'When it comes to violence in my place, I am the police!' Exploring the policing functions of service providers in Edinburgh's Cowgate and Grassmarket

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This study explores the role of social service providers in providing basic policing and security functions to residents of a marginalised community in Edinburgh. Through analysis of interview data, social service providers are revealed as routinely engaging in a variety of activities traditionally associated with public policing, such as crime prevention activities, peacekeeping and order maintenance tasks, receiving complaints regarding criminal and disorderly activities, surveillance of suspect identities, as well as informally liaising with the public police on crime and security issues within the community. The hitherto informal policing functions of service providers have recently begun to change with the implementation of a Remote Reporting programme that formalises the crime reporting functions of service providers, linking voluntary service agencies more closely to the criminal justice system. Both formal and informal policing activities are explored within an analysis that draws on the conceptualisation of contemporary security governance as 'networked'.

Keywords: policing; nodal governance; social service providers; security

In recent years, criminologists have begun to analyse a staggering proliferation of forms of policing occurring below the state. Much of this recent literature has invoked governmentality theory, explaining this proliferation as a consequence of larger transformations in relations between the citizen and the state (Rose 1999, Garland 2001). Recently, an alternative thesis has begun to receive some attention: in *Governing Security* Les Johnston and Clifford Shearing (2003) offer a reconceptualisation of contemporary governance as 'nodal'. In complement to other conceptualisations of policing that represent the diversity of contemporary forms as variously 'multilateral' (Bayley and Shearing 2000), a 'mixed economy' (Nogala 2003), a 'pluralisation' (Johnston 2003) or a 'security mix' (Eick 2003), Johnston and Shearing treat policing as a complex of related security activities performed by both public and private actors. Within this framework, the public police are no longer viewed as the exclusive providers of security, but rather as a cog in a set (albeit, given their special powers and ability to command extensive resources, an important cog).

A significant benefit of reliance on the nodal theoretical frame is that it permits flexibility in how we analyse relations between public police and other actors 'on the ground'. It opens up theoretical space for questions of agency among various actors,

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or 'nodes'. Power imbalances within relationships – particularly between the public police and non-state entities – are no longer assumed to be true *a priori*, but rather something to be empirically analysed, as occurs in the instant case.

Drawing upon the theoretical framework offered by the nodal model of security governance, the present study explores the role of social service providers in providing basic policing functions to residents of the Cowgate and Grassmarket, a marginalised community in the city centre of Edinburgh. Through an analysis of interview data with identified community stakeholders, social service providers are revealed as engaging in a variety of activities commonly associated with public policing. Such activities include crime prevention work, peacekeeping and order maintenance, receiving complaints regarding criminal and disorderly behaviours, surveillance of suspect identities, and liaising with the state on crime and security issues within the community. These activities occur both independently and as part of a security network to which service providers belong by virtue of local and local–institutional relationships formed with the public police. As I discuss in the pages that follow, this policing role has emerged as a consequence of three factors: (1) the need of service organisations to create secure environments for clients; (2) the development of trust relationships with clients; and (3) failures of the criminal justice system to support marginalised groups.

Recently, a key element of this informal security system – the crime reporting functions of service workers – has been formalised through the implementation of a Remote Reporting programme for area homeless. This programme utilises local service providers as access points for residents who may wish to report a crime to the police, but are unable or unwilling to do so. In examining this local policing programme and the roles that the police and service providers variously played in its implementation and subsequent operation, we find that network relations between police and service providers are, in this instance, structured around equal recognition of the advantages of pooling resources in order to achieve individual and joint security aims.

This paper is presented in five parts. First, I briefly review the literature on nodal governance in order to provide an introduction to the theoretical framework that supports this analysis. Second, I introduce the research site and review the methods used to acquire the data presented here. Within this section, I also discuss the nature of crime and victimisation within the Cowgate–Grassmarket community, as well as exploring reasons as to why crimes in this neighbourhood frequently go unreported to the public police. Third, I examine the role of local social service providers in responding to crime and fostering order in the Cowgate and Grassmarket. Fourth, I analyse recent attempts at expanding service providers' policing functions through an examination of the Remote Reporting programme, a local–institutional network composed of public police and self-selected service agencies. The essay concludes with some final remarks on the networked nature of security provision within marginalised communities, and potential implications of further attempts to expand and formalise security relations between the service providers and the police.

Security networks

The principles of nodal governance are derived from network theory and the work of Manuel Castells (1996, 1998, 2000). Castells has characterised advanced capitalist

societies as 'networked societies' because of the pervasiveness of network formations across various social sectors. A key feature of this social form is that 'a network, by definition, has nodes, not a centre' (Castells 1998: 364). Accordingly, a nodal governance model takes 'nodes' – participating actors within a network – as the principal frame of reference in analysing contemporary modes of governance. In doing so, nodal governance shifts the focus of inquiry away from the hegemonic state to questions of how variously situated actors within social networks mobilise 'mentalities, technologies, institutional arrangements and resources' to facilitate common goals (Shearing 2006: 16). However, to be clear: analysts of networked relations do not lose sight of the fact that power is distributed unevenly and that some actors are clearly endowed with hegemonic forms of power (Wood 2006), rather attention is focused on the possibilities and consequences of power diffusal across networks (Drahos 2004).

