UNDERSTANDING KIDS/TEENS' CONSTRUCTION OF POLICE AND CRIME CONCEPTS AS A COMMUNITY POLICING APPROACH: SOCIAL GROUNDED THEORY APPLIED

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ABSTRACT: There has been a growing interest among academicians, researchers and policy-makers in promoting community policing as a modern way to deal with crimes and community problems. Community policing is a philosophy of policing based on the concept that police officers and citizens working together in creative ways to control crimes. The purpose of this research is to get the perspectives of kids/teens regarding crime and police since this segment of society is most vulnerable to crimes. This will enhance youth's participation to the community policing and the police can be informed how teens/kids think about them. This research seeks explanations for the question of "What and how do kids/teens define and construct the police and crime?" The perspectives of kids/teenagers were examined in a small Southern City, Tallahassee, Florida and the data gathered through both the eyes of staff who have working experience with kids/teens and kids/teens directly. A variety of empirical data through personal observations, others' experiences, field notes, and interviews were collected to analyze the issue by social grounded theory as a qualitative research paradigm.

Key Words: Community policing, police, crime, social grounded theory, qualitative research methods.

TOPLUM POLİSLİĞİ YAKLAŞIMINDA ÇOCUKLARIN POLİS VE SUÇ KAVRAMLARINI OLUŞTURMALARINI ANLAMA: TEMELLENDİRİLMİŞ SOSYAL TEORİ UYGULAMASI

ÖZET: Akademisyenler, araştırmacılar ve siyasa yapımcılar arasında, suç ve toplum sorunlarının çözümünde modern bir yaklaşım olan toplum polisliğini yaygınlaştırma konusunda artan bir ilgi gözlenmektedir. Toplum polisliği, polis ile vatandaşların suçları kontrol etmede ortaklaşa geliştirdikleri yaratıcı yaklaşımları içeren bir felsefedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, suça en çok maruz toplumdaki çocukların suç ve polis ile ilgili görüşlerini anlamaktır. Bu da, gençliğin toplum polisliğine katılımını sağlayacak ve polisi, çocukların kendileri hakkında ne düşündükleri konusunda bilgilendirecektir. Bu çalışma "çocuklar polis ve suç kavramını nasıl tanımlar ve inşa ederler" sorusuna açıklamaları araştırıyor. Çocukların bakış açıları Florida'nın güneyindeki küçük bir şehir olan Tallahassee'de incelenmiş ve veriler çocuklarla çalışan personelin bakış açılarıyla ve kendileriyle doğrudan görüşülerek derlenmiştir. Konu, nitel bir araştırma metodu olan temellendirilmiş sosyal teori uygulanarak kişisel gözlemler, alan notları, başkalarının deneyimleri ve görüşmeler aracılığıyla derlenen çok farklı veriler ile irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplum polisliği, polis, suç, sosyal temele dayanan teori, nitel araştırma yöntemleri.

INTRODUCTION

The problems regarding crime, fear of crime, and social disorder etc, are becoming increasingly important in the public agenda. Solving these problems is not so simple because they have extensions/implications to the problems and crime in the society. Community policing was suggested as a solution to deal with existing problems in a broader perspective. The interest in community policing has to do with the recognition that traditional policing has failed to solve some crime-related problems we face in today's society. Policy-makers after recent incidents increasing crime rates have further emphasized the interest in improving community policing. The study of community policing is especially important for public administration and policy researchers because it emphasizes such issues as the change of organizations from a centralized and bureaucratic model to a decentralized and open model, the improvement of the relationship between public employees and their clients (Swiss, 1992:355). And also recent the emphasis on governance philosophy, the quality of public services and the satisfaction of citizens make subject more interesting for further research.

Community policing is a relatively recent philosophy of policing based on the concept that police officers and private citizens working together in cooperative and creative ways. Researches indicate that kids and youth are most at risk for violence and serious delinquency. To do something good for the youth, community policing tries to communicate with youth organizations and encourage their activities, and get support from the community for the youth organizations. Police are advised to understand first how kids/teens construct their views about police and crime to communicate better with these segments of communities.

