, had ample experience working with contentious groups, and came from a long line of police. These could all have contributed to his expansive identity. One could argue that as stability increases—whether expanding or contracting—the number of or distinctions between policing identities (i.e., occupational, organizational, role) decreases. A more expansive identity is likely more desirable, whereas we would be inclined to seek options to broaden a more traditional identity.

The liaison saw his involvement with the commission as a partnership. This conceptualization was tied to trust and the open communication that accompanies trust. He described these facets as based in part on his personal ability to connect with people and to approach this commission as he would any other. Still, he worked to leverage the power of his identities (i.e., straight, White, male, high-ranking officer) to the commission’s cause. Although this might seem to contradict the idea that he had taken a neutral professional approach to the commission, both the liaison and participating commission members saw this as a useful tool to accomplish the commission’s goals. Viewed in this way, leveraging identity was similar to other strategic approaches. The liaison engaged in a kind of reverse “code switching” (code fixing?),
which is to say that his value to the commission came from being, solidly, a cop on board with the commission’s agenda. This was seen as conferring a legitimacy on the commission.

Frustration can result when the notions of identity and reputation get tangled together. The ways in which the CPD are outliers in their approach to policing can get lost when people see the police monolithically. The department in general and the liaison specially are sometimes assumed to be like any other police agencies and personnel. Such challenges can make it difficult to assert an occupational or organizational identity counter to these assumptions in a way that will be heard. Unfortunately for CPD personnel, the larger narrative of police abuse and bias can drown out different approaches. The liaison’s attempt to reach a compromise about how to participate respectfully on a Transgender Day of Remembrance was an example of trying to move forward while understanding that other participants have reason for fear of police and may not be in a position to discuss the Cambridge way at that moment.

But bad reputations can also be earned. Safety Net partners and participants in The Port described past and present instances in which young people of color in particular were mistreated during interactions with CPD officers. The need for trust building is connected to the imperative of the CPD to demonstrate that professional identities associated with being a police officer do not view such behaviors positively.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking was a helpful perspective to guide the exploration of partnership, and identities appeared to be significant influences on sensemaking about partnership within the CPD as well as by police and non-police participants in collaborative initiatives. Sensegiving and departmental structures (not to mention institutional factors) influenced CPD personnel’s sensemaking of partnership. The nature of sensemaking around partnership among the police was closely tied to where in the organizational hierarchy one was located. As noted, leadership
personnel have had a lighter sensemaking load than line personnel. The relative expansiveness of police identities among leadership compared to line personnel was addressed in the previous section. An important corollary to this point involves the extent to which personnel are differentially comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. Differences were again observed between leadership and line personnel. This was evident in Safety Net.

*Differences in the Extent of Sensemaking Needed*

The nature of what initiatives ask of their participants is tied to the sensemaking need involved. Some endeavors will involve more familiar goals, practices, and participants—requiring less sensemaking—while others will involve more discomfort. If a partnership’s features (goals, participants, approach, etc.) are familiar, the interaction may not require sensemaking at all; it may have been accomplished when these features were new. The CPD’s relationship with the GLBT Commission and Safety Net involved trying to engage a particular group of individuals more productively than in the past. These were certainly not identical processes, however. While policy change and education on LGBTQ cultural awareness in the department addressed some technical issues around such areas as searches, transportation, and confinement, the focus was, ultimately, on normalizing interactions between the police and people who have traditionally not fit the police’s image of who comprises the legitimate community.

Safety Net arguably involves greater challenges to police perspectives and routines. The children and teens addressed by Safety Net comprise a large segment of the population and inherently involve individuals whose self-control is not fully developed. Several trainings addressed the developmental and neurological reasons that young people often behave and react in particular ways and the rationale for responding to problem behaviors with greater
understanding and a wider range of interventions than had been previously considered appropriate. Officers were asked to expand their routine to include the YFSU and Safety Net in ways that brought them closer to a social work approach with the potential to threaten the police occupational identity.

The greater number of organizational members in Safety Net compared to the relationship with the GLBT Commission also directs attention to the wider range of perspectives on working with the police. Police liaisons to the GLBT Commission have had different temporal and cultural referents from which to ground their understanding of the role, but this still involved a single point of contact in the police department. Safety Net highlights the diversity of reference points occurring across participating organizations. The main members of the collaborative and indirect participants from those agencies attempted to make sense of the police department’s new approach by looking back to different points in time, different experiences, and different occupational perspectives.

Retrospection

Despite a lackluster relationship with the initial liaison working with the GLBT Commission, interactions with the second liaison took little time to become highly trusting and productive. While the liaison described being somewhat nervous at the outset as an outsider to the LGBTQ community, the idea of collaborating with a city commission generally and the prospect of working with a non-traditional police partner more specifically did not appear to have been a cause of sensemaking on the liaison’s part. As noted in the previous section, he had what was described as an expansive identity as a police officer. His experience and outlook allowed this collaboration to fit neatly with his various professional roles and personal identity.
Also, as the cliché goes, times had changed. Given cultural changes and the Cambridge
environment, the retrospective search for meaning vis-à-vis this assignment had also shifted
since 1997 when the first liaison was assigned. The reference points to which this and future
liaisons look are increasingly different; specifically, American culture in general continues to
grow more supportive of the LGBTQ community, making it easier for LGBTQ officers and
members of the public alike. Occupational and agency-specific narratives related to being
LGBTQ may not be immediately or inevitably negative or cause one to fear for one’s safety or
career trajectory. While it is unclear whether LGBTQ personnel in the CPD are comfortable
publicly identifying their sexual orientation and gender identities, it would seem less likely that
one would need to avoid engagement with the GLBT Commission to bolster one’s police
occupational or CPD organizational identity. Additionally, framing the commission simply as
one of many such bodies may have also served to ease identity challenges.

For the GLBT Commission’s part, participating members also reported an easy
acceptance of the liaison. Their mission and mandate necessitated collaboration with its own set
of external entities, so it is not surprising that partnership was not a heavy lift. But certainly
LGBTQ-police relations could be expected to give pause. Although the liaison’s personality,
approach, and commitment can be credited with alleviating much of any tension that may have
existed when he started, the broader relationship between the commission and CPD bears
attention as well. Despite the experience with the first liaison, the relationship does appear to
have borne fruit, and the CPD maintained the assignment for over a decade before assigning the
second liaison. This suggests that even if commission members had been suspicious upon the
appointment of the second liaison, retrospective sensemaking could reach back and find a willing
partner in the department. Moreover, commission members recognized the legitimating power of
a formal association with the police department, even if some within the LGBTQ community in Cambridge were suspicious of the CPD.

The Port is caught up in process of trying to make sense of their neighborhood and the police. Reported efforts such as residents’ attempts to take on more agency in the relationship with the police and city after a murder in 2002 suggest the purposeful construction of a new understanding of themselves. While there are many narratives simultaneously occurring, this change and the tangible results emanating from it, such as annual community events, offer a new set of cues when community members retrospectively reach back to make sense of current events.

**Who’s Got the Map? Being Comfortable with Uncertainty**

The extent of sensemaking necessary seemed to be connected to one’s relative comfort with uncertainty. Change appeared to be a constant in Safety Net, and participants had not failed to notice. According to the police commissioner and several participants, Safety Net’s story was one of continual evolution. “Evolution” has a connotation of forward progress, not merely change, and Safety Net did appear to represent a significant break with earlier departmental efforts progress toward a youth-centered approach. The collaborative had shifted from diversion to more prevention-oriented approach with younger individuals, officer roles and unit personnel had changed, and the case management process had grown more formalized. But characterizing the dynamism of Safety Net as evolution was not associated with a clear linear path forward. Participants frequently discussed Safety Net as an approach that was new to everyone involved and that it was developing as it went.

Comments indicated that this was “a work in progress” (Safety Net 1). There was “no playbook” for what Safety Net was trying to accomplish (Safety Net 3). A participant noted that
“as you’re walking on the road you’re also paving it” (Safety Net 15). A non-police member focused on the degree to which this was particularly challenging for the police officers, observing that “they’re entering into this uncharted ground” and “navigating this really new world” (Safety Net 3). Indeed, several participants noted that finding training programs was often a challenge. As work was being done to create formal job descriptions and training plans for YFSU personnel, it was recognized that the trainings desired were generally not offered by traditional law enforcement sources. The trust-building process between the police and psychologist was similarly characterized:

For this collaboration to work, the police officers had to trust the counseling psychologist as someone who would be there when called upon. This was an organic process and took time to develop; it was not a procedure that could be laid out in a manual and then followed. Thus, it is critical that counselors and psychologists who embark on similar partnerships make sure to dedicate adequate time to building trust and respect in their relationships with partners. (Barrett & Olle, 2016, p. 24)

Not only did the collaborative feel the lack of an instruction manual, they did not have a clear terminus.

Maps are prominent in Weick’s (1995) work. He describes an experience of soldiers getting hopelessly lost until a map is found that guides them to safety. The reveal: the map did not cover the soldiers’ geography. Weick’s point is that sensemaking is not reliant on accuracy; plausibility is often sufficient. Safety Net’s efforts to reduce the ambiguity of their roles—especially those of the police members—were critical but also suggest that, contrary to Weick’s (1995) notion that “any map will do,” sensemaking frameworks needed to engage salient identities. What the quote above highlights is the challenge of establishing plausibility. In interorganizational partnerships like Safety Net where the members have substantial differences in professional perspective and areas of technical comfort, the found map must seem a reasonable approach to all. Here, Weick’s example is turned on its head: in some situations, even
an “accurate” map (e.g., use of a validated instrument) may not be seen as plausible to those expected to use it, making it an insufficient sensemaking tool. Collectively, the introduction of the YLS, process flow instructions, and officer-led case management embody a system of thinking that was seen by officers as not just unfamiliar but contrary to their training and identities. Mentioning the process flow diagram to participants could lead to sighs or jokes about its perceived level of complexity, even though it provided concrete steps that would presumably be welcomed.

This challenge was recognized. A CPD participant described the process of helping Safety Net officers grow more comfortable with the case management process flow diagram and noted that this involved attention to how the officers would most effectively learn the material. The officers often printed out a separate copy of the booklet for each of their cases and made notes on the copy as they completed the steps. The map needed to be applied to a specific landscape. Moreover, training on the diagram (and on the YLS) required attention to language. During discussions about the process, the participant noted that it was more effective to talk about “record management” rather than “data collection.”

As noted earlier, police case managers often felt ill-equipped for their roles despite training. One expressed concern over the potential harm to clients that could result given the perceived lack of clear guidance in developing client plans. A police participant described a situation in which two clients’ initial YLS suggested a high risk of future delinquency. Four months later, their re-evaluations on the inventory showed a low level of risk. Subsequently, one of the two reoffended shortly after. The map had let the participant down.

The map is one of probability—not all clients will reach the destination. Perhaps a more apt analogy is that the map is accurate in showing how to get to the destination, but it cannot
guarantee that a particular road will not have potholes or be blocked by a fallen tree. A valid and reliable instrument cannot take into account every variable. The uncertainty associated with a scientific instrument and the fuzzy definition of success and failure added to the complexity of the officers’ jobs. The YFSU lieutenant pointed out that he had been up front about the fluid nature of the unit.

I’ve always told the officers that change is inevitable, change will come. I can promise you that they’ll be changes, not just with the type of work that we’re doing, but the structure of this place.

Indeed, sometimes a willingness to abide the ambiguity of their roles seemed apparent alongside the frustration. One of the case managers indicated being able to see the potential usefulness of the YLS but also that this was a stretch for most of them. Another case manager expressed a similar sentiment when asked if there was something that would make Safety Net more of a partnership. These comments appeared to suggest a level of comfort with uncertainty, even if there were accompanying frustrations.