In an article that adds further theoretical flesh to the concept of nodal governance, Benoit Dupont (2004) has created four ideal types of security networks from which an infinite variety of network combinations can be produced. These types are local, institutional, international and virtual. As the activities discussed within the present paper fall within and across local and institutional levels, in this section I will limit myself to discussing the first two forms.

Local security networks are public–private initiatives that pool institutional and extra-institutional knowledge and resources to develop solutions to local crime problems. The key concern of local networks is effectiveness: how can a network of actors achieve the best results in dealing with a given issue? In order to maximise effectiveness, local networks must be open systems; they must have the 'capacity to connect a much more diverse set of actors, and must retain the ability to integrate new agents at all times in order to produce the expected outcomes' (Dupont 2004: 80). In contrast, institutional networks are characterised by a relative degree of exclusiveness. This form of security network operates as a closed information and resource sharing loop between two or more state agencies. Further, whereas local networks are oriented towards achieving 'effectiveness' in joint problem solving, institutional networks pool resources frequently as a means of increasing the 'efficiency' of individual nodes.

Through focusing on nodal relations within security networks, issues of actor agency are brought to the fore; actors at local and institutional levels *choose* to pool resources in order to realise both individual and/or common goals. Participants bring with them resources and/or knowledge that are viewed as either essential to the operation of the network or necessary to achieve desired security outcomes. The ability of actors to influence outcomes is viewed as roughly proportional to the value and amount of 'capital' they bring to a network. Dupont identifies five forms of 'capital' that can be mobilised within security networks. Economic capital is the financial resources that actors have available to them. Political capital relates to actors' relative proximity to or distance from governmental power – the 'machinery of government' – and the ability to influence this machinery to achieve particular outcomes. Cultural capital refers to an actor's unique expertise or knowledge of a particular field. Social capital is the strength and direction of an actor's relations in the social field, and their ability to exercise connections to produce outcomes. Symbolic capital pertains to the authority that actors command by virtue of the honour or prestige conferred upon them through their activities. It is through

examination of how actors variously negotiate, purchase, demand, give or purchase capital that the 'ways in which the range of authorities and providers of security governance exercise considerable agency as they "jockey for position" in the field' are revealed (Wood 2006: 225).

A nodal conceptualisation of security thus emphasises the strategic nature of relations between actors. Rather than assuming that relations between actors necessarily involve the subordination of one group by another, the analyst of network relations assumes that various nodes will have greater and lesser access to forms of capital with which to negotiate to influence objectives and/or access further resources. This is not to say that there are not likely to be power imbalances between parties by virtue of differences in access to capital, but that the relative degrees of power held and expressed by actors in networks is an empirical question requiring study. In the present paper, through examining network relations between a public police agency and local service providers, we find that the ability of service providers to leverage the cultural capital they hold – access to knowledge of an inaccessible population – permits a higher degree of influence within this particular network than one might otherwise expect.

The Cowgate and Grassmarket

In this section, I begin with a brief introduction to the methods used to acquire the data presented here. This introduction is followed by a description of the research site and a discussion of the experience of criminal victimisation within the Cowgate and Grassmarket street community.

This paper is informed by data drawn from a larger ethnographic study conducted in 2003 of the policing of 'skid row' districts in San Francisco (the Tenderloin), Vancouver (the Downtown Eastside) and Edinburgh (the Cowgate and Grassmarket) (Huey 2007). During the Edinburgh phase of the study, interviews were conducted with 34 subjects.

Police officers were selected from the local City of Edinburgh division of the Lothian and Borders regional police force; individual officers were identified through Internet searches. Similarly, service providers, city representatives and local business personnel were located through Internet searches and several interviewees within these groups were contacted through mailed interview request letters. Subsequently, additional interviewees – including service workers, and lower ranking officers and area residents – were identified through the use of snowball sampling

Table 1. Interviews

Subject category	Edinburgh
Police personnel	8
Community groups/service providers	9
Area residents	14
Local businesses	1
City representatives	2
Total	34

techniques. For example, police interviewees supplied names of other potential subjects. Contact with area residents was facilitated largely through shelter and outreach workers who provided access to their facilities.

To provide some context for understanding the Cowgate and Grassmarket community, I note that this area was selected as a research site primarily because at the time of fieldwork the community had many of the characteristic features of an inner-city skid row district. For instance, its resident population was predominately poor, street-entrenched, addicted and/or mentally ill. Locals and transient individuals could be found sleeping rough in doorways or in the local churchyard, or overnighting in area shelter beds. More 'fortunate' residents were housed within the low-income housing stock that dots the community. Further, services for the poor could be found located throughout the site, including: soup kitchens, homeless shelters, a 'skin clinic' for the homeless to wash up, an advice centre and a physician's clinic. It was also noted to be a poor urban community where residents experience high rates of criminal victimisation, most of which goes unreported to the public police (Manson 2002).

In interviews with area residents and service providers, multiple instances of both inter- and intra-class victimisation of community residents were reported. Throughout the remainder of this section I discuss common forms of criminal victimisation, as well as examining three primary factors behind the unwillingness of residents to report victimisation to the police.