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The purpose of this research is to get the perspectives of kids/teens regarding crime and police so that the police can be informed how teens/kids think about themselves and enhance their participation to the community policing. The perspectives of teenagers regarding police and crime were examined in a small Southern City, Tallahassee, Florida in 2005. The perspectives of kids/teenagers were studied and gathered through both the eyes of staff who have working experience with kids/teens and kids/teens directly. A variety of empirical materials; personal observations and experiences, field notes, interviews and other participatory observations were collected to analyze and understand the issue by using a qualitative research method of social grounded theory. Outcomes of research were discussed and strategies were suggested to improve the relations based on the findings.

Emergence of Community Policing

The emergence of community policing were evaluated in two main categories; (1) traditional professional policing and its problems, and (2) philosophical foundations and contributions of various disciplines and perspectives.

Traditional Professional Policing
The development of policing was described in few stages as the legalization, the militarization, and the professionalization of the police function. However, this process was also evaluated in terms of development of professional policing. Historically, local law enforcement in the 1930s and 1940s was characterized by the "beat cop," who knew every resident and business owner in an assigned area. Likewise, this officer was aware almost immediately when a crime occurred and generally found out crimes quickly from members of the community. This timely apportionment of justice helped to create a strong bond between members of the community and the officers who patrolled their districts (Bobinsky, 1994:15). However, this policing model harbored significant drawbacks. Officers often gained something through corrupted political deals, were poorly trained, and rarely displayed positive appearance or demeanor (Patterson, 1995:5-6).

The professional policing model gained its significance in order to reduce corruption and increase efficiency in policing. Considering the vast areas covered by a limited number of officers, response times were exceptionally quick. Such areas as recruiting practices, training, and professionalism were vastly improved. Nonetheless, the professional policing model possessed its own inherent shortcomings (Bobinsky, 1994:16). Officers became less a part of the communities they served. In fact, they were intentionally placed "outside" of the community as a reaction to the potential for corruption that existed in prior policing models. The "incident-oriented" policing model placed an impressive array of resources at officers' disposal to locate offenders, but made little attempt to reduce actual crime numbers.

Philosophical Foundations
There are several disciplines and approaches that have an impact on formation of community policing such as communitarianism, new public management, governance, and similar other approaches. Communitarianism, mainly drawn from the writings of sociologists, focused on themes of balancing rights and responsibilities, nurturing moral ties of family, neighborhood, workplace and citizenship as a basis for bringing about a better society (Stillman II, 1995:24-27). And consequently their concerns can be placed upon collective responsibility, or moral values of citizenship which translate into specific policy proposals such as national public service programs, improved crime control, health care, job retraining, child-day care for working mothers, welfare reform, and the like.

Police involvement with the community in a new, proactive, positive relationship is a key element of the emerging political role. The administrative changes necessary to facilitate this "reengineering" are fundamental to internal political problems which must be resolved. This is not occurring in a vacuum but is representative of a broader "community movement" signified by recent managerial trends and more vocal grass roots concerns voiced by citizens from the community. The philosophical changes in management practices directed towards customers -or a constituency in political terms- coupled with a new vision of policing which offers hopes to deal with crime effectively.

Concept and Basics of Community Policing
The concept of community policing has been referred to various terms such as neighborhood-oriented policing, community oriented policing and community-based policing. Many policing researchers consider community policing as "modern," "progressive," or "contemporary" policing. The concept of community policing is closely related to the community relations programs of the 1950s and 1960s which developed to increase interaction between the community, especially the minority community, and the police and continued through the 1970s with the team

policing concept (Greene, 1987:1-3). In spite of the failure of the team policing concept in some agencies, the idea of a "community concept of policing" has remained in the agenda for the fact that the bureaucratic model and conventional police practices have not been effective in the long run (Greene, 1987:5).

The U.S. Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services defines the term broadly as "any policing aimed more at crime prevention than on chasing and catching bad guys; those tactics can include working with the community, decentralizing command, or simply increasing the number of beat police officers in a community" (Oliver, 2001:25). The philosophy (Carter, 1995:10-12) is predicated on the belief that achieving these goals requires that police departments develop a new relationship with the law-abiding people in the community, allowing them a greater voice in setting local priorities, and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in their neighborhoods.