It should be noted that while Safety Net officers were struggling more with the lack of definition of their roles, it was their roles that were changing most dramatically. Inherent to their subordinate ranks, they also had less control over the direction of the collaborative and their unit. As Chapter 7 hopefully makes clear, however, the officers involved in Safety Net appear generally to be rising to the challenge. It is unknowable how many patrol officers possess the capacity or interest to wrestle with these types of roles, but we do know that only about 20 officers applied for positions within the YFSU.

PARTNERSHIP AND THE CPD

Before beginning the discussion of partnership’s meanings, a critical point needs to be reiterated: this study did not intend to culminate in a definition of partnership either generally or
in the CPD specifically. It sought to understand how department leadership seeks to frame understandings of partnership within and outside of the department, how these messages and other factors influence how partnership is understood by departmental personnel and beyond, particularly by the external participants of these initiatives. Several theoretical and conceptual tools attended to not only characteristics and definitions of partnership but the contextual and organizational influences on how understandings are shaped. Responses to the three research questions are now briefly provided to summarize what was learned.

**Research question 1: How is partnership framed at the organization level?**

How partnership was understood and used in the department had not solidified. Although the department’s mission statement included partnering with the community, a clear definition or manner or operationalization did not appear to exist. The police commissioner envisioned partnership as a trust-based relationship between the department and the agencies, organizations, and groups with which it works. It should entail dedication to a common goal as opposed to “partnerships in name only,” often can result when participation is motivated by funding. Partnerships were viewed as “investments;” like financial transactions, they were expected to provide benefits but were also recognized as involving risk.

Trust was seen as being built on consistency: of actions within initiatives as well as in other areas of police work. The department needed to communicate that its values embraced the entire community and demonstrate this through its actions. This served as a link between transparency and accountability. As a result, the message was intended to reach all personnel: partner where possible. Still, most focused collaborative activity was purposefully located within special units and with leadership rather than patrol.

Leadership did not see partnership as a decontextualized practice. It was understood as emerging from an evolutionary process away from the traditional, insular policing that still
characterizes many departments. The shift had been incremental, seeded by local conditions and actors both outside the CPD (local culture, city leadership, economic conditions) and within the department (organizational changes opening up the department) and punctuated by particular events (critical incidents and highly publicized controversies). The commissioner at the time of the study was viewed by many as representing a culmination of these factors in terms of his emphasis on a collaborative approach.

That the department’s focus on partnership was seen as being constructed over many years connects to the police commissioner’s view of partnership as embodying a level of uncertainty. He had recognized that this was not the standard approach by the CPD and that determining how best to operationalize it would take more time. The most promising collaborations were described as experiments, as evolutionary. There was an unpredictability to partnership, but it was being considered and shaped with a particular environmental fit in mind. The manifestation of these factors appeared to be a tendency to deliver internal messages supportive of partnership, to lead by example (personally and through his command staff), and by working to educate personnel about key initiatives. The study did not identify specific policy, training, or performance indicators put in place by the commission to formalize and define partnership.

The police commissioner’s sensegiving efforts focused on specific partnerships varied. He personally spearheaded the creation of the YFSU and Safety Net, reaching out to other agencies to demonstrate his resolve and good faith to change the department’s approach to youth. He engaged in a widespread campaign to meet and engage with the city’s agency heads and to be personally involved as a liaison to several groups. Specific to the GLBT Commission, he was responsive to their requests and mission. The CPD’s relationship with The Port was more
difficult to assess in terms of what message the commissioner was trying to convey about partnership. Certainly he was front and center when violence occurred to speak with neighborhood residents, but it appeared to be a lack of purposeful sensegiving that was described by some participants in that community. How partnership is understood and used in the department has not solidified.

**Research question 2: How is partnership understood within the organization?**

Conceptualizations within the CPD vary. Ideas about partnership at a general level are not dramatically divergent across the department, but understandings of its value and uses grew increasingly opaque the further one traveled from the police commissioner. The commissioner’s priority on partnership was readily observed by participants but was seen by many as more atmospheric than practical. Leadership had bought into the need for widespread engagement and trust building and were personally involved in numerous initiatives with external entities, but partnership had less immediate purchase for many supervisory personnel and patrol officers. Given the police commissioner’s comments about partnership being expected to take place outside of patrol, this is perhaps understandable.

Line personnel are provided with few organizational cues to help them make sense of partnership in ways that will be resonant. Recruit training is generalized rather than specific to the Cambridge context, performance in patrol is not assessed based on experience or effectiveness in collaborative work, patrol expectations and routines are not tailored to motivate more collaborative or project-based work, and promotional exams do not appear to account for knowledge of and skill in collaborative work. Cultural forces socializing officers early in their careers continue to pull from traditional notions of policing. Collective bargaining agreements also appear to privilege patrol work and to base rewards (e.g., desired assignments) on seniority. Finally, associations between the staffing of special units and their connection to a robust
departmental budget (which is seen as a unique feature of the CPD), may further the perception that work taking place in these units (partnership) is something done within wealthier communities and lies outside the scope of “real police work.” These factors may be caught in a recursive cycle with the tendency to view partnership as the province of other organizational components.

Departmental sworn leadership (deputy superintendents and superintendents) was selected through a rigorous process involving voices from outside the CPD. This allowed for the police commissioner, other agency heads, and city leadership to craft the department’s higher echelon in ways that promoted like-minded personnel with particular skill sets and capacities. Frequent engagement with peers in other agencies and organizations becomes both an inherent feature of leadership personnel’s routines and, to some degree, an important influence on their occupational identity. Role, occupational, and organizational identities are expected to overlap more at this level and to grow increasingly distant from more traditional institutional influences.

Different interpretations of how and why professional identities expand are possible. One suggests that the influence of a monolithic institutional environment is diluted through exposure to a wider variety of occupational cultures in a professional context. Perhaps individuals who were already less beholden with the policing occupational culture were promoted and the process of being required to work productively with people embracing different professional worldviews further loosens the grip of traditional policing assumptions. They encounter and accept a new set of sovereigns in their work routine. A second interpretation reflects the idea mentioned earlier that policing may have more than one institutional environments, one that continues to reflect the assumptions of the professional era and another that embraces a more democratic understanding of the police role.
Which interpretation is a better explanation is an interesting question. However, either would depend on the broader social and administrative cultures. Without a collaborative culture among city agencies and political leadership, there is little or no opportunity for police leadership to develop a wider understanding of policing and their role in the community.

However, the traditional police identity has powerful cultural roots, and even progressive leaders should not automatically be expected to have forsaken them. Moreover, structural forces in the organization, profession, and larger society continue to prioritize traditional approaches—that is, toward insularity—which feed the problematic encounters between the police and community and the resulting negative understandings they have of one another.

Research question 3: How is partnership understood within relationships involving the police?

Again, the more abstract notions of partnership do not differ widely from those offered by CPD personnel in initial interviews or between the police and non-police participants in specific initiatives. Trust, consistency, and communication are frequently cited characteristics. At a more concrete level, the meanings of partnership must be considered in the context of partnership with the police specifically. The CPD has had troubled relationships with various groups in its community, and it decontextualizes police-community relations to discuss different professional worldviews without considering the consequences of the police perspective on actual lives. It was not that the police had simply been professionally reluctant to work with others on issues of crime and public safety; these agencies and organizations were connected to or staffed by people who had been victimized in some way by the CPD.

The GLBT Commission liaison, Safety Net, and NSP in The Port are examples of instances where the CPD has begun or enhanced efforts to engage with particular communities in ways that involved the police participants relinquishing some level of control and instead
adopting the perspective of the groups with which they were working. The department took steps within these initiatives to clearly demonstrate its seriousness, providing opportunities for real decision making rather than ceremonial involvement. The tension that this can create for police occupational identities was evident in the challenges faced by the YROs and YOOs in the YFSU. Within The Port, however, stands the most unresolved conflict observed across the initiatives studied. This neighborhood experienced a large part of the violence in the city and continued to perceive lackluster departmental efforts to prevent and investigate it. Young Black residents and visitors also reported being regularly harassed by patrol officers.

It must be noted, however, that although there have and continue to be serious problems between the department and community, Cambridge has not been the site of major incidents of unrest like many communities experiencing conflicts. This may partly speak to the more active social and political culture of the city. Despite needs for improvement, local proclivities for activism and political organization may have led to some level of change or at least response through pressure on city leadership. The LGBTQ community’s request for a liaison because of problematic encounters with police was met with a concrete response. There are arguments to be made as to whether the position was created simply to appease a vocal community, but this position evolved as the department did.

Pointing out the lack of violent or disorderly public protest is not meant to suggest that community problems with the police are unserious or resolved. Rather, there is an argument to be made that the relatively high level of community organization and political responsiveness and representation may have prevented problems from worsening past a certain point, limited the community’s need for more disruptive action, and allowed for the police department to engage communities when it had evolved to a certain point. There are cities where various groups will
not work with the police or it is much more problematic bringing groups to the table. Sensemaking suggests that retrospective glances back found a flawed but not unredeemable department.

The CPD’s understanding of partnership was communicated differently across partnerships. Safety Net displayed concerted efforts to change the department’s approach to a specific problem through a problem-oriented approach. The GLBT Commission was one of numerous bodies to which the CPD assigned liaisons. This is more readily characterized as community policing approach that seeks to engage a wide range of stakeholders. The NSP could also be viewed as a liaison assignment. Both the Safety Net and liaison models were arguably limited because of their structural isolation. That is, to varying degrees, these initiatives were not linked to others in ways that might allow for enhanced coordination of services, information sharing, organizational learning, and greater transparency and public accountability. Whether and how an initiative was connected to the department promotes greater confusion over the meaning of partnership. When the CPD is working with other agencies or organizations, who is the relationship with? Several participants described a positive experience but declined to characterize it as a “partnership” because the central relationship was perceived to be with a particular person or unit rather than the CPD overall. Or the initiative was described as a partnership but with that particular person or unit rather than with the CPD as a whole. Even when a partnership is a “partnership,” it may not be clear that this means the same thing to everyone. When thinking about organizational and professional legitimacy, this nuance matters. Is it possible to possess legitimacy in a piecemeal manner? Alternatively, given the complexity of the institutional environment and sovereigns’ demands, is it possible to possess legitimacy in any other way than piecemeal?
CHAPTER 10: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Having addressed the study’s research questions, the question is what to make of all of this? What to make of the myriad factors associated with how partnership is framed, used, and valued? This final chapter discusses broader themes that have come from the study that apply to how police organizations might think about partnership in terms of approaching it organizationally and in terms of its implications for legitimacy. The concept of boundary spanning is then suggested as a framework that police agencies might find useful when engaged in strategic planning around partnership as an organizational approach that prioritizes an expressly democratic value system. Ideas for further research are offered, study limitations are discussed, and concluding thoughts are offered.

DISCUSSION

This study has many lessons for thinking about and practicing “partnership.” This discussion focuses on those that speak to the ongoing reform agenda seeking to increase the permeability, transparency, and accountability of the police in our democratic system. There are two broad and connected areas within which to consider this study’s findings. One addresses lessons about approaching partnership in a comprehensive or at least strategic manner. The second speaks more directly to police legitimacy.

Approaching Partnership Organizationally

The study’s findings point to the host of organizational-level influences on how partnership is understood within and outside the CPD. Several factors are related to pursuing a collaborative approach that promotes greater engagement, transparency, and accountability.
Partnership is an Organizational Process, Not a Stand-Alone Initiative

Partnerships are often implemented and studied (and funded) as responses to particular problems. Targeted efforts, evaluations, and funding are certainly important to the field, but we can lose sight of the greater purpose of such efforts. Like all police practices, partnership work is a means to an end—public safety, legitimacy, civic equality, for example. When focusing more narrowly on individual efforts or issues, a limited set of indicators comes into sight. Greater attention needs to be focused strategically on how a partnership approach can bring the community closer to these goals. When developing an approach to partnership, departments should consider the full range of organizational mechanisms (structural, cultural, or otherwise) that could communicate messages to personnel about partnership. How can they be leveraged to support the approach? What might prevent various structures and processes from working in the desired direction?