Much of the inter-class victimisation of Cowgate and Grassmarket residents occurs as a consequence of the fact that the area is home to a large number of licensed establishments serving cheap alcohol. 'Piss Alley', as the Cowgate is informally called, draws pub-goers from not only across the City, but also attracts individuals and groups that come to Edinburgh specifically to engage in 'drink tourism'. The result is that drunken visitors to the site inhabit area streets at all hours of the night, causing local businesses to complain of property damage, vandalism and debris. For street residents, pub-goers are not only a potential source of income through begging, but also represent potential threats to their safety. Residents interviewed reported having their begging hats or signs kicked by visitors, having been treated to unprovoked aggression, receiving verbal abuse, and incidents of physical abuse that occurred while begging or sleeping rough. One rough sleeper described the experience of being awoken at three o'clock in the morning by an intoxicated pub-goer wielding a knife. As an area shelter worker explains of the violence and abuse that occurs:

> Most of the crime in this neighbourhood would be related to the clubs and the nightclubs. Especially on the weekends … which then affects our clients, because if they're trying to beg they quite often get beaten up or robbed by night clubbers, groups of young folk out for a good time, been drinking. 'Well here's somebody, let's have some fun'.

Of the intra-class crimes among residents, petty theft is easily the most frequently occurring. Indeed, theft is so rampant within this community that norms have developed around its practice. The local street code prohibits stealing 'from one's mates'. It was explained to me by a local street drinker that 'the only thing you don't do, is don't steal off your own'. However, those who are not one's friends are often deemed fair game regardless of their physical or mental condition. For example,

despite the fact that he was clearly suffering from a serious illness, one fellow that I interviewed had been robbed and stolen from multiple times. Although shelter workers try to be vigilant, much of the theft that takes place occurs within area shelters. Fear of theft and other forms of predation leads some individuals to forsake shelter beds for sleeping rough. Those who are unable to withstand the rigours of sleeping in nearby alleyways or in the local graveyard, either lose money and possessions, or must rely on the assistance of 'mates'. In the case of the man who had been repeatedly stolen from, a friend eventually tasked himself with keeping charge of the fellow's finances: 'I try to look after him ... I think people at [the shelter] take his money from him. Now, he's no' losing as much as he was losing'.

Violence is also common here; it is used as a means of settling scores, preventing individuals from informing to the authorities, hurrying settlement of unpaid drug debts or resolving turf wars between drug dealers. While much of the violent activity committed by local residents is directed against their own, service providers also reported assaults by clients. An outreach worker advised, 'I see violence, I see people getting assaulted. I've been assaulted a number of times, not seriously'.

Physical intimidation of weaker individuals – a form of robbery known as 'taxing' – also serves as a means by which food, money, clothing, drugs and alcohol can be obtained. Taxing is described by an area service worker in the following terms:

> If I'm bigger than you and more ruthless than you, I accompany you to the post office with your GIRO [benefits cheque] and I have a knife, then you'll give me a percentage of your GIRO. And that's very, very common. The level of intimidation and violence is really quite high.

Both police and service providers acknowledge the problem of criminal victimisation within the local street population, but attempts to use the criminal justice system in response have largely failed. A senior officer with Edinburgh's Lothian and Borders Police Force explains, 'a big problem that we have at the moment is trying to get people from the homeless community to come forward to us to report crime, because there is data that supports that they do experience massive victimisation [from] street crime'.[1] Through interviews it emerged that three factors operate to deter area residents from reporting criminal victimisation to the police: (1) individual distrust of the police; (2) the police practice of checking victims for outstanding warrants; and (3) a normative code that prohibits street residents from reporting to authorities.

As the bulk of interactions between police and area residents frequently entail the latter being viewed as suspects or potential suspects, it is hardly surprising to discover that residents frequently express negative views of the police. While some local officers are seen as worthy of praise, police were often portrayed by residents as authoritarian and arbitrary. In particular, residents interviewed felt that their rights were infringed upon when officers asked them to move along for no discernable reason.[2] Further, both residents and service providers complained that police hold discriminatory views of local inhabitants. One service provider suggested that many of the local beat who serve this community 'have stereotypical attitudes, perceptions' centred on the 'undeserving, aggressive poor'. These perceived attitudes were described as resulting in what are seen as unfair policing practices. A service provider explains:

The reality of it is that the homeless guys will not go and talk to the police because probably the discriminatory policing towards them. As soon as something happens, like the mirrors get knocked off the cars up the street, or the cars get broken into, where's the first place they come? They come here. As much as we have had guys who have gone out and done that, but not everybody who comes out along the Cowgate on a Sunday night lives around here.

Residents' stories and comments support this view. A local street drinker described a situation where he had been threatened with a knife. When asked why he had failed to report the incident despite the presence of a police cruiser stationed nearby, he replied 'They would have to come back to me and get a statement. Just another drunken homeless person, eh?'