This philosophy encourages officers to get out of their desks and on to the beat, where their visibility will reassure the public that they are there for a good. It shifts the focus of police work from handling random calls to long term solutions. Community policing calls for a new breed of police officer operationalizing a new professionalism based on democratic values such as participation and openness, rather than on technological values rooted in substantive expertise (Gerasimos and Davis III, 1998:486). Officers are becoming more actively involved with residents, youth organizations, schools and other local civil society organizations.

Community policing especially emphasizes a full partnership between the community and its police in identifying local crime and disorder problems. It claims that crime and disorder problems are the joint property of the community (as client) and the police (as service deliverer). Therefore, the community members need to participate in shaping public police policy based on interactive and cooperative relationships. Officers are not and should not be solely responsible for reducing crime. The entire community –citizens, business and industry leaders, schools, churches, civic organizations, police, and others- must share that responsibility (Inman, 1994).

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Despite various forms applied by police agencies, community policing has some foundational goals and principles, including: 1) goals -fear reduction among citizens, increased citizen satisfaction with the police, and development of techniques to address the problems of the community and 2) principles -community building, trust, and cooperation. To achieve these goals in accordance with principles, following general operations strategies can be provided (Travis, 1995:7-16):

- permanent neighborhood-based offices or stations,
- designation of community or neighborhood officers,
- foot patrol as a specific assignment or periodic expectations,
- regularly scheduled meetings with community groups,
- specific training and interagency involvement in problem identification and resolution,
- use of regulatory codes to combat drugs/crime.

Problems of Community Policing
In order to successfully implement their community policing programs, most researchers state that police organizations should adopt an "organic" organizational structure, a participatory management style, new reward structures, new training programs and selection criteria, and new control systems. Community policing entails the formal enrichment or enlargement of the job of patrol officer, and increasing the autonomy of the patrol officer calls for the enlargement of citizen participation as oversight to prevent potential abuses. Hence, the community policing model makes a host of demands on the hierarchical, military model, which has been largely closed to public participation. This may be the reason that in 1994, it was reported (Gerasimos and Davis III, 1998:493-495) that "in practice, no department has yet fully implemented community policing as an overall philosophy".

Community policing often entails putting more officers on foot or on bicycle patrol, or operating out of storefront substations on long term assignment to a particular neighborhood so the officers become readily accessible to and intimately familiar with the residents and their concerns. Buermann says "a large percentage of law enforcement agencies who say they're doing community policing aren't doing it, because they're not really sure what it means" (Weber, 1999:33). There are other problems in the implementation of community policing (Stevens and Yach, 1995) such as; diverse communities have conflicting demands, community's understanding of community policing, working

with other agents which have their own specific goals sometimes may contradict with the benefits of community, alienation between community oriented police officers and patrol officers (Henderson, 1999:5-11), and current culture and hierarchical tradition of policing.

The researches postulate that problems of the youth such as abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, truancy and violence have been increasing. These factors include availability of drugs and guns, low neighborhood attachment, extreme economic deprivation, family conflict, early antisocial behavior in school, academic failure, alienation, rebelliousness and so forth. But those risks can be mitigated, they argue, by strengthening the factors that research has shown prevent young people from resorting to destructive behaviors: a resilient temperament and positive social orientation, bonding with good adult role models and development of healthy beliefs, all inculcated within a framework of clear standards of right and wrong (Chaiken, 1998:485). To do something for the youth, community policing tries to communicate with youth organizations and encourage their activities, and get support from the community for the youth organizations.

There are many reasons why community policing is not working well (Greene, 1987:3-4; Bracey, 1997:29). One of the important barriers to community policing is community's understanding of community policing (Stevens and Yach, 1995). However, current studies, focusing mostly on results, neglect what members of communities think about police and crime. This situation prevents to capture the picture as a whole and hence inevitably leads community-policing efforts to end up with less successful. For that reason, this study aims to explore what this young segment of community think about police and crime first.

Research Design
Researches indicate the kids/youth are most at risk for a violence and serious delinquency. Therefore, one of social groups in a community is kids/teens[1] whom community policing wants to cooperate. Simply one cannot improve relations with another one without knowing what s/he thinks about him/her. The aim of this study is to explore what younger members of communities think about police and crime. However, rather than all community groups only kids/teens were chosen as a focus for the study. Kids/teens' perspectives was considered as reflections and implications of community's understanding. The perspectives of teenagers regarding police and crime were examined in Tallahassee in 2005. The perspectives of kids/teenagers were both studied and gathered through the eyes of staff that have working experience with kids/teens and their own experiences.