The point should not be lost, however, that organizational mechanisms need to support processes that put the right individuals into positions that involve significant collaborative skill. Agencies need to consider who in the organization is best suited for any assignment, but these roles in particular should not be filled based on seniority. Collaborative roles come can require a set of experience, skills, and personality that is less commonly honed through typical policing training and education. Especially in initiatives that rely on one or two departmental contacts or involve frequent work with other organizations, abilities that lie beyond standard training are needed. A challenge of partnership is that differences can exist between the attributes of a good leader in that setting compared to good leader within a single organization. A traditional idea of effective leadership takes place in a hierarchy and involves the giving of strong direction and
providing answers, whereas within collaborative frameworks, a more “catalytic” process is

Some personnel may be more naturally skilled at the interpersonal approach needed. A
selection process that recognizes this need should be developed. Moreover, training in those
interpersonal and coordination skills that can be taught should be considered for inclusion in
trainings from early career on to foster these skills and broaden the pool of potential boundary
spanners. Given the importance of being able to communicate and develop partnerships in a
department that values community policing, departments would also do well to reconsider
recruitment and hiring criteria. Initiatives such as “Hiring in the Spirit of Service” (Scrivner,
2006) and the recent attention on building a “guardian” rather than “warrior” culture (Rahr &
Rice, 2015) speak to a focus on foundational expectations and socialization.

**Partnership is Plural**

Understanding partnership as an organizational focus requires recognizing that
partnership is not one thing. When thinking organizationally about partnership, there may be a
central purpose embodied in a mission statement related to working with the community to solve
problems or a similar theme. However, discussion should not stop at an overall purpose and
vision for partnership. Deciding to foreground partnership and asserting that partnerships should
embody certain emergent qualities tell the public—and the department itself—very little. How
partnerships are operationalized is a key concern. Decisions will likely differ by issue and will
need to consider the particular demands and sovereigns in different sectors of the organization.
Moreover, which personnel are best suited to the task? Addressing these questions will better
position leadership to anticipate segmented sensemaking needs and engage in targeted
sensegiving.
Professional identities, or identities including occupational, organizational, and role, were found to be implicated in how partnership was valued and approached. Greater comfort with collaborative work seemed to be associated with greater overlap of identities—that is, one’s understanding of legitimate police work, what it means to be a member of a specific department, and the nature of one’s role within the organization were more closely related. As departments work to tailor partnership to different parts of the organization, it may be useful to consider the professional identities and related cultures influencing personnel.

**Collaborative Capacity is Efficient**

Efficiency is an oft-used term in policing and government, despite it not always having a clear or useful meaning. What is efficiency in the context of government work, where one cannot simply step over law or democratic values in pursuit of more arrests or lower taxes? If efficiency is used to mean needing fewer rather than more steps to achieve the same goal, the notion of organizational collaborative capacity is illustrative. As Rosenbaum and Roehl (2010) observe, communities with partnership experience had an easier time implementing SACSI. There is a benefit to experience for subsequent efforts.

However, it is not simply the number of experiences that is important. The more that partnership is understood in a decontextualized manner, as simply any initiative involving two or more organizations, the less benefit experience will have for police departments and their relationship with the community. The CPD’s attempts to change how they approach various issues were often starting from places of distrust. Although many of these appear to be moving in productive directions, they have been slowed by the need to come to terms with how their insularity of perspective has, at times, harmed the community they intended to protect. Safety Net in particular required significant reassurance and clear action by the CPD to demonstrate the
department’s sincerity in wanting to change their approach to dealing with city youth. Trust needed to be built through a long and continuing process of co-training, retraining, informal conversations, experience working together, and learning to expand their professional perspective. The department had engaged in a significant process of collaborative capacity building not just by working together with these groups but by making good-faith efforts to repair and build trust and understanding with people and groups who the police may not have adequately conceptualized as legitimate members of the community. However, collaborative capacity was still lacking in patrol and other areas in which partnership was not a priority.

Although trust building and maintenance is an ongoing process, the heavy lifting arguably occurs when this is tried for the first times. Trust can be a generational factor, making for an inherently slow process. However, progress can be made in the shorter term. Efficiency comes from not having to reinvent the wheel each time problems arise that might be addressed by a partnership involving certain groups and the police. It might even prevent certain problems from arising in the first place.

**Context Matters**

Even departments who invest in developing an organizational collaborative approach may be disappointed with the results if their local environment is not supportive. Police organizational processes do not take place in a vacuum. A key example is departmental leadership. Leadership personnel and their priorities are closely related to the local context. Personnel who have greater experience with a variety of assignments may be well-positioned to function in collaborative settings. This is hypothesized to result from exposure to pressures and perspectives that do not necessarily comport with the police occupational culture but need to be understood and responded to in order to do one’s job. However, such a process is expected to be
contingent on the political, administrative, and social context in which the police are located. As noted above, experience in and of itself does not guarantee growth.

The Cambridge environment appeared to be supportive of interagency and community-focused collaboration. The city manager appointed the police commissioner at the time of the study with support from elected officials and other sources of input. People from outside the police department were involved in promotions to deputy superintendent and superintendent. Command staff members all appeared to be supportive of a collaborative approach, suggesting that this perspective was valued in the review process.

Although this study is based on a single department, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that a different context would lead to the appointment of leaders with different perspectives. The process itself might differ as well (e.g., civil service selection of chiefs and leadership, less community representation in appointment processes, etc.). In a more traditional environment, the leadership promotional processes would be expected to strengthen an insular occupational identity, whereas in Cambridge it is argued to broaden notions of what police can be and increase the overlap of professional identities.

Legitimacy

Much of what was discussed and observed in the CPD related to partnership and collaboration is related to efforts to enhance the department’s legitimacy with historically marginalized groups who were underserved, treated poorly, or both. As described throughout this paper, the department seemed to be making progress while also encountering some familiar obstacles. Partnership and legitimacy are closely linked given their overlapping concern with external perceptions.
Managing External Sovereigns’ Demands

It may be impossible to reconcile all sovereigns’ demands. It is hard to imagine a jurisdiction where a clear and singular consensus exists on what the police should be doing and how; there are simply too many opportunities for opposing values and expectations. There will always be conflicting pressures on the police, and the police will need to make difficult decisions about how to respond. If a baseline level of turbulence can be assumed, the question becomes how to manage it in ways consistent with democratic ideals, not simply what is best for the organization.

One hope is that through the development of greater organizational (and municipal) collaborative capacity by considering some of the ideas presented in the previous section the sheer number of divergent pressures will decline. As more groups feel that they are being treated inclusively by the department, perhaps they will not need to make as many demands or will feel comfortable working with the department in amicable ways.

A related thought is that managing turbulence requires opening up the department further to the public through greater transparency, structural inclusion, and other meaningful mechanisms. This may sound either unrealistic or anathema to many departments. The counterpoint is that this is arguably a symptom of tensions with various community constituencies, a failure to develop collaborative capacity, or other organizational deficits. There is no magic bullet; getting to a point where a department does not blanch at the idea of transparency and accountability requires discomfort and a focus on long-term outcomes.

Making permeability an inherent feature of policing recognizes that social problems are complex and typically do not have police-centered solutions. Including many voices at the table as a matter of standard procedure is less a symbolic nod to external pressure than the recognition
that a wider range of expertise and perspectives increases the likelihood of a useful response. It also takes the pressure off the police for fixing intractable problems that they cannot reasonably be expected to tackle alone.

*Walking the Talk: Enacting a Consistent Collaborative Message*

Chapter 3 discussed the observation by Worden and McLean (2017) that legitimacy research has paid vastly more attention to legitimacy in the situational context of interactions between officers and members of the public than in terms of how a department is perceived by powerful stakeholders (i.e., sovereigns). The findings from the present study suggest that both are important and likely influence one another.

A serious question police leaders and stakeholders must grapple with is what do they consider organizational legitimacy? Findings from this study, especially from the three initiatives, lead to important questions related to how departments understand police legitimacy. When non-police participants questioned whether the partnership or relationship is with the particular individuals or the department more broadly, they were implicitly interrogating the notion of police legitimacy. An extraordinary relationship with someone or a unit from the police department may or may not lead an individual to generalize that relationship to the department as a whole. Alternatively, a bad experience with a single officer may or may not cause someone to see the entire organization in a negative light. Certainly the replacement of a department’s chief executive has long been recognized as a common approach to rebuilding legitimacy (Sherman, 1978). But outside of a scandal—especially in the context of a “permanently failing organization” (M. W. Meyer & Zucker, 1989)—how does the public understand police legitimacy? Must departments be entirely legitimate or not, or can individual components or officers be legitimate while others are considered illegitimate?
Partnerships highlight the importance of trust for the police’s efforts in the community, not just in formal partnerships but in all activities. The police commissioner and top leadership prioritized partnership and legitimacy through messaging, modeling behavior, and organizational change. However, these efforts often remained disjointed from other departmental processes, particularly as it related to patrol—the largest component and the one with which the public most often encounters and associates with “the police.” A department with numerous productive partnerships can still be plagued by distrust and suspicion if other actions contradict the message of collaboration and inclusion. Perceptions of bias and harassment should not be considered discretely from praise for successful outreach or other efforts at engagement.

Bradford, Murphy, and Jackson (2014) find that social identity is a mediating factor between procedurally just treatment by police and feelings of police legitimacy. They suggest that when people feel fairly treated, they are more likely to identify with the social group whose interests are represented by the police. Fair treatment communicates not only the just use of power but the social inclusion of those with whom the police interact. This finding held up across citizen and ethnic identities; there was variation in how positive the correlation was, but correlations were consistently positive. Extending this finding suggests the act of the police reaching out in good faith to groups, particularly historically marginalized ones, may create social value by conveying social inclusion, which may then enhance groups’ perceptions of police legitimacy. Indeed, looking for and responding to non-crime opportunities for engagement are likely key to public perceptions of police legitimacy. For example, Greene, Mouhanna, Taheri, and Jones (2016, p. 169) find that even in Boston’s “most complex and socially disorganized communities” about sixty percent of public calls for police service were related to social support needs rather than crime. Thus, while crime-related interactions are important sites
for fair treatment and inclusion, the police have many other opportunities to demonstrate that they value the social value of their residents and other stakeholders.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The observations noted above need to be considered against a critical backdrop, however. It emerged from this study that efforts to build a partnership culture were more successful in some parts of the organization than others. The CPD is almost certainly head and shoulders above most police departments in terms of its attempts to cross organizational boundaries and approach various issues in a problem-oriented fashion. Still, even here, what might be considered the agency’s core was reported to remain largely unchanged. Although patrol officers were expected to provide a customer-service oriented approach to their interactions with the public, to look for opportunities to engage in deeper problem-solving, and to partner with people or groups when possible, it was widely acknowledged that for the most part their task environment had stayed the same. Recruit training and promotional exams were not specific to Cambridge, expectations of patrol focused on traditional measures, and partnership was operationalized at a distance rather than within patrol itself. If one of the nation’s most motivated, well-funded, and progressive departments struggles with figuring out how to shape patrol, what does this mean for police agencies more generally?

This observation is not unique to Cambridge. Reform efforts have often demonstrated lackluster results in what had appeared to be rich soil for cultivating change. Disappointments have led to questions about whether too much is being expected. A decade-long attempt to implement a problem orientation throughout the San Diego Police Department, “using training, supervision, organizational incentives, a POP project database, and state-of-the-art crime analysis,” had not transformed the department as hoped. Officers were more often using a
problem-solving approach but not engaged in the higher-level problem-oriented work desired.