A second factor adversely impacting reporting of criminal victimisation in the Cowgate and Grassmarket is victims' fear of arrest. The Cowgate and Grassmarket is a criminalised community and many individuals here have outstanding warrants for a variety of minor to serious offences. Interaction with the police is thus something to be avoided, particularly as police officers routinely check residents for the existence of warrants regardless of whether the individual is a victim or not. Both residents and service providers see the process of checking victims for warrants as discriminatory. Service workers questioned why it would be necessary for police to investigate a victim before pursuing a criminal complaint.[3] For victims, the warrant checking process affirms suspicions that police see the homeless and other inhabitants of the street solely as criminal objects to be harassed, subjected to police surveillance and/or arrested. As one outreach worker explained of residents' failure to report victimisation to the police, 'the guys say, "What's the point? I'm a criminal anyway. I'm not worth anything". So who wants to go to the police?'

A third factor that also plays a significant role in under-reporting of criminal offences within the Cowgate and Grassmarket is the existence of a subcultural norm that prohibits informing to the police ('grassing'). The operation of 'grassing' or 'snitching' codes among street populations has been well documented within the criminology and urban ethnographic literatures (Anderson 1999, Rosenfeld et al. 2003), therefore it is not entirely surprising to find such a code operating within this street-based community. Indeed, the existence of this code within Edinburgh's street cultures becomes readily apparent when asking residents how they deal with problems, criminal and other threats they face while on the street. Cowgate and Grassmarket residents offered statements that supported the view expressed by a local street drinker: 'I don't grass . . . I'd just give myself a bad name'. This normative prohibition is supported within the community through the use of fear, intimidation tactics and a resort to physical violence. An area resident explains, 'Basically, if you grass, your life' (sic). Strict enforcement of this code means that the public police cannot and do not function as the primary provider of security for residents of this community. Residents must therefore either rely on themselves or street 'mates' for protection or other security-based assistance from authority figures within the local community.

Security arrangements in the Cowgate and Grassmarket

Interviews and field observation within the Cowgate and Grassmarket reveal that, aside from self-reliance, the primary source of security provision for area residents is

social service providers. In the first part of this section, I explore how such agents – shelter, food line, outreach and other social service workers – operate both informally and largely independently from the police to provide security to the local population. In the second half of this section, I focus on how social service providers participate with police in what is best characterised as an informal local security network.

Poor inner-city communities are frequently seen as socially chaotic spaces constituted of individuals unwilling or unable to master the techniques of self-regulation that render other communities 'orderly', 'peaceful' and/or 'normal'. Nikolas Rose (1999: 259) contends that such sites have recently emerged as a new territory of governance, a territory 'traced out by a plethora of quasi-autonomous agencies working within the "savage spaces", in the "anti-communities" on the margins, or with those abjected by virtue of their lack of competence or capacity for responsible ethical self-management'. What Rose perceives as new – the transformation of 'opposition forces' into 'service providers' under the rubric of self-help philosophies – is actually little more than an example of the social control functions that have historically been embedded within the ministrations of the voluntary sector (Bibby and Mauss 1974, Archard 1979). Indeed, in *Vagrancy, Alcoholism, and Social Control*, Peter Archard (1979) sketches a matrix of control that has historically operated on skid rows. The matrix Archard provides is one composed of institutions – police, missions, halfway houses, alcohol recovery facilities and so on – that individually and jointly take as the target of their social interventions the moral degenerate. Agents of these institutions employ various moral, penal, medical and/or social strategies, to reduce the 'inherent risk' to society posed by the degenerate. Moral strategies, what Rose might term 'ethical self-management', are the particular stock-in-trade of the voluntary sector, organisations of which have sought to pair the provision of necessities with 'rehabilitative' efforts (Archard 1979, Mettrick 1985).

Whereas the social scientific literature on skid row and other marginalised communities references aspects of the social control function of service providers, what is seldom discussed is the overt policing and security functions that such groups frequently provide independently of the state. In communities like the Cowgate and Grassmarket, we find the informal use of service providers as local policing authorities by area residents. This treatment has arisen in large part through the unique role of service providers within the community and through the development of trust relations between service providers and their clients. As a local mission volunteer, who is himself a former client explained, an informal hierarchy of authority exists on the street:

> Question: If somebody was preying on the older folks, because of the code that says you don't grass, how would somebody like that be dealt with? Or would they be dealt with?

> Answer: You just go to somebody higher. It's like me or [names an outreach worker].

I first noted the security functions of social service providers when I asked a Cowgate street drinker about who he would turn to if he were having a problem with someone on the street. Rather than approaching a police officer, he advised that he would speak to a trusted outreach worker:

> Depending on who you trust, who you speak to. I mean I've been in trouble, and if I've needed a wee bit of help I've sat there and explained the situation to [names a service

provider], and he'll go away and see such and such. And then he'll come back to us. 'Do you have any answers for us?' He's got answers.

This man was hardly alone in seeing service providers as trusted authorities that could provide security; the majority of residents interviewed, while stating that they attempt to solve their own problems when possible, also expressed a willingness to report criminal victimisation to trusted service providers as a means of either confiding what had happened or seeking protection or resolution.