Research Question
The purpose of this research is to get the perspectives of kids/teens regarding crime and police so that the police can be informed how teens/kids think about themselves and enhance their participation in community policing. The question of "What and how do kids/teens define and construct "the police" and "crime?" was explored. The concepts of police and crime were considered together because the police are the ones that have direct involvement with crime issues. They are legally responsible for controlling and reducing crime particularly in physical actions. Separating both of these very interrelated concepts would downgrade understanding of multi-dimensional phenomena.

Data Collections and Analysis Methods
A variety of empirical data; personal experience, field notes, interviews and other participatory direct observations were collected to analyze and understand the issue using a qualitative research paradigm. Because quantitative methods are insufficient and/or inappropriate, qualitative method was chosen to be able to capture meanings and feelings in detail.

Data Collection
The information for this research was gathered by using these methods: observations, and interviews with the staff from "Boys and Girls Club", and a staff who has a work experience with kids/teens. The perspectives of kids/teenagers on crime and police were gathered through both the eyes of those staff and direct interview with them. There are several reasons why adults rather than only kids/teens themselves were used as sources of information. There are legal limitations for interviewing with kids/teens and permission of parents is required. On the other hand, both because of complexity of the method and the phenomenon used required the researcher to interview with adults who can better understand the subject.

Participatory/Direct Observations

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[1] The definition of kids/teens covers the age between 6 and 18.

The data based on the field notes were gathered in the natural settings of several Boys and Girls Club in Tallahassee. In fieldwork activity, as a participant observer and/or in some extent as a covered observer, the observations were made. Researcher took advantage of being a foreigner when interpreting various perspectives since most of those behaviors was taken granted by the natives.

After a certain period, having learned more about the club and networks of relations helped the researcher in choosing the interviewees. This was very important either choosing interviewee or interpreting the results since thoughts of kids/teens were also learned through the eyes of people worked and knew them. The focus of researcher in these field observations was on communication and relations between staff and kids/teens in order to infer how much knowledgeable they are and their capacity to convey the perspectives of kids/teens. The interviewees were chosen to represent the general attitudes and deviations from groups.

Interviewing

After field observations, main form of data gathering was semi-structured interviewing. Semi-structured interviewing involves a combination of structured and unstructured interviewing techniques. Semi-structured interviewing allows a researcher to tap into the meaning with depth and diversity, and stress a natural expression of the life world. One has a guideline of questions prepared in advance but s/he is not rigidly stick on them because of not knowing what to anticipate. This flexibility gives researcher to be active listener, match and change questions according to the context, form non-threatening questions, encourage participation from subject, acknowledge wishes of the subject, keep interview on its course, and help to handle emotional subjects (Patton, 1987:7-12; Rubin and Rubin, 1995:1-9).

Semi-structured interviewing is more suitable for grounded theory since the researcher should be interactive with data gathering and in different coding stages and analyzing. Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:102-104).

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The interviewees were chosen from the people who worked in a job directly related kids/teens. Four interviews were held from three different "boys and girls clubs" in Tallahassee[2]. One interview was done with a former staff worked in juvenile delinquency and police officer. One interview in Magnolia Boys and Girls Club was held among the kids in a way that sometimes kids/teens participated and answered the questions directly.

In question form, the concept of "community policing" was not used since people generally do not know much about community policing. However, contents of the questions are directly related with the philosophy of community policing. For example, the question of "how can community-police relations be improved?" and others explicitly illustrated the thoughts and expectations about community policing.

Analysis Method

Social grounded theory was used to investigate the perspectives of kids/teens regarding crime and police to be able to better understand them, and so that both we can inform the police how teens/kids think about themselves and enhance their participation to the community policing by improving positive meaning of police and policing. Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 90). Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory and then prove it but end up with a theory.

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[2] These boys and girls clubs are Springfield Boys and Girls Club, Miccosukee Boys and Girls Club, and Magnolia Boys and Girls Club.

Table: 1 Interview Questions with Adults about Teenagers

The purpose of our interview is to learn the perspectives of kids/teenagers in terms of crime, police, and police-teenagers relations in order to enhance their participation to the community policing activities.