Seeing the setting as a test case, Cordner and Biebel suggest a fundamental revision of expectations for POP.

It may be time to make a distinction between everyday problem solving and problem-oriented policing, in San Diego and elsewhere. When they do problem solving, officers take a thoughtful approach, try to gather some information before proceeding, and often implement a multipronged response to problems. This process is better than not thinking, not gathering information, and relying on only one response. Modest though it is, problem solving is probably more effective than traditional reactive policing. (Cordner & Biebel, 2005, p. 177)

Here, at least pursuit of POP was found to drive policing in beneficial directions. In Seattle, Herbert (2006) and W. Lyons (1999) conclude that community policing had led to reduced opportunities for police accountability. Herbert observes that community members cannot overcome the intense resistance of the police to informal oversight, and Lyons notes the power of the police to define community and to base access to the department upon uncritical support for the police. Indeed, Herbert (p. 140) suggests that “perhaps it is time to abandon community policing, to give up the ghost of a chance of its ever representing a project for meaningful police reform.”

These findings either implicitly or directly speak to the seeming intractability of a traditional patrol culture and its related identity. Take San Diego. Officers were asked for recommendations to improve POP performance. Their suggestions included more crime analysis support, streamlining of paperwork, direct mentoring, support and encouragement from sergeants, information about resources to help with problem-solving, and more time to do POP. However, “[t]he least popular suggestions were putting more emphasis on POP in promotions and performance evaluations” (Cordner & Biebel, 2005, p. 176), which would be expected to be the factors most closely tied to shaping officers’ actual behavior. The Seattle studies more
pointedly address culture. Building on Bittner, Herbert (2006) specifically argues that the police’s capacity to use force leads to powerful cultural values related to adventurousness, officer safety, and the need to exercise their authority effectively that obstruct reciprocal relationships with the public. Lyons (1999) describes the co-existence of democratic and disciplinary features of community policing but argues that ultimately the democratic ones are pursued only insofar as they are consistent with police organizational needs.

Cambridge’s experience rhymes with these examples. There are also important contrasts. The Seattle studies characterize the police department more widely as uninterested if not hostile to working collaboratively with the community. Funding for community policing was instead funneled to patrol personnel and tradition police tactics. The SPD screened more critical groups through a friendly partnership and, within the partnership, characterized partners’ requests for information from the police as micromanaging or exerting undue influence. These qualities did not appear to be present in Cambridge. As noted throughout this study, CPD leadership and special units had purposefully sought to communicate through word and deed that relationships are intended to be reciprocal. A wide net was cast in terms of working with community stakeholders and the department was often problem-focused, creating collaborative models that involved multiple agencies in decision making capacities and took approaches grounded in other professions. Political and administrative support was also quite robust in Cambridge. Further, the CPD appears to be avoiding a pitfall noted by Herbert, namely the overreliance on the community for collaboration and accountability. While there are certainly neighborhood associations and other opportunities for residents to get involved, the CPD has cultivated strong relationships with a wide variety of formalized entities.
Organizational changes following data collection for this study continue to move the department in collaborative directions, even without the police commissioner at the time of data collection. For example, in July 2018, the department established the Family and Social Justice Section, bringing together support for vulnerable populations that had been the focus of the Community Services Unit and other units: youth, homeless individuals, people suffering from mental illness and substance abuse, seniors, and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault (Cambridge Public Information Office, 2018). The Clinical Support Unit, one of three units in the section, includes two licensed social workers and a director of outreach and community programs and is run by the Safety Net psychologist, who was hired directly by the CPD for this position (D. Dwyer, 2018).

Where Cambridge rejoins these other departments is in its crafting of a collaborative approach that does not fully incorporate patrol. On one hand, the department appears to have developed useful models for community outreach and support. It has pursued a path taken by few departments by fusing law enforcement with clinical psychological and social work services. Leadership is involved in numerous relationships across the city. An argument can be made that this is not only enough but at the leading edge of the profession.

On the other hand, this approach is potentially problematic by neglecting to involve the majority of its personnel, those personnel who interact most frequently with members of the public and who are the most visible focus of demands for reform nationally and in the city. It is possible that by implementing promising models in a setting that has built up support for such efforts the CPD is incrementally changing its overall culture and will be able to change the structures that limit patrol’s involvement in partnership work. But, given experience elsewhere,
this outcome cannot be assumed, and the department may continue to experience suspicion where community may not have been defined broadly enough.

This enormous challenge suggests several implications. One involves fundamental alterations to the policing task environment. Questions arise at the level of the profession as well as in individual agencies about the nature of street-level policing and the associated qualifications for entering the profession, training and socialization, performance measures, promotional criteria, and other organizational mechanisms tied to the police institutional environment and, eventually, police professional identities. Cambridge’s experience also points to the importance of local context in allowing for organizational change. This study has argued that the extent of the CPD’s collaborative approach may have required the unfolding of processes at the city administrative and organizational levels. These are weighty issues that require long-term planning and as such are less likely to be attempted.

In the event police agencies do not have the support for such an overhaul, a more feasible path involves thinking strategically—across the organization—about how the police interact with the external environment. Doing so does not require loyalty to a particular approach, as it is more broadly tied to democratic principles of transparency and accountability. Indeed, it may be that “partnership” is ultimately not the most helpful term or overarching notion for reform efforts. A “boundary spanning” framework could be used to more clearly operationalize the expectations for how each component of the organization is to interface with the outside world. It would necessitate a rigorous assessment of each component’s purposes and task environment as well as the associated internal and external sovereigns’ demands. A brief explanation of boundary spanning is needed.
The idea of boundary spanning, a concept related to institutional theory, may be useful in understanding the CPD’s use of departmental resources outside of patrol for partnership and for considering approaches that involve the full organization. Boundary spanning refers to a conceptualization of organizations as having frontiers—distinctions can be made between the inside and outside of an organization. The nature of such boundaries is ambiguous, however, and can be characterized as being on a continuum from nearly imperceptible to hermetically sealed. While organizational boundaries can literally refer to physical or geographic properties, more commonly they involve complicated questions about people and systems. With government agencies, democratic notions of representation must also be wrestled with.

Agencies like the police operate as extensions of the public they serve, but there is a distinction between them. As Herbert (2006) notes, political theory recognizes several kinds of interactions between the public and the state. Police in a democratic state are subservient to the public to some degree, but also seeks to maintain an independence from it. This reflects a key theme in the shift from the political to professional era. But the police are also generative of the public, in that “the state fundamentally constructs the community with which it interacts” (p. 121). That is, the police have great power to define who the legitimate community is. This has important implications for whom the police decide to partner with—whom is brought inside or kept out. Plainly, how boundaries are defined depends on what observers are concerned with describing or explaining. In Cambridge, as elsewhere, the perceived boundaries differ in their nature and quality across the police department.

Boundaries can be crossed for different purposes. An organization may seek to make its borders more porous and permeable or try to erect impenetrable shields, depending on many factors. Police organizations have a history of trying to keep “outsiders” out and, where they
have failed to do so, have done their best to prevent any influence from creating real change. At times, it is difficult to tell whether boundary spanning is being used to open or close organizational borders. The following two sections describe how boundary spanning can be used to insulate and bridge an organization, respectively.

**Buffers Against Uncertainty**

Thompson (2007/1967) argues that organizations seek to limit or control uncertainty, ideally to operate within a closed system, as this would allow them to develop the technical standards by which they are ultimately evaluated. This is generally impossible, however, especially within the particularly turbulent environments in which police agencies often operate. As a result, technically rational criteria are insufficient performance measures, and “organizational rationality” becomes a more likely guide. Organizational rationality is “based on estimated needs or processing necessities rather than cost/benefit or technical rationality” (Zhao, 1996, p. 72). When attempting to protect its core technology from environmental uncertainties—in policing, the core technology is traditional reactive patrol and investigation—organizations will often attempt to expand their task environment. In other words, when control of certain parts of their existing task environment is constrained, organizations will seek additional areas of the environment to place within their control. One way of “buffering” the core technology through expanding the task environment is to create new units or programs.

For example, the police cannot easily control the crime rate to any significant degree, and changes in crime rates are often unpredictable. An organizationally rational response might be to measure arrests and citations issues, which are actions a department can take—and manipulate—no matter what “actual” crime is taking place, with some exceptions. More to the focus of the present study, the creation of special units to tackle various problems could be seen in some circumstances as a distraction from problems with demonstrating the effectiveness of the core.
Under the norm of organizational rationality, the primary function of these new units or programs is to serve as “surveillance” agents or “sensors.” They help an organization estimate the impact of uncertainties and formulate strategies for dealing with them. The efficiency and effectiveness of boundary-spanning units are not judged by clear cost/benefit rationality criteria, but rather by the much vaguer standard of organizational rationality (e.g., outside recognition, appearance of influence) (Zhao, 1996, p. 73). In other words, the mere creation of, say, a homeless outreach unit could be used to claim that disorder involving homeless individuals is being addressed. This could be a good-faith effort based on problem-solving and community input, but its main value to the department could be that it is seen as doing something, regardless of whether anything is accomplished. Number of contacts, for example, is an easily manipulated indicator that can be marshaled to demonstrate organizational action to stakeholders.

At the professional level, Zhao’s (1996) study of community policing’s influence on police organizational structure finds that little expected change occurred. That is, despite the vastly different set of priorities associated with COP and widespread police claims of its implementation, widespread changes to the organization of police agencies did not occur. His data show most innovations were externally rather than internally focused. Programs engaging the public were much more commonly implemented than were administrative changes. While adding public engagement programs may seem in line with COP, Zhao finds that types of programs were not correlated with one another, suggesting that these were ceremonial or scattershot, not strategically implemented in accordance with COP principles. Zhao notes also that police chief executives tended to rank service-related organizational priorities below law enforcement (most highly prioritized) and order maintenance, suggesting that agencies continue...
to see their core mission in terms of the bureaucratic tradition rather than a public service mission envisioned by community policing proponents.

Here, one can see the introduction of an evaluative standard familiar to neo-institutionalism. Rather than being assessed on technical criteria (e.g., number of problems solved, role in crime rate variation), boundary spanners may be judged by their contribution to organizational stability and survival, or by creating the illusion of organizational accountability and hence legitimacy. But the issue is more complicated, as the purpose of boundary spanning units or roles can shift over time; these units may be incorporated into regular operations (institutionalized) but “only when an organization is sure it can sufficiently control that enlarged portion of the task environment” (Zhao, 1996, p. 74). This can occur as other parts of the organization change in the direction of the unit and may explain the evolution of the GLBT Commission liaison position. As the social, occupational, and organizational cultures shifted, so did the department’s understanding of its connection to the GLBT Commission.

Citing Thompson, Zhao argues that his findings demonstrate a situation in which the police are under great environmental pressure for organizational change and have generally chosen to expand their overall task environments using boundary spanning units and programs to buffer the agencies’ technical core rather than engage in major structural changes to rework the nature of patrol. Thus, boundary spanning can be a useful strategy for avoiding rather than engaging in change while appearing to do so. In this context, partnership can be viewed suspiciously as a means of avoiding reform or co-opting reformers. As such, it pays to be alert to the forms partnership takes and how partnerships are integrated into the organization.