For clients, the primary benefit of reporting victimisation or other crime and disorder problems to service providers is that the majority of service workers observe the 'grassing code'. Local residents know that service providers exercise considerable discretion in deciding whether to report incidents to the police. Except for situations involving immediate threats of violence or serious crimes, most service workers prefer to deal with situations themselves through the use of informal sanctions. Their compliance with the grassing code is predicated upon the need to establish and maintain trust with client groups, who are distrustful of state authorities. Clearly, their clients view the exercise of this discretion as preferable to being 'grassed' to the police.

Within Edinburgh's street community, area service providers also undertake a significant portion of both the order maintenance and preventative policing practice that Banton (1964) terms 'peacekeeping'. For example, a client might ask a trusted worker to provide assistance in solving a problem or resolving a dispute. In these situations, a worker will talk to both parties and attempt to mediate the dispute or, depending on the circumstances, issue a warning to one or more parties. In other instances, service providers are mobilised into peacekeeping duties by disturbances within their facilities. As one service provider explained of his peacekeeping work in such situations, 'I get in their face. I say, "You, sit down, speak to me. What's your problem?" And address it before it comes to anything else'.

To be clear, the accepted authority of service providers to facilitate order within the community does not rest solely on their status as trusted figures. The simple fact is that the majority of local residents are heavily service-dependent, requiring access to food, shelter, clothing, bathing facilities, medical treatment and other necessities. A primary means through which order is facilitated within the Cowgate and Grassmarket is through the rules and regulations established and enforced by service organisations. Prohibitions against the use of drugs, stealing, disorderly conduct and violent activities within facilities are the norm. Rule compliance is facilitated through the threat of expulsion. For service providers, ejection is simply a means of ensuring order and preventing crime: 'We have got a lot of people who are excluded from here. Some people we know that we cannot let back in here. And that's the reality'. With individuals who are heavily service-dependent, the threat of permanent expulsion may serve as an effective disciplinary tool.

The predominant discourse surrounding the use of rules and sanctions to normalise client behaviour is one of paternal/maternal protectionism. The creation and maintenance of order within facilities is seen as central to service providers' ability to achieve rehabilitative goals: in order to overcome service aversion, clients must be made to feel a level of comfort and security in facilities and trust in those who operate them. This view is encapsulated within an observation offered by a service worker in the Cowgate and Grassmarket: 'everybody who comes in here has a

right to feel safe and be comfortable'. Thus, 'when it comes to like violence in my place, I am the police. I'm here to protect you, make sure you're safe and comfortable'.

   Site security is of critical importance not only in relation to meeting government requirements for the operation of homeless facilities, but also for establishing safe and secure environments for clients. Thus, a consistent feature noted of service facilities throughout the Cowgate and Grassmarket is the use of access control and other physical security measures. Access controls are often in the form of intercom systems for automatic or manual entry. Area shelters also require service users to register. The purpose for this measure is made explicit by a service provider:

> It means that I know everybody who's in the building and I know most of them by name, and I know who's likely to cause a problem. And as I said, there's a policing element . . . it's to stop these predators from coming in because there are people who will prey on the weak and the hungry.

   Internal surveillance of service facilities is a necessary preventative measure to limit the number of assaults, thefts, drug deals and other problems that can occur if left unchecked. For those facilities that lack the means to purchase and operate closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras, employees are utilised to perform the surveillance function. Their task is to watch and record the behaviours of service users, including identifying behavioural changes that might represent potential problems. For example, service workers know that drug dealers use local addicts as 'runners' to sell drugs within the shelters, therefore staff attempt to identify 'runners' within their facilities. One technique utilised by staff is to be on the watch for any resident 'who was not popular previously and has suddenly become popular', thus potentially indicating a newfound status as a drug runner. While such tactics are often effective, the need for constant vigilance creates strains on workers: 'You've got such a big space, you're policing the place all the time to make sure that if something happens . . . it's really difficult'.

   To the extent that powerful subcultural norms operate to deter fuller penetration into these communities by the public police, a significant amount of criminal activity remains consciously hidden by perpetrators, victims and witnesses. This activity represents a body of exploitable knowledge unknown and unknowable by the police except through extraordinary measures – undercover operations or through the arrest process. There is, however, one other potential avenue available to police: through liaison work with cooperating social service agencies that gather information on community members as part of their social work. To this end, local beat officers assigned to the Cowgate and Grassmarket can be found engaging in 'social calls' to area service facilities as a means of garnering information about client groups. An officer explains these calls as 'trying to find out the word on the street'. To be clear, though, service providers also value such contacts with the public police: police visits also provide opportunities for service workers to gather information about safety and security issues that affect their clients.

   Low-level knowledge exchanges between police and security providers, to the extent that they are patterned and follow clear rules of engagement, as I outline below, lead me to characterise police–security provider relations in this context as a local security network. Cast in this light, public police and participating service facilities can be seen as functioning as participatory nodes in a network that has the

provision of security within the local community as its common goal. Each node recognises that, because of unique abilities to command necessary resources, other participants have clear roles to play in the provisioning of local security.