1- Could you describe what you do here in this club? Or what are your responsibilities?
2- What do you like most in working with kids? (what do you like most in your job) And why?
3- What is the greatest difficulty you have in working with these kids? And why?
4- How could you describe a fairly typical kid before working here and after working here?
5- Do you have any fear (regarding job or environment) when you come here? If yes, explain.
6- Tell me about your neighborhood? What? Why?
7- In working with these children, do you gain any sense of their awareness of crime? What kinds of crime related things do they talk about? Can you give some examples?
8- How do kids define crime?
9- How do adults (who come here or work here) define crime?
10- How does the typical police officer you interact with define crime?
11- Do you live in this area? If yes, Q12.
12- How safe do you feel while walking alone in this area after dark? Or are there things you avoid doing at night in this area?
13- Have you experienced or observed crime in this area? If yes, Q14.
14- Can you describe what it was like?
15- Do you ever observe interactions between children and police? If yes, Q16.
16- How do they interact with each other? Or what works well in this interaction? And what doesn't work in this interaction so well?
17- How do kids seem to feel about police?
18- How do you know that? Could you give me some examples to illustrate how do they feel about police?
19- What do you suggest to improve relations between police and teenagers?

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Theories should be grounded in data from the field, especially in actions, interactions, and social process of people. In order to illustrate how people act and react to phenomenon, the researcher collects data, develops and interrelates categories of information, and writes theoretical propositions or hypotheses or presents a visual picture of the theory (Creswell, 1998:150). The aim is to generate theory; the theory is articulated at the end of the study in the form of a narrative statement, a visual picture, or a series of hypothesis or propositions. Literature review is used to show gaps and/or bias in existing literature to provide rationale for a grounded theory. The language is expected to be scientific and objective.
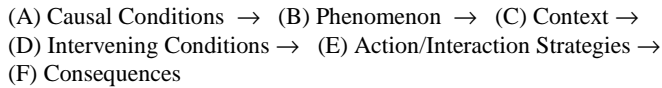
Analytical process in grounded theory follows mainly three stages (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:97): open, axial, and selective coding. Grounded analysis starts with data from the field, which are systematically broken down with open coding to build up a scheme of categories, dimensions, and properties. This is done with a rigorous analysis line by line of the data collected. Memos are used to record the researcher's interpretations of the data's meaning and as reference for later comparisons of new categories and themes.

The next step is axial coding where the researcher interconnects related categories and themes as well as removes spurious elements. This serves to compact the analytical scheme. In axial coding stage, a researcher explores causal conditions, specifies strategies, identifies intervening conditions, and delineates the consequences for the phenomenon. The interconnecting axial coding pushes towards a central concept or core status category or categories. This process continues until all categories are saturated so that is when no new information about it emerges.

In selective coding stage, the new centralized categories, themes and concepts are integrated until theoretical saturation occurs. This is a saturation in which no new properties and dimensions have emerged from the data and the analysis has accounted for as much of the variability as possible It is at this point theory, conditional propositions, and models emerge from the exhaustive saturation of all the central themes. A story line is then constructed to present, explain, and describe the emerging theory.

A highly simplified model of grounded theory model may look like as in the following (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:99):

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(A) Causal Conditions  →  (B) Phenomenon  →  (C) Context →
(D) Intervening Conditions →  (E) Action/Interaction Strategies →
(F) Consequences
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Constructing Police and Crime (Outcomes)
There are many factors shaping individuals' understanding and behavior about police and crime. Firstly, the concept of police and crime were studied in a way that how kids/teens define these concepts. And then a process or factors that shape their understanding of phenomenon was considered. To be able to simplify the understanding of the phenomenon, these factors were classified into several categories and sub-categories. Nonetheless, since they are interrelated to each other suggesting clear-cut categorization were not possible.

Defining Crime and Police
The definition of crime and police changes according to each person depending on his/her perspectives and/or cultural settings.

The Concept of Crime

There are several questions regarding crime such as if kids have had experience of crime, how kids, adults and typical police officer define crime. Crime is mostly defined in a general meaning of wrongdoing and breaking law. However, there are differences in understanding of wrongdoing and breaking law, which can be related to both socialization process and the applications or enforcement of rules and regulations by the police[3].