According to Zhao, the focus by police agencies on boundary spanning units situates these efforts within the “emergence” stage of Yin’s (1979) phases of organizational change. This
first phase is “a period in which external environmental circumstances force an organization to adopt new approaches to maintain its competitiveness” and that “organizational rationality is the principal criterion influencing decision makers” (Zhao, 1996, p. 83). Some boundary spanning units will be institutionalized, the second phase, and then assessed on the basis of technical rationality. The process of organizational change is complete in the “disappearance” phase, when “past changes are no longer considered to be innovations” (Zhao, 1996, p. 83). Zhao concludes that

the contemporary COP model is still mired in the first phase Yin suggested—that is, the emergence phase. Generally speaking, under the norm of organizational rationality, the organization’s core mission in this phase is not changed because of continuing uncertainties about the appropriateness of the incremental changes attempted early in the change process (Zhao, 1996, p. 83).

Two decades on, however, there appears to be little forward momentum toward organizational change on the scale expected of collaborative models. Agencies have not sufficiently altered the task environment, leaving the core essentially untouched.

In Cambridge, partnership may be characterized as buffering in the sense that it takes place in ways that require minimal change in patrol routines. This appears to have been a sincere effort to move the department in a collaborative direction while recognizing the significant challenge represented by patrol. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the organization continues largely as before.

**Opportunities for Permeability**

Although boundary spanning can be used as a hedge against change that does not fit the organizational or professional culture, it is also a necessary component of good-faith outreach and engagement efforts. It is inherently the act of an organization seeking to bring the world closer. Pursuit of democratic policing requires transparency, participation, and accountability, not an overriding focus on organizational needs. While agencies need to take care of their
personnel, this should not lead agencies to prioritize the organization over its mission; agencies need to be able to clearly demonstrate how each organizational element supports this premise. Boundary spanning may offer a framework for considering the purposes of organizational components and roles and constructing clear strategies for how each will engage in democratic policing, particularly the organization’s expectations for how they are to work with the public. While this approach fits COP and POP, it can also eschew such labels and be tied more directly to democratic principles.

Boundary spanners are (generally) the specific individuals in roles that require them to bridge their organization with (often) other organizations. Stated more formally,

Boundary spanners are positions that “link to or more systems whose goals and expectations are likely to be at least partially conflicting” (Miles, 1980, p. 62). At each organizational boundary there is a person whose role it is both to interact with the other people inside their own organization and to negotiate system interchanges with another organization. The interchanges may be raw materials, information, or products. (Steadman, 1992, p. 77)

“Products” can refer to people who are being moved across systems (e.g., the criminal justice and mental health systems, which is the focus of Steadman’s article). Boundary spanning is often defined as between two organizations or systems but has also been conceptualized more broadly. Boundary spanning can take place more specifically across sub-organizational units (Giacomantonio, 2014), with service recipients (Rugkåsa, Shortt, & Boydell, 2007), and within organizations across internal entities (Giacomantonio, 2014; Steadman, 1992). Additionally, boundary spanners can be partnerships (and presumably other aggregates) as well as individuals (Steadman, 1992). Thus, this approach does not place the burden for engagement with the police directly on community members as Herbert cautioned; formal bodies can act on the behalf of communities.
CPD partnerships and other efforts at engagement that perhaps were not seen as rising to the level of partnership can be viewed through the lens of boundary spanning in different areas. P. Williams (2012) notes that boundary spanning takes place at three points:

- at the periphery of organisations where the outer membrane allows permeability for organizational actors to look out and others to look in; in the overlaps between agencies where coordinated activity is sustained through personal relationships, joint policies and protocols; and in new spaces between agencies where new structures and relationships are forged involving sharing resources and joint decision making. (Williams, 2012, p. 31)

These points generally correspond to study participants’ comments, particularly CPD personnel as they recalled a wide number and variety of interactions that were seen as partnerships or precursors to partnership. Although there are many CPD partnerships and potential partnerships that have gone unexplored in this study, it is illustrative to apply Williams’s framework. This should not be read as advocating for a particular arrangement. The point is that if departments start with the assumption that all personnel and units (and partnerships) are conduits to the external environment, it makes it easier to ask how they are to be used in that capacity rather than debating whether such engagement is indeed part of their role.

At the periphery are patrol officers. The CPD wanted patrol to be involved in partnership work but had not yet found an effective way to communicate this message so that it offered sufficient direction, motivation, or reward. One could argue that they were already engaged in some undefined form of cross-boundary work with a large number of people in the community. This is perhaps disputed territory. Maguire and King (2011) describe the role of police boundary spanners in sensemaking term, “to interact with and enact their environment” (p. 327, original emphasis), but see their ability to enact the environment as severely limited:
Although these boundary spanners play a valuable role in securing valuable resources for the police organization from various elements in its environment – resources like funding, personnel, goodwill, community support, and a perception that the police agency is a legitimate and responsive agency of local government – the one thing they do not influence is the way work is accomplished in the technical core. (Maguire & King, 2011, p. 327)

Writing in the context of counterterrorism work, Maguire and King (2011) argue that the vast majority of policework goes unaffected by boundary spanners and is highly protective of the technical core. This suggests that patrol officers and investigators in the role of boundary spanner would be highly problematic, since they are the main guardians of the technical core.

This may be true in many or most cases as a result of longstanding recursive relationships between structure and culture, but there is nothing inherently preventing the organization from guiding these personnel differently. It is useful to consider how the personnel in patrol, investigations, and other sectors can be seen as having boundary spanning roles or could be re-oriented toward them. Certainly, this fits within a community policing generalist framework and supports community-focused counterterrorism efforts as well. Whatever the case, it is likely useful to have a rigorous debate about their role is and what supports would be required. Ideally, police agencies and sovereigns in their environment would be willing to entertain larger change. More limited efforts may still enhance operationalization of partnership more widely.

Steadman (1992) notes that boundary spanning is “not unstructured;” rules and regulations apply to what spanners are expected, permitted, and prohibited from doing. Although CPD patrol officers were not given much explicit direction in terms of collaborative work and may indeed have been engaged in protecting the technical core, their work did connect the department with the external community and affected more formal partnership work elsewhere in the organization. The suspicion and frustration expressed by young people in The Port over feeling harassed and by residents angered by the lack of resolution for incidents of violence were
likely felt in Safety Net, as collaborative members had to work harder to overcome this contradictory message about the CPD. While it may expand the notion of partnership too far to characterize any interaction on the street as a partnership, training officers to take on some form of purposeful and positive boundary spanning (not simply respectful patrol work) may be needed in many departments.

The second area of boundary spanning involves **personal relationships and regularly-occurring formal relationships across organizations**. These are interactions that may be characterized as relationships or, if particularly robust, as partnerships. Observations of the CPD suggested that this area required a focus on both individual and organizational issues. Because these are often one-on-one interactions, the individual involved is closely tied to their success. This suggests the need for organizational mechanisms to select and prepare specific personnel who will be good fits. The CPD looked to leadership and other select personnel for these roles. Liaison assignments (however framed—formally as “liaisons” or in liaison-style initiatives like the NSP) fit this area well. These types of interactions also reflect the police commissioner’s investment metaphor, as they seeded and enacted a much larger set of contacts and relationships than might be considered active or formal partnerships. Organizational structures could be used to develop and clearly communicate clear plans about what the department wants from these relationships. These could include accountability mechanisms to avoid such relationships from drifting into buffering.

Points of contact can overlap with those involved in peripheral areas, but these involved a smaller group, as they are more consistent, targeted, and formal. The liaison’s work with the GLBT Commission arguably reflects the high end of the spectrum of spanning relationships, while perhaps the other end would involve regular, personal and informal conversations with
another organization’s staff member. In some ways these interactions can be characterized as peripheral, but they also have the potential to be valuable sources of trust-based information exchange. Viewed as an investment expected to provide a meaningful return, the liaison assignment, for all the uncertainty about how it would look in the future, had been a continuous role for nearly two decades at the time of research.

Interactions in this area can be dynamic. Particularly with the involvement of the second liaison the GLBT Commission, the department has shown that it is capable of enhancing a relationship with an important voice of the city’s LGBTQ community. The connection between the department and commission had matured in the sense that the assignment had received more attention and authority, in what partly appears to be a shift from an essentialist notion of the role to a more bureaucratic one. Being characterized as bureaucratic should be read positively in that it refers here to a professionalizing of the assignment and, possibly, an example of evolution in the department’s approach to community engagement and partnership.

Still, as useful as such interactions can be, there is a danger of even the better instances drifting into buffering, if only in part. For example, there appears to be no attempt to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of CPD personnel given the New England G.O.A.L. training or to understand the experiences of the larger LGBTQ community with regard to the CPD. The department does conduct “Quality of Service Surveys” (links may be found at the department’s community resources web page), but methodological factors likely limit their ability to capture LGBTQ perspectives adequately.96

96 Three of the four (incident assessment, citation assessment, and investigation assessment surveys) are by invitation only. A community survey is available to be completed by anyone wishing to do so on a voluntary basis. This survey addresses respondents’ (residents, non-residents, students, employed in the city, other relationship) perceptions of safety in Cambridge, where respondents would like police to direct their activities in their neighborhoods, the level of respondents’ “personal involvement in crime prevention/reporting,” services of importance to respondents, and the quality of interactions with CPD personnel if applicable. A voluntary survey posted on a police department’s website is unlikely to capture a representative sample in general and is even less
Indeed, more broadly, the command staff reported that there were no formal departmental processes around partnerships related to data collection, analysis, distribution of results, and application of lessons learned. The absence of robust efforts may reflect budgetary limitations and the like, but this is perhaps usefully viewed as a sign or symptom of a larger organizational need to enhance the problem-focused aspect of community engagement. The LGBTQ community would undoubtedly prefer training and other efforts that demonstrate positive effects rather than initiatives that are ineffectual or unintentionally harmful. Whenever boundary spanning is not found to be enhancing permeability, it may be a sign that it is playing a ceremonial role that serves organizational interests rather than the public’s, reflecting Herman Goldstein’s critique.

Relying on numerous liaison relationships illustrates Crank’s polity monitoring mechanism and may serve as both buffer and bridge, depending on the specific circumstances. By spreading out across various organized constituencies, the department enhances its ability to take stock of the department’s reputation and more swiftly identify pressures from sovereigns or people or groups that could be developing into sovereigns. These boundary spanners are a relatively inexpensive approach to keeping tabs on the department’s legitimacy in the polity sphere. They do not appear to involve training for CPD personnel involved or other organizational resources other than some measure of personnel’s time and the associated. This is not necessarily a problem if liaisons have the requisite knowledge, experience, and ability to connect on a personal level. Although there are regular command staff meetings and meetings among the deputy superintendents specifically, there appear to be little effort devoted to applying

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likely to include a sufficient number of LGBTQ respondents. Even if the surveys by invitation reach a high response rate, an historically marginalized group is especially unlikely to have reported crimes witnessed or experienced to the police, potentially skewing the results from any survey pool generated through self-selection into it.
formal mechanisms to information gleaned or lessons learned from liaisons’ experiences. For example, the NSPs rarely if ever met together or exploited other communication channels to learn from one another.

Williams’s third point of boundary spanning involves initiatives that collocate resources, share decision making, or otherwise redraw organizational borders. Safety Net is a prime example, and a complicated one. The collaborative sought to bridge the borders between its constituent participant organizations as well as within each organization. There was also a need to bridge the gap between the collaborative and the public, in particular the families it sought to work with, but also other community organizations who might become involved through referrals or in other ways and community members who were suspicious of the collaborative’s efforts.

One of the conceptual challenges was determining whether the boundary lies at the border of Safety Net as a partnership or of the CPD given its history with the agencies and communities it was striving to engage. To the extent the controversy existed around Safety Net, it came from the perception that it was, essentially, the CPD. Schools, parents, youth workers: they were all being asked to refer young people to a service being defined for them as “Safety Net” but which they are seeing as the police department. In their capacity as participants of Safety Net, YFSU personnel were often in the position as trying to thread the needle of representing Safety Net rather than the CPD more specifically. Formally, the CPD was the boundary spanner to the court, but it occurred within the context of Safety Net efforts.