For the local police officers, participation within this network is based on the desire to access social capital that service providers have in the form of knowledge of and trust relations with client groups. In turn, social service workers eye up the many advantages of working cooperatively with the police: by virtue of their privileged position as agents of the state, the police have varying access to the forms of capital described above. However, within this particular local network, what security providers are primarily seeking is access to cultural and symbolic forms of capital that the police hold and that service providers require access to in order to realise both security and rehabilitative goals. For example, in relation to cultural capital, service providers seek access to organisational knowledge of their community and its residents – such as which clients might be under police suspicion for criminal activities, who police believe that service providers should be on the watch for, and so on. Further, as key representatives of the criminal justice system, and thus of the state, the public police hold an invaluable form of symbolic capital that is particularly desirable: positive relations between the police and client groups are seen as having the potential to confer upon the latter an improved social status and thus the possibility of better treatment by the police, and perhaps by other state organisations as well. This desire to utilise cooperative security relations with the police to potentially foster a larger social inclusion of marginalised residents is exemplified by a quote from an outreach worker who advised of his participation in networking with area police, 'I'm happy to liaise with the police. I'm happy to have them come in. I'm happy to go down the lane, and "police are good guys" and build relationships'. For this individual, engaging cooperatively with area police officers to build relations is about 'breaking down barriers' that negatively impact clients.

Burris (2004: 343) suggests that 'resources take many forms ... money, armies, and information can all be resources that a node deploys to manage the course of events'. While relations within this local network appear informal – 'chats' and 'visits' are the terms both police and social service providers use to describe knowledge exchanges – they are highly structured with clear rules of engagement that favour reciprocity. The recognised importance of reciprocity of information exchange by both sets of actors suggests that the flow of power across this network is diffuse and that service providers have a great deal of agency in setting the terms of their participation. For example, a shelter worker explains of her relations with local police, 'they tell me stuff that's been going on on the street and I tell them ... It's a good relationship and it works very well.' Still another advised, 'They come and ask questions. If somebody goes missing ... they'll come to us if they can't get any help ... I always say to them, "You help us, I'll help you"'. Police officers also acknowledge the importance of reciprocity to maintaining relations: 'if you treat service providers] right, you can use them for information'. The reciprocal nature of information exchange, particularly in connection with police attempts at fostering good relations, means that service providers may be more willing to share information with the police than they might if the power dynamic was different. As a shelter worker explains, 'If there is a very serious crime going on we help the police ... we have a very good paper trail of who has been here, and that often is useful to the police'. However, this service provider was also quick to note that this

local network is based on information sharing being 'a two way thing with the police'.

Formalising police–service provider relations: the Remote Reporting programme

In his typology of networked security arrangements, Dupont sketches out four models – local, institutional, international and virtual – that contain significant possibilities for overlap and hybridisation. The Remote Reporting programme that I discuss in this section represents what is best viewed as a local–institutional hybrid.

The origins of the Homeless Remote Reporting scheme lie with a group of shelter workers who were concerned with the volume of unreported crime they observed within the community they serve. In response, a local organisation commissioned a study of criminal victimisation within Edinburgh's homeless youth population. The report, which was based on an analysis of interviews with 42 homeless area youth, found that 90% of respondents had been criminally victimised while homeless[4] (Manson 2002). Further, 79% of victims had failed to report the crime to police (Manson 2002). Aware of the operation of Remote Reporting programmes within Edinburgh for gay and minority communities, the study's author recommended that a similar programme be implemented for the City's homeless.

In essence, Remote Reporting programmes formalise the crime report-taking function that service providers have traditionally, if informally, held within the Cowgate and Grassmarket and other marginalised communities.[5] Remote Reporting is based on recognition of the fact that members of marginalised groups are often unable or unwilling to report criminal victimisation to legal authorities, often preferring instead to seek advice and assistance from trusted authorities within their own communities. To counter this, Remote Reporting encourages victim reporting of crimes to police through service providers who serve as third parties in the process. Upon receiving a client's complaint of criminal activity, a service provider consults with the client as to whether to bring the complaint forward to the police. If the complainant wishes to proceed, the service provider completes a set of forms that are sent to the community safety branch of the police department for investigation. Reports are logged and then forwarded to the relevant Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Inspector, who assigns the complaint for investigation. Investigating officers are required to follow up with the agency from which the complaint was filed. In order to reduce a victim's fears of the police, service providers support the victim throughout the process, and the practice of arresting reporting victims for outstanding warrants for minor crimes is suspended.[6] Further, victims are to be provided anonymity to the point at which criminal charges are laid.

It has been suggested that interpersonal relationships are 'paramount' to the successful functioning of security networks, because of their 'informal capacity to structure them' (Dupont 2004: 84). Within the present study, the cultivation of interpersonal relations between police and security providers is seen to operate at the level of the local security network – in informal information sharing links between police and service providers – but this is also found to be the case with respect to other levels of networking between police and social service organisations. For instance, in order to maximise the possibility of police support for the proposal to implement Remote Reporting for the homeless, sponsors of the study were careful to forward the report to a local police commander with whom they had ongoing

positive relations. This history of personal and professional relations was made clear during an interview with one of the key programme participants who expressed the following view of his police counterpart: 'He's a fantastic man. He's really, in my opinion, [interested in] policing properly in marginalised communities'. Coincidentally, this individual had also been the officer in charge of successfully implementing similar programmes for both gay and minority communities in the City. As a service provider explained, 'they passed it onto [name deleted] because he'd done the LGBT stuff and this became another thing he could do, with the homeless community'. In turn, the commander also relied on his personal and professional relations with area service providers when deciding whether to support this project. As a social service provider explained, 'I've known [officer's name deleted] for a couple years, and he actually approached me on that [Remote Reporting] programme'.