There are some other definitions emerged out of conversations. A female teen in a group discussion defined crime as "getting problem with others." However, when examined in depth[4], one can see that this definition also has implication for breaking law and then getting trouble with the police.

For African American kids/teens, crime has been seen as a usual way of life. They argue that this is because of discrimination against the African American Community. According to them, police treat African American as potential criminals. If everybody is a potential criminal, it is usual way of life but not real crime. Therefore, the crime is not a big deal something one faces daily. Common types of crime kids/teens commit are fighting, stealing, and drugs. On the other hand, they are generally subject to fight, oppression, child abuse, rape etc.

The Concept of Police
Although police has been defined as law enforcement agency in a very general meaning, people attach various negative meanings and feelings to the concept. Almost none of the interviewee told something positive about the

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[3] These issues were evaluated in the sub-title of "factors influencing constructs of crime and police."
[4] In follow-up questions, interviewee restricted her definition only to include illegal problems.

police. They generally stay away from police, and find them cold, unfriendly in best. They define and/or know police mostly as aggressive and oppressive. On the other hand, for the African American teens, police gain the meaning as a discriminatory agent. In short, the police have many negative meanings in the eyes of adults, and hence kids/teens' since they are reflections of adults. These characteristics may be given as aggressive, oppressive, cold and unfriendly, untrustworthy, corrupted, and discriminatory faces of police understanding.

Factors Affecting Constructs of Police and Crime
The main factors influencing kids/teens' understanding and behavior about police and crime may be given as; institutions that socialize kids/teens, peers[5], self learning or life experiences, police organization itself, and social problems.

Institutions that Socialize Kids/Teens
Socialization process of kids/teens play crucial role in their constructs of crime and police. The important institutions in kids/teens socialization are family, school, media particularly TV, religious institutions, and other civic organizations/clubs. How do these institutions affect the understanding of crime and police? The institutions are especially important in defining right and wrong, which supports and reinforce legal regulations and norms. Legal regulations without social background and support are not enough to maintain social order. Individuals who do wrong are categorized as criminals if it is particularly regulated by law. Conversely, police may be introduced from negative or positive viewpoints of these institutions depending on the perspectives and experiences with the police.

Chronologically, family is the first most important institutional factor shaping behaviors or attitudes of kids toward everything and so police and crime. These kids seem to accept what their parents teach or tell them almost like an ultimate truth. The extent of family influence in teaching the values of society in a normative way may be seen from the following example in one group discussion:

> "R: What is crime?
> 14-15 years old girl: Wrongdoing.
> R: What is wrongdoing?
> Girl: Hmm…
> R: What is wrong?
> Girl: What my mom says so…"

Most of the kids/teens do not have problems with police and even though they have not faced or met police in person, they nearly hate police since what they have been told from other members of the family. Even though parents do tell their children to go to police if they have any problems, the kids/teens still do not have positive images of police.

Interestingly, while parents want to control and/or do kids submissive, they use a police metaphor to scare them beginning from infancy. Therefore, children intentionally or unintentionally gain negative feeling and meaning of police. The kids/teens' reaction becomes "stay away from police." One explains this situation as in the following example:

> "By the way, when you are small, parents make kids scare by using police metaphor… I will call a cop and he will get you. "I will go over, get the police officers, and they will lock you up." People do it. We don't give good concept of cops."

> If kids are from criminal family, they see crime as a way of life. The same understanding was seen in case of African American kids/teens, but they argue that this is because of discrimination against the African American Community. Hence, if everybody is a potential criminal, it is usual way of life but not real crime. However, juvenile delinquents are not only from these kinds of criminal families, which suggest searching factors other than these kinds of family relations in crime.

The role of media is important in shaping understanding of kids/teens either directly or indirectly and negatively or positively. Media news and TV movies about corruption, discrimination, and aggressive aspects of police and policing repeatedly present spread the image of bad police. TV is the well-known media tool that has impact on children, particularly if it baby sits kids. The kids/teens sympathize the life style they see in TV movies and tend to imagine it in their real life, which most likely to motivate and increase aggressiveness, violence, and other kinds of crime among them. Fights, vandalism, stealing, drug-selling may influence the kids/teens in some extent.