Williams (2012) identifies two types of boundary spanners. One is an employee who works in a multi-organizational environment and whose position is dedicated to boundary spanning, whereas there is a much greater number of people who engage in boundary spanning
activities in the course of their other roles. This distinction seems simple enough, but it is perhaps more problematic in practice. Strictly speaking, the public information officer was probably the only truly dedicated boundary spanner in the CPD. Others had considerable boundary spanning duties, including the commissioner and command staff, but these did not fully define their jobs. One could argue that personnel in the YFSU (and CRU) were in dedicated boundary spanning roles. The YROs and YOOs were charged with working with students; school faculty, administration, and staff; and youth center staff, often on school or youth center premises. Still, these were not necessarily permanent assignments, nor were they hired to the CPD for these roles.

The police occupational identity is also arguably more rigid than many others. While boundary spanning does not imply giving up one’s occupational identity, it does suggest some level of comfort treating it as something that can be examined and modified rather than sacrosanct. Police personnel, especially those who are newer (and are trying to prove themselves) or who have less varied experience in the department (e.g., only in patrol), may on average have a more challenging time appreciating the value of such a role. Those who stay and flourish in YFSU roles are more likely to embody a boundary spanning role.

It should be noted that, similar to the police commissioner, who worked with a non-sworn chief administrative officer, the Safety Net lieutenant worked closely with a trusted non-sworn member of the department in ways that supported boundary spanning. The director of outreach and community programs was expressly recognized as a key resource in connecting the YFSU to non-police audiences both within the collaborative and more broadly. This relationship facilitated the expansion of the lieutenant’s occupational identity, which already seemed quite open to outside input. The YROs and YOOs also served as boundary spanners in their daily roles.
as YFSU personnel as well as representatives of Safety Net, as they were operated primarily in the schools and youth centers.

Although not explicitly one of Williams’s categories, the experience of studying the CPD suggests that internal boundary spanning was indeed a critical area that required attention. YFSU leadership has been working to introduce a change to patrol officers’ ideas and routines related to youth. This has involved speaking patrol’s language, including appeals to their frustration when problems return despite their efforts. Given the significant cultural and structural differences between patrol and the YFSU, for example, it may be appropriate to characterize certain personnel as intra-departmental boundary spanners. This may ultimately be a superfluous position, but until a department is able to achieve cultural consensus on a specific issue, it may be necessary. Herbert (2006, p. 106) lamented the isolation and ownership mentality within the Seattle Police Department, noting, “perhaps the best place for the police to build community is among themselves.”

Each area suggests different expectations for the role, skill sets, and organizational supports. Williams (2012) argues that boundary spanners should have certain attributes in order to perform this role well. These are related to managing relationships in networks, being able to connect with a diverse set of actors, organizing collaboratives, and developing creating solutions. Although interrelated, the extent to which each role and its associated competencies are needed at a particular boundary spanning point or within a particular relationship would be expected to vary. Departments can use these ideas to develop strategic processes around the selection of personnel for various spanning roles.

Boundary spanning suggests a way of framing partnership that connects sensemaking and institutional theory. One of the challenges the CPD experienced was trying to infuse notions of
partnership throughout the organization. Many participants noted the difficulty for patrol to adopt a collaborative role given the cultural and structural impediments. Cambridge’s experience suggests that even if “partnership” is located mostly in particular units or ranks, a fully integrated strategy is needed to ensure that a uniform message is being communicated internally and externally. To the extent that there are anticipated or unavoidable conflicts in messaging (e.g., the need for police use of force in some instances, undercover work), the department needs to counter this by increasing transparency, allowing for greater external input. But this is a band-aid if the department cannot change who it brings into the department and how it shapes and socializes its personnel through discursive and symbolic sensegiving (the latter through observable org structures).

The department recognized that “partnership” may not look the same across the CPD because of different roles and task environments encountered by personnel. Building on the need for differentiation, boundary spanning can support the development of a strategic plan for engaging with the external environment in collaborative ways. Rather than directly pitting traditional and democratic worldviews against each other, it may be more fruitful to think in terms of specific pressures and sovereigns. Differences in the relevance of partnership between leadership/special unit and line personnel appeared to stem in significant part from the different sovereigns that are influential within different segments of the department. One’s salient sovereigns are connected to the nature of one’s role and task (work) environment. Together, the demands of one’s specific job contribute to a certain outlook that supports coping with the attendant challenges. Identities are constructed out of these contexts and help individuals make sense of their professional world. The experiences of the Safety Net officers demonstrate the tension between these cultures and identities.
Although a police agency must ultimately be able to integrate its various activities under a single democratic mission, there is arguably a large if not infinite number of actual practices to accomplish this based on the specific context. A central question is how to produce harmony rather than dissonance as an increasing number of voices is added to the chorus. Consistency across efforts is critical, but it is also important to consider whether and how various efforts are connected to one another and the extent to which they are integrated more deeply into departmental moorings. The CPD was engaged in several productive interorganizational initiatives, but these often appeared not to talk with one another or to other agency activities.

Thinking in terms of roles and their associated sovereigns can direct attention not simply to the sovereigns whose demands must be satisfied for the sake of determining how best to satisfy them. As with the institutional environment more profoundly, the polity field of action can be changed as well as accommodated. If a department’s mission and how each organizational component should contribute to that mission are considered in light of the demands on each component—including sovereigns—a systematic assessment can be made. The notion of boundary spanning may be useful in helping agencies navigate the intervening terrain.

**STUDY LIMITATIONS**

This study involved several important limitations and, thus, areas for future research. Greater participation by middle managers and line officers would have benefited the study. As noted, there was a combination of an apparent lack of interest on the part of many lieutenants and most sergeants and a reluctance on the part of departmental leadership to make patrol officers more easily accessible. Although a consistent narrative coalesced around line officers as doing a difficult job that as constructed may have little opportunity, direction, or reward for what is often
considered more direct partnership work, it would have been helpful to have a wider array of perspectives from line officers and supervisors regarding their understandings and experiences.

The study looked at examples of the CPD’s efforts based on the police commissioner’s stated desire to engage other city agencies, community-based organizations, and the public. While this was useful in plumbing the specifics and empirical manifestations of this vision based in community and problem-oriented policing, the study did not examine a wider set of “partnerships” that may have exhibited distinct dynamics, different connections to organizational processes, or other variations. Future efforts should strive to include not only a greater number of partnerships but a wider range of efforts, for example, initiatives that involve only law enforcement or public safety agencies, potentially coercive “third party” partnerships, and partnerships with business interests. Police personnel could then be asked more pointedly about these initiatives and speak to how they bear on the nature of partnership, their connections (or lack thereof) to other types of “partnership,” whether different forms are compatible organizationally, and whether tensions across them create legitimacy problems for the organization. More direct observation of personnel and a deeper dive into departmental documentation would be necessary to accomplish this goal.

Lastly, the study focuses mostly on the clash between traditional police institutional environment and reform pressures rather than problems stemming from clashes across external sovereigns. Here, the pressures discussed have focused on community stakeholders wanting the police to be more accountable and less enforcement based. There are likely pressures that were missed, such as when developers or business interests demand a low crime and disorder area, putting pressure on the police to engage in tactics that move undesirable people quickly out of the area. Economic pressures are likely to impact the least organized and powerful stakeholders.
Given the recognition that a wide variety of stakeholders can function as key sovereigns and that the particular sovereigns can differ across parts of the department, future studies would do well to include the perspectives of city leaders, other agency heads, developers and other stakeholders bringing funds to city coffers, a variety of community members, or other stakeholders that are suspected of wielding influence over policing in the jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

In the end, then, partnership is caught up in a web of meaning. How it is understood, valued, and used are contingent upon professional cultural norms, the local context, organizational structures, and personal capacities. While it is important to ascertain how personnel conceptualize partnership, these ideas are only a small part of what partnership means in a police agency and in its broader context. For police departments and communities serious about police reform that truly embodies democratic values, partnership needs to be understood more holistically. The present study represents an initial step in more closely exploring how partnership is understood within policing contexts. There is much more work to be done.

At the level originally propelling the present study, given that the rhetoric of many police departments is centered on community policing or problem-oriented policing despite the likely cross-currents of various approaches coursing through organizations, it would be helpful to delve into the ways in which agencies pursue their explicitly stated approaches as well as the practices that may lie outside of them. This could be undertaken as survey research in which items ask tacitly about the use of strategies and tactics associated with various approaches (e.g., community-focused, problem-oriented, third-party, intelligence-led, counterterrorist, etc.). This general approach could also guide comparative case study research of a more qualitative natures. The survey approach could help to establish a sort of baseline of heterogeneity. It also suggests a
process for individual agencies to take if they are inclined to pursue organizational change in the
direction of more fully democratic policing. Although doing so might be seen as admitting
having followed a “non-democratic” approach, the pressure on police agencies to demonstrate
their legitimacy in the current atmosphere might be a strong incentive.

Given the limitations of the present study, there remains a need to more comprehensively
interview and observe a departmental cross-section, particularly with regard to patrol,
supervisors, and investigators. A more systematic review of formal agency mechanisms would
also be useful. How do recruitment efforts, entrance requirements, training and socialization,
policy, role expectations and performance review, and advancement opportunities support or
hinder partnership? Survey research could be used to explore a greater number of departments
with regard to these factors. In addition to obtaining responses from a national or regional sample
of departments, the data could be used to select sites for subsequent qualitative research.
Comparative case studies of sites purposefully selected to vary on key contextual variables could
help to more carefully examine understandings of partnership across settings. Qualitative
approaches could also explore the specific sensegiving and sensemaking processes involved.

In a related vein, it would be useful to better understand the polity fields of action in
which police agencies exist. The present study’s findings suggest that internal and external
sovereigns are critical influences on structural and cultural change and need to be more fully
understood. Using a neo-institutionalist lens, new work could assess what sovereigns are present
in the environment, what demands are made/pressures applied, what components of the agency
they exert pressure on, whether and how pressures are applied at particular temporal guideposts,
how these pressures might promote or obstruct collaborative, democratic policing, and how the
department overall and its individual components respond to sovereigns’ demands.
More directly focused on partnership, research is needed to consider the range of ways in which partnerships are operationalized in policing. This does not mean formal definitions; rather, what are the observable forms that collaborative work involving the police take? How do these forms correlate to the type of problem, collaborative experience/capacity, and other factors?

There is also certainly room for more directly collaborative work between researchers and police agencies. An action research approach could be used to work with specific police agencies to develop and operationalize an organizational approach to partnership. This might involve a community-centered process to agree upon a vision of partnership, assess the ways that this vision is currently being met or not, and working to construct an approach that meets these expectations.

Ultimately, the hope underlying this study is that it and the work it leads to can help police agencies to think more systematically about their work as a democratic institution. Partnership has been a popular rhetorical tool for thinking about the relationship between the police and the public. By asking what it means, this study questions the larger project of American policing. That it is so difficult for transparency, participation, and accountability to infuse policing’s core raises uncomfortable issues, even as some departments are engaged in encouraging work. This is perhaps a “wicked problem” given the range of values surrounding policing, but striving to make our state institutions more fully democratic is certainly a worthy pursuit.
APPENDED MATERIALS

APPENDIX 1: POLICE COMMISSIONER’S EMAIL TO DEPARTMENT

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: PD Supervisors
FROM: Commissioner Haas

SUBJECT: Partnerships & The Police - Research Project

In the coming months, the Cambridge Police Department will be participating in a research project exploring our partnerships with other agencies and community organizations. The project director is Russell Wolff, who is conducting this research for his doctoral dissertation at Northeastern University. The project seeks to understand our approach to partnership by studying such issues as which organizations we partner with, what issues are addressed through partnerships, how partnerships involving the department come about, how partnerships work, and what partnerships are intended to accomplish. This research will be valuable both to our department and to other police agencies pursuing such collaborations.