Following consultations between the two groups, a decision was made to jointly implement a Homeless Remote Reporting Programme as a six-month pilot project. Today, it operates as a hybrid local–institutional network between the public police and five local social service agencies.[7]

As a hybrid security model that links public police and service providers into formal relations under the umbrella of the criminal justice system, the Homelessness Remote Reporting programme presents a fascinating study of shifts in local governance. Before considering issues of actor agency with respect to the operation of this network, I want to first consider those elements of the programme that render it an interesting example of a local–institutional network.

Local security networks are defined by actors' willingness to pool knowledge and resources to combat local crime problems, by their relative degree of inclusivity within and across public and private spheres, and by an emphasis on increasing effectiveness. The network currently being described retains some of these features, but not all: the Remote Reporting programme represents a local attempt to deal with the problems of a specific community through the sharing of knowledge and institutional resources across nodes. Its participants are not, however, desirous of increasing the breadth and scope of the network beyond other homeless social service providers, thus it also demonstrates one of the central features of institutional security networks, which are characterised by a relative degree of exclusivity. Where this programme differs from other institutional security network forms is that while such networks may also involve a high degree of knowledge and resource sharing to combat crime problems, problems and solutions are frequently targeted at the social rather than the community level, which is clearly not the case with regards to the instant programme. In short, Remote Reporting is hybrid security form.

Issues of actor agency are critical to understanding the operation of networks. Such issues may include the terms of actor participation, how communication between nodes is to be organised, the nature and extent of resources committed, and other decisions that are variously negotiated between nodes. Of particular importance, however, is the decision as to whether an actor should participate in a given network in the first place. The decision to participate in a network, I suggest, is centred on both the manifest and latent functions that the network serves (Merton 1957). For example, the manifest function of the Remote Reporting network for all participatory nodes is the provision of local security through removing predators from the community and, ostensibly, providing victims a measure of formal justice.

With respect to latent functions the network serves we see some interesting divergences between policing and social work goals. For participating service providers support for the programme is predicated on the belief that Remote Reporting reconstitutes marginalised crime victims as citizens equally worthy of the services of the state. This view is evident in the contention that 'the main ethical consideration relating to the non reporting of crime is the right of people to be protected by the state' (Manson 2003: 22). For participating service providers, potential latent benefits of Remote Reporting also include the increased opportunity they believe that networking with police affords them to educate the latter on homelessness issues. Participation in this network also serves latent functions for the police: Remote Reporting clearly furnishes increased access to, and knowledge of, a community that in many ways remains impenetrable by public police. A senior police officer interviewed was quite clear about the utility of Remote Reporting: 'what it is going to give us is a hint of the dark figure of the undercover crime in that very vulnerable section'. Similarly, another representative of the L & B (2006) advised, 'any intelligence gleaned regarding culprits is entered onto our intelligence systems'.

Just as actors may exercise agency by choosing to participate in a network, so actors might choose not to participate. For example, while five homeless service agencies have joined this network because of what they see as its potential to foster greater social inclusion of marginalised clients, other social service organisations within and outside of the Cowgate and Grassmarket have opted not to participate. In interviews with individuals from non-participating service organisations, intervie-wees were critical of Remote Reporting and worried that the programme represents little more than an attempt at turning service workers into police informants. One outreach worker articulated the concerns of others in stating that:

> I wouldn't have been comfortable with being part of that [program] to be honest with you, because my relationship with these guys is all built on trust ... I'm not about to become a conduit for a grass. Going down that line seems to me that instead of having one grass, all you're doing is creating two grasses in the eyes of the clients. One major grass, who would be me. That's not the way to go. That's not the way forward. All that's going to end up doing is alienating the service users at most agencies, and that's the last thing you want to do.

For this service worker and similar others, participating in a crime reporting programme holds the potential to destroy trust relations within the local community, with the result that clients would no longer feel comfortable using particular facilities or confiding in service workers.

In order for local networks to meet community-based goals, they frequently require contact with and/or input from the communities to be served. Often forgotten is the fact that community members must also choose whether they wish to participate with such enterprises, and to what extent. In relation to the exercise of agency by community members in relation to Remote Reporting, this form can be seen most clearly in individual decisions as to whether to utilise the programme or not. At the present time of writing, there have been 24 criminal complaints[8] processed through the Homeless Remote Reporting programme, including reports of assault, threats, theft and breach of the peace (L & B 2006). A representative of the L & B force advised that 'although numbers appear to be low, it was never envisaged that large number of reports would ever be received through this scheme. The aim is

to build up the trust and confidence the community to be able to report through conventional methods' (L & B 2006).