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[5] Even though peers also play a role in socialization process, another category was created since they are not institutions.

For instance, one of the interviewees underlines the importance of media in shaping what kids/teens think about police and how TV affects them. The nickname they use for police comes from TV program;

> "I: Children don't do well with the police. As a matter of fact, they don't call them police. They
> have nickname for them.
> R: What is that?
> I: They call them five oh –50-
> R: Where does it come from?
> I: It comes from old 1970's TV program "Hawaii 502." They do not call them as police."

Media in short, both cause to increase and worsen crime rates, which increase responsibility of police, and spread the negative image of police. In turn, all these together aggravate the negative understanding and image of police.

Schools in many respects substitute and/or complement the role of family in educating kids/teens. "Schools are doing very good job of socializing kids. They spend seven hours a day on average in schools, they are in school more than staying with us" says one of interviewees. They get to know more about the real life/world around them, start learning others' rights and wrongs; norms of the society. Schools criminalize many usual activities to be able to control students. In schools, kids/teens learn that if anyone violates rules and harm others they deserve punishment in various ways even get caught by police.

Religious organizations contribute in teaching the individuals about what is right or wrong and linking the relations between sins and crime. These institutions talk about the sanction hereafter in "The Other World by God" rather than sanctions in this life. Most of the interviewees argue that religion is important in socializing kids/teens in this respect. On the other hand, churches organize different kinds of events for kids/teens to attract them. However, it has been argued that religious sanctions and arguments don't work well for kids/teens, because they are not very interested in these themes since they even cannot recognize the phenomenon of death. One of the interviewee says that:

> "R: But you see kids are asking so many questions about religious concepts like hell, heaven, angel
> etc?
> I: But they are not important at that age. They are asking a lot of questions but they even do not
> think and understand how death will happen. They cannot recognize death. Some of them may
> think that they may have so much time to correct old things."

There are other types of organizations deal with kids/teens. The clubs serve to teens with different kinds of activities; mostly sports activities. Kids/teens may start to see the whole world from viewpoint of a club based on how important club/s for them. However, it is not easy to generalize what kinds of effect these civic organizations do make on understanding of crime and police.

Peers

The proverb of "Tell about your friend, I will tell who you are" may be most valid to explain the influences of friends on kids/teens. Peer pressure rather than defining meaning of crime emerges as real life/ practical problems in terms of crime. Peer pressure from negative aspects creates and increases crime among teens. Generally crime for this age emerges out of proving oneself to other/s in form of fighting stealing, drug-dealing etc.

One-interviewee who worked ten years with kids/teens emphasizes the influence of peer by saying that "It took me while to understand how important peer pressure was on kids. I figured out that if you talk them logically and show them what to do rationally, you think they would see what you want to say, but that was not sold actually…but peers." Another interviewee explained her experience about peer pressure as in given in the following;

> "R: Do you have any experiences or do you remember one regarding this peer issue?
> I: Oh yeah...two case I remember. They were out of two good houses and both of their fathers were
> police officers. But they committed crime. One beat another small kid up and put dead rat in his
> mouth. This is son of police officers. You know he must know what crime is, this was wrong. But
> his friend influenced him. They told he couldn't do these kinds of things."

Why do kids/teens fight? Fighting kids/teens are sometimes from good and educated families but their peers manipulate them to do certain things. What they tell is that they do not want to allow anybody take advantage of

himself. But main thing is that kids or teens do not have any conflict resolution skills, and when they feel threatened, they respond physically; fighting. "They try to prove something to each other to get credit and social acceptance" quotes one interviewee.

Police

Police function like a paramilitary organization. This reflects in policing activity to see people as their enemy or in terms of potential crime. The professionalism in policing disregards social aspects of policing. They do not feel like they should do something to change the minds of people about them. They want an image of tough guy. Police also suffer from another mentality, others and us mentality. All public is them, only people you can trust are us (police). One interviewee who worked as a deputy sheriff says, "You and your life style starts to become force, everybody else is not force. We are going out, seeing everybody as an object, threat or potential criminals, all right… We are the ones catch those others."