The first step of the project involves identifying and describing the range of partnerships in which the Cambridge Police Department has been involved during recent years. Mr. Wolff will be contacting several members of the department to discuss the partnerships or collaborations they may know about, as well as how they think about partnerships more generally. Interviews are expected to be 45-90 minutes and can take place at the location and time most convenient for you. These interviews are entirely voluntary, but I do encourage participation if your availability allows. What you discuss will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified in any reports or publications associated with this research. More details will be provided by Mr. Wolff should you be contacted.

Whether or not you are contacted to be interviewed, Mr. Wolff welcomes questions about this research and can be reached at rwolff@cambridgepolice.org or r.wolff@neu.edu.

Thank you,

Robert C. Haas
Police Commissioner
Dear [Name]:

As stated in the recent email sent by Police Commissioner Haas, I am conducting a research study on partnerships between the Cambridge Police Department and other agencies and organizations. This research, which is my doctoral dissertation project at the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, seeks to understand the way that the Cambridge Police Department approaches partnerships with other organizations, the characteristics of these partnerships, and how these partnership work. I am contacting you to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed as part of this study. As someone in a position to influence the department’s involvement in partnerships or to lead them, your participation is important to this research.

The first phase of the project is to identify the range of partnerships in which the CPD has been engaged during recent years and to learn about how personnel in leadership positions think about partnerships. Discussions will address the following topics:

- In your view, what are the central characteristics of partnerships and why are these characteristics important?

- What are the specific partnerships that have involved the CPD in recent years? Please note, I do not expect that any individual in the department knows about every partnership. What partnerships with other organizations do you know about (even if you are not directly involved with them)?

- How would you characterize the partnerships in which the CPD is involved? What are partnerships’ reasons for coming about, aims, perceived benefits, and challenges encountered?

- A lot of important information about partnerships (for example, membership, sources and allocation of funding, and data and outcomes tracked) will be contained in written documents, for example, proposals, reports, meeting minutes, MOUs, etc. What documents or other materials associated with these partnerships are already in place and can be shared?

Interviews are expected to be approximately 45-90 minutes and can take place at the location and time most convenient for you. Your participation in this study is voluntary and your agreement to participate may be withdrawn at any point. I have attached a document further explaining the protections afforded participants in this study and will address these issues prior to the start of the interview.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at rwolff@cambridgepolice.org or r.wolff@neu.edu. You may also call me at (617) 669-1818. Your participation will be valuable to this study and is very much appreciated. Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Russell Wolff
Project Director

[Approved Stamp]

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APPENDIX 3: UNSIGNED CONSENT FORM, CPD INTERVIEWS

Northwestern University
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Jack Greene, Ph.D., Russell Wolff, M.S.
A Study of Partnerships in the Cambridge Police Department

We would like to invite you to participate in a research project. The purpose of this research is to learn more about partnerships between the police and other agencies and organizations. Partnerships are an important part of the way the police operate today, but there is little research looking at how partnerships with the police come about, how they work, and what they aim to accomplish. In addition, we know little about how partnerships are approached overall by a police department. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The study will take place at a time and location most convenient for you and will take about 30-60 minutes. If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to discuss the partnerships you have knowledge of and your experiences working together with the partnership agencies and organizations. In addition, the research team is interested in locating materials associated with these partnerships (e.g., reports, proposals, meeting minutes, etc.).

There are no foreseeable risks or discomfort to you for taking part in this study. The information sought is related to your professional duties as a member of the Cambridge Police Department.

There are no direct benefits to you for your participation in this research. However, it is hoped that the study will offer police departments in general and the Cambridge Police Department in particular greater knowledge about partnerships involving the Cambridge police. Your participation may help to achieve this result.

The Cambridge Police Department will be identified specifically as the study site of this research project. However, your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being part of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time. The interview will be recorded so that the interviewer will not need to take extensive notes at the time of the interview. Recording the interview will also make it possible to transcribe the interview and allow the interview and limit the extent of follow-up for clarification. Recordings will be destroyed following transcription and analysis. If you are not comfortable with being recorded, please let the interviewer know and the interview will not be recorded.

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call Russell Wolff, M.S., the person mainly responsible for the research, at r.wolff@neu.edu. You can also contact Jack Greene, Ph.D., the Principal Investigator, at j.greene@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: (617) 373-4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

You may keep this form for yourself.

Thank you.

Jack Greene, Ph.D.
Russell Wolff, M.S.
Dear ________:

I hope this email finds you well. I am conducting a research study on partnerships between the Cambridge Police Department and other agencies and organizations. This research, which is my Ph.D. dissertation project at the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, seeks to understand what partnership means in the Cambridge context and how partnerships involving the CPD work.

During the first part of the study, I interviewed numerous members of the CPD about their ideas on partnership and learned about many of the relationships in which the department is involved. In the next phase, my plan is to explore several of these particular partnerships. **I am contacting you to ask if I could speak with you about [specific partnership] possibly participating as one of the partnerships included in this study.**

If [specific partnership] were to participate, data collection would involve the following:

- **Interviews with members of the partnership.** I would like to speak with as many of the individuals involved in the workings of the partnership as possible about their views of and experiences with the partnership. Interviews are voluntary, and the decision to participate in an interview would be solely up to the individual. Interviews are expected to take between 45-75 minutes, but I am happy to accommodate people’s time constraints. Responses will be kept confidential, which means no individual will be personally identified in any research products resulting from this project.

- **Observations of partnership activities.** In order to see how the partnership operates, I would plan to attend meetings of the partnership as well as other functions in which the members participate as part of their involvement. My expectation is that observations would take place over the course of 3-4 months and that I would work with members of the partnership to identify a schedule of internal and public events over that period of time.

- **Review of partnership materials.** Written and other materials are also important to understanding partnerships. In addition to publicly available materials, it would be necessary to access reports and other materials that are produced for internal purposes or that are required by other organizations (for example, funders, legislative bodies). This is not for the purposes of evaluating the partnership’s effectiveness. I am interested in what information is captured by the partnership and how it may be used.

I would appreciate it if we could meet in the near future so that I may provide more details and answer any questions you may have. I am also happy to make a presentation to the full membership of [specific partnership].

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at r.wolff@neu.edu. You may also call me at (617) 669-1818. Your participation will be valuable to this study and is very much appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Russell Wolff
Project Director
Dear _____:

I hope this email finds you well. I am conducting a research study on partnerships between the Cambridge Police Department and other agencies and organizations. This research, which is my Ph.D. dissertation project at the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, seeks to understand what partnership means in the Cambridge context and how partnerships involving the CPD work. [Specific partnership] is one of several partnerships that are participating in this study. I am contacting you to invite you to be interviewed as part of this study.

Interviews are expected to take 45-75 minutes, but I would be happy to speak with you for whatever amount of time you have available. Questions will address topics that involve your professional role in [specific partnership]. More specifically, I am interested in such issues as your role in the partnership, your expectations of the partnership, your experiences with the partnership, the accomplishments of the partnership, and any challenges you have observed.

Your participation is voluntary and responses will be kept confidential, which means no individual will be personally identified in any research products resulting from this project. I have attached a document to this email providing a fuller description of what to expect from your participation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at r.wolff@nec.edu. You may also call me at (617) 669-1818. Your participation will be valuable to this study and is very much appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Russell Wolff
Project Director
APPENDIX 6: UNSIGNED CONSENT FORM, PARTNERSHIP INTERVIEWS

Northeastern University
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Jack Greene, Ph.D., Russell Wolff, M.S.

A Study of Partnerships Involving the Cambridge Police Department

We would like to invite you to participate in a research project. The purpose of this research is to learn more about partnerships between the police and other agencies and organizations. Partnerships are an important part of the way the police operate today, but there is little research looking at what "partnership" means in local contexts and how police partnerships involving a particular jurisdiction work. In addition, we know little about the steps police agencies take to support different kinds of partnerships in which they are involved. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The interview will take place at a time and location most convenient for you and is expected to take 45-75 minutes. If you decide to participate, we will ask you to discuss the partnership in which you are involved with the Cambridge Police Department. This includes topics such as your role, expectations, and experiences in the partnership as well as your perceptions of the partnership's accomplishments and challenges.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomfort to you for taking part in this study. The information sought is related to your professional involvement with a partnership involving the Cambridge Police Department.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Any reports or publications based on this research will not identify you or any individual as being part of this project.

There are no direct benefits to you for your participation in this research, and you will not be paid for your participation in this study. However, it is hoped that the study will offer the Cambridge Police Department, its partners, and the City of Cambridge greater knowledge about partnerships involving the Cambridge police. Your participation may help to achieve this result.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time. The interview will be recorded so that the interviewer will not need to take extensive notes at the time of the interview. Recording the interview will also make it possible to transcribe the interview and limit the extent of follow-up for clarification. Recordings will be destroyed after being transcribed or otherwise used in the study. If you are not comfortable with being recorded, please let the interviewer know and the interview will not be recorded.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call Russell Wolff, M.S., the person mainly responsible for the research, at r.wolff@neu.edu. You can also contact Jack Greene, Ph.D., the Principal Investigator, at j.greene@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: (617) 373-4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

You may keep this form for yourself.

Thank you!

Jack Greene, Ph.D.
Russell Wolff, M.S.
APPENDIX 7: EXAMPLE OF CPD INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant information:
- Name, position, years at CPD, years in current position, other experiences in the department, experience outside the CPD.

Meaning of Partnership: What is a partnership?
- How do you know one? Is a partnership different from other types of relationships?
- What is required for a relationship to be a partnership?
- Purposes for CPD, why get involved?
- Expected benefits/challenges
- Influences on ideas
- Other terms used (e.g., collaboration)
- Has the CPD ever declined to join a partnership? Why?
- Have any organizations declined to join a partnership with the CPD? Why?

Organizational Approach and Mechanisms: How would you characterize the CPD’s approach to partnerships?
- What factors are considered when deciding to participate in a partnership? Are strategies other than partnership considered?
- How are individual members of the department selected to represent the CPD in partnerships? Is there a formal process involved? Do the unions influence who is selected?
- How would this approach be visible to personnel in the department? How are partnerships supported internally (e.g., policies, trainings, promotional criteria, accolades, cultural ethos)?
- How would this approach be visible to someone outside the department? What does the CPD do when entering into a partnership? Does the CPD have a strategy when entering into a partnership? What would external partners see when partnering with the CPD? Are there strategies to maintain partnerships?
- Is partnership between the CPD and other organizations or agencies something that is discussed in the department? Do you discuss the idea of partnerships with anyone in the department? With whom? How would you characterize these conversations?
- A lot of important information about partnerships will be contained in written documents, for example, proposals, reports, meeting minutes, MOUs, etc. What documents or other materials associated with these partnerships are already in place and can be shared?
- Has the CPD ever changed its approach to partnerships during recent years/while you’ve been at the department (e.g., types of issues, specific partners or types of orgs, policies governing, support, etc.)?

Influences on Partnership: Where does this approach come from?
- Leadership: How does the commissioner communicate about partnership between the CPD and other organizations and agencies?
• Political, cultural, economic environment: Are there pressures from outside the department to engage in partnership? Do outside influences seek a certain type of partnership?

**Heterogeneity of Partnership:**
- Internal: Do partnerships involving [PARTICIPANT’S INDIVIDUAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY] differ from those involving other parts of the CPD? Is the approach to partnership different when it involves these units?
- What do personnel in your division/area say about partnership?
- External: How does this approach compare with other local departments?