However, Cowgate and Grassmarket residents interviewed were skeptical of the programme and its promises, and expressed disdain for the 'grasses' who had already filed criminal complaints. Indeed, one complainant's allegation was readily dismissed by other residents as 'all lies'. Further, residents were aware of the fact that a victim-complainant had been arrested for allegedly filing a false report.[9] It seems all too probable then that residents of the Cowgate and Grassmarket, as well as residents of other homeless communities within the City, may resist attempts at reconstituting themselves as 'citizens' in the face of suspected further entrenchment within the penal-welfare complex.

Concluding remarks

Largely absent from the ever-expanding literature on policing below the state is work that provides insight into the means by which extremely marginalised communities address crime and criminal victimisation. The present study represents a modest attempt at filling this gap: through an examination of a local skid row community in Edinburgh, we discover the use of service providers as informal policing authorities. For various reasons explored within this article, social service providers are called upon by the state (through health and safety regulations, criminal laws, etc.), through occupational necessity (the need to provide safe spaces for clients), and at client request, to fulfil many of the lower level policing functions often tasked to the public police. Such policing functions are oriented towards both crime prevention (internal–external site surveillance, informal dispute resolution, advice and counseling on minimising risk) and crime response (expulsing individuals caught in criminal activity). Of the latter functions, a significant contribution of shelter, outreach and other local community workers is the service provided in receiving reports of criminal victimisation and offering advice on addressing victimisation.

Social service providers do not, however, work in isolation from the public police on either social service or policing issues (which are frequently treated as intertwined). Rather, social service providers operate an informal information-sharing network with local beat officers in their district. Following Dupont (2004), I have characterised these relations as a 'local security network'. While some might view informal relations and information sharing between police and service providers for security purposes as unworthy of being treated as a 'network', it is routinised activity that is ordered along clear lines of engagement (for instance, information sharing must be reciprocal and police are expected to arrest individuals away from social work premises).

This local security network has recently been enhanced with the introduction of what I have termed a hybrid local–institutional security network: a Remote Reporting programme that encourages the use of service providers as formal access points for area victims of crime into the criminal justice system. While the manifest goal of the programme is said to be increased security for members of the City of Edinburgh's homeless population, both police and service providers also recognise certain latent goals that this use of service providers can also achieve. For instance, the programme clearly represents an attempt by the public police at utilising service providers as conduits into a community that has thus far remained fairly immune

from significant police penetration. For participating service providers, Remote Reporting represents an opportunity for attempting to reconstitute marginalised clients as citizens of the state worthy of access to state services.

Within this article, I have assessed both formal and informal information and resource sharing between public police and area social service providers in light of the nodal governance model (Johnston and Shearing 2003). My aim in casting these activities thusly has been to flesh out an important, but often under-explored area of the literature: the roles of agency and capital in negotiating terms of agents' participation within local security arrangements. All too often, the hegemonic power of the public police becomes the primary focus of analytical attention, obscuring our understanding of the ways in which other public and private agents engage in local security and transact with the police to achieve shared goals. This paper therefore also represents an attempt at refocusing critical attention to the agency of non-state agents within informal and formal (institutional) arrangements. As was revealed here, social service providers are hardly the powerless dupes of the local police force, but rather politically savvy actors who leverage the forms of capital they have access to in order to achieve their social rehabilitative and security outcomes.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The exact dimensions of criminal victimisation within this community remain largely unknown as official reporting is sketchy, and no self-report surveys could be located with the exception of the Manson (2002) study discussed shortly.
2. Officers interviewed stated that in most cases individuals are asked to move along because of complaints about noise or behaviour received from tourists or local businesses.
3. One shelter worker who was critical of this practice noted two separate occasions when staff were asked by police to search resident logs for alternate names that a victim might have registered under in order to identify aliases under which they might have outstanding warrants.
4. Manson (2002) reports that crimes reported to the interviewer included assault, rape, attempted rape, and various forms of theft.
5. The first Remote Reporting programme in Edinburgh was established by the L & B in response to a series of local gay bashings. Shortly thereafter violence against members of the City's minority communities was also identified as an issue for police. In response to failures of affected groups to report victimisation, in June 2000 the Lothian and Borders Police Department implemented Remote Reporting.
6. Outstanding warrants for serious crimes can still lead to arrest of complainants once charges have been laid against alleged victimisers.
7. Following implementation, a fifth agency subsequently joined the network.
8. According to the material released through a freedom of information request, the breakdown of criminal complaints received under the Homeless Remote Report Reporting programme is as follows:
   2003-15 reports
   2004-5 reports
   2005-2 reports
   2006-2 reports (as of 11 May 2006) (L & B 2006).

9. The Remote Reporting programme has met with some significant challenges: one of the four service agencies temporarily suspended its involvement when a complainant was arrested for allegedly filing a false report. As a service worker explained of the decision, this arrest 'completely gutted the confidence of the support team'. Another incident involving the arrest of a complainant for outstanding warrants – a clear breach of programme policy – also threatened to jeopardise the programme's future. Meetings between police and service personnel subsequently took place, with the result that all four founding service agencies decided to continue their involvement. As a member of one of the service agencies involved stated, 'the whole idea is far too good an idea to throw it down because one mistake happened'.

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