"Being a black is a crime for police" said some of the interviewees. Reinforcing this argument, another one added, "The African-American man driving a car is more likely to be stopped by police." When background of this discriminatory perspective is researched, it has been seen that the problem of this discriminatory action and African-American dislike of police goes back to the slavery and segregation period. Kids/teens learn from history or from their parents how they were discriminatory.

"For African-American they have strange relationship with police…
R: What kind of relationships do they have?
I: African-Americans' feelings about the police have to do with slavery and segregation. In minds of African-American, it is very difficult to see police out of that. They were the ones enforcing the rules of slavery, and African-Americans interacted with them rather than other civilians. They all were learning from their parents how oppressive they were."

The others argue that police is no more discriminatory than the other segment of the society; racial profiling.

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Social Problems

Many other social problems are likely to shape the understanding of crime and police. Most important issues raised were poverty, oppression, fighting, drug dealing, and race issues. Individual self-experiences of crime and so getting trouble with the police are more likely to change their views of police. Common types of crime kids/teens commit are fighting, stealing, and drugs. On the other hand they are generally subject to fight, oppression, child abuse, rape etc. It can be argued that active side in crime has more negative attitude about police. On the other hand, one subject to crime less likely to have negative feeling about police.

Strategies to Improve Positive Meaning of Police

One of interviewee says, "They do always talk about community policing but they are not good about it." However, communities are changing. The old and tried methods of policing are not working properly. Citizens have different needs and expectations from governments. To face those needs and expectations, police organization should change its organizational culture. Organization's culture in this context refers to a set of expectations and norms that guide employees' behavior (Glensor, 1996:15). Organizations base their culture largely on history, officer experiences, organizational structure, routines and old way of doing things.

The people suggest many alternatives to do something to improve positive meaning of police and policing and so improve relations between community and kids/teens. Some of them were inferred from the data analysis as in the following:

a) *Structural change;*

   -Changing paramilitary structure

   -Decentralization of organization; stations in the community

b) *Changing organizational culture*

   -Change image of tough guy

   -Get skills to communicate youth; social work class

c) *Communicate with the communities*

   -Involve with community

   -Mutual problem solving with community

-Aware of general and community's problems

-Get support from the community for the youth organizations

-Incorporate joint activities with different groups to increase communication

-Support family values

-Establish well-working network between various organizations to get their support

d) *Communicate with kids/teens (youth)*

-Communicate with youth organizations and encourage their activities

-Develop alternative training programs for after-school hours

- Talk with teens; give them pad

-Set up/Organize programs with kids/teens

-Gain skills to understand kids/teens; social work classes

-Aware of social problems kids/teens have; Try to see the world of kids in certain age; hair, peer, car, dress style

Conclusion

There are many factors shaping individuals understanding and behavior about police and crime. The definition of crime and police changes from one to another according to each person's own experiences and/or the range of different institutional effects on them. Crime is mostly defined in a general meaning of wrongdoing and breaking law. Although police has been defined as law enforcement agency in a very general meaning, people attach various negative meanings and feelings to the concept such as being aggressive, oppressive, cold and unfriendly, untrustworthy, corrupted, and discriminatory. Almost none of the interviewee talked something positive about the police.

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The main factors influencing kids/teens' understanding and behavior about police and crime may be given as; institutions that socialize kids/teens, peers, self learning or life experiences, police organization itself, and social problems. These factors important in defining right and wrong, which supports and reinforce legal regulations and norms. Individuals who do wrong are categorized as criminals if it is also regulated by law. On the other hand, police may be introduced from negative or positive viewpoints of these processing factors depending on the perspectives and experiences with the police.

Many strategies are suggested to do something to improve positive meaning of police and policing and thereby improve relations between community and kids/teens. Main categories may be given as it follows:

- Structural and cultural change in police organization;
- Communicate with the communities
- Communicate with kids/teens (youth).

In short, it can be inferred from these recommendations that problems regarding crimes, police brutality, and distrust between police and citizens of their communities can be handled by all segments of society together. Nobody should expect that police alone could solve problems of crime and their image since any social issue is one-dimensional. Crime is not alone racial, youth, urban, poverty, media, peer, school problems, but mixture of all as a social problem. The entire community; citizens, business leaders, schools, religious organizations, civic organizations, and police organizations must share that responsibility. Additionally, police can and should also do some changes in organizational level.

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