**Examples of Partnership: What partnerships has the CPD had with other agencies and other organizations during recent years?**
- Which have involved [THE PARTICIPANT’S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY]?
- Which have involved you personally?
- Successful partnerships – which ones and why?
- Unsuccessful or unsustainable – which ones and why?
APPENDIX 8: EXAMPLE OF RIDE-ALONG PROTOCOL

Background
- Time in CPD, length of time in patrol, day/night shifts.
- Worked in other departments? How do they compare?
- Are you assigned to a particular geographic beat area? How long have you had this assignment? How often do these beat assignments change?
- Have you always/ever ridden with a partner?
- How has your job changed over the years and commissioners?

What is the nature of patrol work?
- What do you spend most of your time on during your shifts? Is this what you want to be doing?

What does partnership mean to you?
- What does partnership mean to you? If you’re told to do partnerships, what would you expect to have to do?

How is partnership involved in your duties?
- Are you expected to work with people and organizations outside of the CPD during your shift? How is this expectation made clear?
- Is partnership something that is talked about in the department? By the commissioner and command staff? By your shift commander? In your patrol group?
- Have you received any training on how to work with other agencies or organizations?
- What are you evaluated on as a patrol officer? What do you want your shift commander to know about? What are you required to report about your work? What skills and experiences are useful to getting promoted?
- Can you tell me about the Community Services Unit? What kind of work do they do? Do you find their services useful to you? Have you ever worked with them? Is this a type of work you’d be interested in doing? Other specialized units you work with?

Are there opportunities for partnership during your shift?
- Is there pressure to clear calls and get back to your car? Do you have time for problem solving or other activities, to get to know the people, businesses, and other orgs on your beat?
- Who do you work with when you’re on patrol? What units and personnel from the CPD? What agencies, orgs, or people from outside the department? Are these positive interactions? What are the benefits and the challenges?
APPENDIX 9: EXAMPLE OF GLBT COMMISSION PROTOCOL

Participant Information

- Job, connection to Cambridge, how long a GLBT commissioner? How got involved? Purpose of a commissioner? What kinds of things do you do in this role? Involvement in other LGBT orgs? Any work with CPD through them?

Origins, Expectations, Aims: How would you characterize the relationship between the police and LGBT community in Cambridge?

- Have there been specific pivotal events related to CPD or public safety? Other events that have spurred change?
- When did the commission start working with the CPD? Why? What did the relationship look like, what were the goals, how were they chosen, how have things changed?
- Do commissioners agree on how to address public safety goals? Do you favor the current goals? Has your view of these aims changed?
- When did [POLICE LIAISON]97 start as liaison? Were there others? Does the commission interact with other members of the CPD? Are there liaisons with other agencies/orgs?
- What were your expectations of working with CPD/[POLICE LIAISON]? And of other CPD contacts? Did you expect them to be temporary or permanent? What about now?
- Prior experience working with CPD? Personal experience/perceptions of CPD? Changed? Perceptions of other LEAs?

Activities: What public safety issues does the commission work on?

- What public safety concerns are discussed by the commission? How do these come to the commission’s attention? Are these acted upon?
- What public safety initiatives are currently underway?
- Are you involved with police and public safety issues? How much time, what tasks?
- How much of this involves [POLICE LIAISON] specifically? What other interactions with the CPD does the commission have?
- How often do you meet with [POLICE LIAISON] and others in CPD?
- What joint activities do the commission and CPD do together? How do you think these activities are perceived by the LGBT community in Cambridge?

Dynamics: How would you characterize relationships between the commission and police liaison?

- Characterize relationships among the commissioners?
- Characterize communication between the commission and [POLICE LIAISON]/the CPD?
- Challenges in communication between the commission and [POLICE LIAISON] or other CPD personnel? Have you personally experienced any such challenges?

97 The bracketed text replaces the name of the liaison.
Trust: How would you describe the level of trust between the commission, police liaison, and CPD?
- Do you trust the CPD personnel you’ve encountered/worked with? What does trust mean to you in this relationship?
- How do you think your organization is perceived by the CPD?

Power and Structure: How do decisions get made about public safety issues?
- How do decisions get made about issues involving the CPD?
- Is there a police/fire subcommittee? Describe work and membership. Do other members of the commission interact with the CPD?
- Is there any funding specifically for law enforcement related activities?

Partnership Health: Describe the relationship between the commission and liaison.
- What is it about [POLICE LIAISON] that makes him an effective partner? Anything to change?
- What happens when [POLICE LIAISON] and/or the police commissioner leave?

Partnership Measures and Effects: What has having a CPD liaison helped the commission to accomplish?
- How are these accomplishments taken note of/publicized?
- Have you noticed any changes in police culture, interactions with LGBT community?
- Does the partnership collect data on anything? How is information analyzed/used? Any regular documents or reports?
- What’s next for the commission on public safety issues?
- Are there any challenges working with CPD and of addressing public safety issues? Do these differ from working with other police departments? How do you think this partnership will help to overcome those challenges?

Meaning of Partnership: Is the commission’s work with the CPD a “partnership”?
- What does “partnership” mean to you?
- What about this relationship do you think reflects partnership?
- What would you like to see happen for it to become more of a partnership?
APPENDIX 10: EXAMPLE OF CAMBRIDGE SAFETY NET COLLABORATIVE PROTOCOL

**Participant Information**
- Position/role in your organization, time there, role in SN, time started participating in SN, amount of time devoted to SN, Cambridge native?

**Partnership Aims: What is the purpose of Safety Net?**
- What are its goals?
- How were these goals chosen? Have these goals changed?
- Is there agreement within SN about these goals?
- Has your perspective on the aims or methods of the partnership changed?

**Involvement and Expectations: How did your organization become involved in SN?**
- How did you personally become involved in SN?
- How did you personally become involved in SN? For how long, what role? Do you work together on SN issues?
- What did you expect of your interactions within SN?
- Did you think SN would be temporary or permanent?
- What organizations are involved in SN, which are core, which are active/inactive participants?
- Did you have prior personal experience working with other organizations in SN?
- Did you have prior experience working with the CPD?
- How were police personnel selected to be a part of SN? Has this process worked out? What changes have taken place?

**Activities: What do you do in Safety Net?**
- Tell me about the bi-weekly meetings. What usually goes on? What comes out of them? Are they productive?
- Do you find the YLS a useful tool? How did its use come about?
- Are you involved in other SN meetings?
- Tell me about the leadership meetings. What usually goes on? What comes out of them? Are they productive?
- What outside orgs do you interact with for SN?
- Before SN, what was your organization doing to address the issues focused on by SN? How does SN’s approach compare? What stood in the way of achieving those goals? How do you think this partnership will help to overcome those challenges?

**Communication and Trust: Describe how the Safety Net partners work together.**
- Which members do you most interact with in SN? For what purposes? How often? How do you interact (email, phone, in person, etc.)? Are there members you tend not to interact with often or at all? Why?
- How well do the different organizations work together?
- Are members of different orgs able to communicate clearly with each other? Have there been challenges/efforts to enhance? You personally?
• How have you found working with the CPD? What are your experiences working with both the sworn and civilian members?
• How do you think your organization is perceived by other members?

Power and Structure: Who would you say are the leaders of Safety Net?
• What do they do as leaders? What do they do well? What might you do differently?
• What organizations are the most influential in the partnership? Has the location of influence changed during the course of the partnership?
• How do decisions get made? Do all members have an equal vote? Do you have voice?
• Does SN receive any funding? From where? How is funding allocated among the members? How are allocations decisions made?
• Are there sub-committees or groups that meet separately from the bi-weekly meetings?

Partnership Measures and Effects: What has Safety Net accomplished?
• How do you know this?
• Does SN collect data on anything? Activities performed, interactions among members, clients served, outcomes achieved?
• How is information that is collected analyzed and/or used?
• Are any documents or reports produced on SN for outside audiences? For inside?
• Has involvement in SN affected your organization in some way? (positively or negatively)?
• What do you think are the biggest challenges for SN?
• What do you think are the biggest challenges to working with the CPD? Does this differ from working with other police departments?

Meaning of Partnership: Is Safety Net a “partnership?”
• What does “partnership” mean to you?
• What about this relationship do you think reflects partnership?
• What would you like to see happen for it to become more of a partnership?
APPENDIX 11: EXAMPLE OF THE PORT/AREA FOUR PROTOCOL

Participant information
- Personal background, employment, ties to the neighborhood

Organizational Affiliation
- Origins: When was it started, what is its mission, and what does it do?
- Operations: Who runs it, who are considered members, who attends mtgs and events?
- Employment/personal involvement: When did you start, positions and duties?
- Activities: What issues have you worked on? Do any of them involve crime, public safety, or the CPD?

Organizational Experience with CPD: How would you describe the relationship between your organization and CPD?
- Has there been frequent contact and involvement between them? Do you feel like the police are a resource for your organization and the neighborhood?
- Describe the activities involving the CPD. Do they come to meetings, organize events, or otherwise work with community organizations and members? Who from your organization works directly with the police?
- Have you, personally, worked with the CPD?
  - Has this always been within your organization?
  - What issues did you work with the CPD on?
  - Who have you worked with from the CPD?
  - What members of the department have you seen and met?
- Did the nature of the relationship between your organization and the CPD change?

The Neighborhood: What are the biggest problems facing the neighborhood?
- To what extent are crime and public safety concerns? Fear of crime?
  - How have crime and public safety in the neighborhood changed over the years? How would you characterize them now?
  - Have there been particular incidents that have shaped the neighborhood’s relationship with the CPD?
- How would you describe the relationship between the neighborhood and the CPD?
  - Is the CPD regularly involved, or does it tend to get react to incidents?
  - Are there any racial, ethnic, or other tensions between groups in the neighborhood and the CPD? How did these develop?
  - What groups/orgs have positive relationships with CPD? How did these develop?
  - Has the nature of these relationships changed? How and why?
- Beyond your organization, how is the CPD involved in the neighborhood? (e.g., attending meetings, organizing/participating in events, patrol, walk and talks, problem-solving, mentoring)?
- What community organizations are prominent in the neighborhood? City agencies? Businesses and associations? Community members?
What groups would you say work most closely with the CPD? Which groups do you see as having the most contentious relationship with the CPD?

- Do other law enforcement agencies (e.g., MIT, MBTA, State police) work in the neighborhood? Do they have distinct reputations or do people generally seem to view them in the same way?
- Has the CPD been an enthusiastic or reluctant partner with the neighborhood?

**Communication: How would you describe your interactions with members of the CPD?**

- Do the police ever make contact with you or your orgs proactively to address issues in the community? When, how often, how?
- Do you feel like there are particular contacts you can reach out to directly? Who? Do these contacts have the ability/authority to make things happen? How do you reach out to people in the CPD?
- Have you felt that the personnel you’ve interacted with have understood your concerns and been receptive?
- Were you able to communicate effectively to address them?
- Do you know about the Neighborhood Sergeants Program? Who is involved? What has this program done in the neighborhood?

**Trust: To what extent do you trust the CPD?**

- What does trust mean to you in this context?
- Have there been any specific breaches of trust? How were these handled?
- Have there been any efforts specifically to build trust? What were they?
- Are there particular members of the department that you do or do not trust? Do your views of these members also reflect your feelings about the department as a whole?

**Accomplishments and Challenges**

- What do you think the CPD has done well in the neighborhood?
- Can you point to successful ways the CPD and neighborhood have worked together?
- What challenges have faced the relationship between the CPD and the neighborhood?

**Meaning of Partnership**

- Would you characterize the relationship between the neighborhood and CPD as a “partnership”? How about between your organization and the CPD?
- What about these relationships strike you as representing a partnership?
- What do you think would be needed to help make it more of a partnership?
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