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## **Social Capital, Fear and Police Legitimacy: Measuring Community-Based Policing in Albania**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years international development organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme have started to implement SSR initiatives in a host of environments. While there are various theories for how this reform leads to development, little attention has been given to how to measure the progress of SSR on the ground, particularly in the reform of police services. This study tested indicators at two project sites of a UNDP police reform project in Albania. The results indicate that the best indicators for a police project's success on the road to development can be seen in public perceptions of police legitimacy.

## About the Author

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## Introduction

This paper argues that police legitimacy is the best indicator for measuring a community-based policing program's contribution to democracy and economic development in a transitional state, and should be employed in the regular monitoring and evaluation of such an initiative. Through mini-surveys targeting the beneficiaries of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) community-based policing project, the Support to Security Sector Reform (SSSR) Programme, this study examined the levels of social capital, fear, and legitimacy in two 7000-8000 person quarters of the Albanian cities of Shkodra and Vlora. A comparison of the results show:

**Social capital**, defined as the “various social elements that promote individual and collective action” (Lederman, 2002), is higher in Shkodra than Vlora;

**Fear**, defined as afraid of being a victim of crime, is higher in Vlora than in Shkodra;

**Police legitimacy**, defined as the degree to which police are trusted, is higher in Vlora than in Shkodra.

Certainly, these findings are surprising: the quarter with a relatively higher degree of social capital and a lower degree of fear has a lower level of police legitimacy, while the quarter with a lower level of social capital and higher degree of fear has more trust in the police.

In order to understand the reasons for this variation, the study considered situational and policy variables and found that there is a significant link between the SSSR Programme and levels of police legitimacy in the target quarters. The other two dependent variables considered by this study, social capital and fear, do not appear to be related to the SSSR Programme, and their variation is most likely due to situational variables related to the quarters themselves.

These findings suggest that in a transitional state like Albania, a community-based policing project's impact on democracy and development will be observed in levels of police legitimacy—not in micro-levels of social capital or fear. On one hand, there is a strong indication that the degree of legitimacy may be limited by police politicization, and on the other, bolstered by coordination with other security sector reform projects.

## COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING AND DEVELOPMENT

In a document produced for the SSSR Programme, the non-governmental organization (NGO) Saferworld (Mathias, 2003) defines community-based policing as:

“both a philosophy (a way of thinking) and an organisational strategy (a way to carry out the philosophy) that allows the police and community to work together in new ways to solve problems of crime, disorder and safety issues to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.”

Defined in this way, there is no question that community-based policing, whilst a component of security sector reform, is also a form of development. Community-based policing is thought and action intertwined into a social project that leads to real changes in the human condition, and its philosophic underpinnings are in tandem with what Beryl Levinger calls “the four core values of the philosophy of development” (2004). Community-based policing espouses *participation*, where the community is a major actor in the intervention; it encourages *equity*, whereby project inputs result in fair outcomes; it is *sustainable*, being enshrined in local laws and policies; and it is *empowering*, giving communities access to services, increased participation in agenda setting, and the ability to make real changes in their circumstances.

In the specific context of Albania, community-based policing is a new type of policing that replaces the authoritarian policing of the communist era and the minimum policing that immediately followed it. In 2002, a three-year Strategy and Action Plan was adopted by the Ministry of Public Order and the State Police which included a community-based policing element. The interest in community-based policing stems at least partly from the Government of Albania’s desire to fulfill the prerequisites of EU membership, an event that would appear to have positive economic and political consequences sometime in the future.

At a national workshop in April 2004, a minister spoke of the need to move away from the bureaucratic model of policing and toward the objective of “strategically orientate police towards a community-based policing.” He pointed out that only 450 out of 8,000 police officers are actually away from their desks and dealing with community issues in the field (Institute for Democracy, 2004). The following month, the Minister of Public Order gave a speech in Parliament concerning the work to be done in the reform of the Albanian security sector, reminding listeners of the need for community-based policing and an increase in the number of officers in the field “where crime happens and the community needs the police.” If Albania’s aspirations are met, this type of policing may have a positive impact on Albania’s development by allowing ascendancy into the EU. However, even without EU membership, development theory suggests that community-based policing will still be beneficial in improving the lives of ordinary Albanians.

Recognizing the connection between community-based policing and development, the UNDP created the SSSR Programme in 2003. The SSSR Programme began with an exhaustive baseline study of police and public perceptions, involving 3,000 randomly selected citizens and 1,200 police officers. Published in January of 2004, it found that there was a genuine need to be filled by the project, and also the necessary willingness on the part of the public and police to take part in the initiative (Kenney, 2004). The SSSR Programme rolled-out its community-based policing activities in earnest in the spring of 2004, a time period corresponding to the flurry of government interest in community-based policing mentioned above.

## **BETWEEN COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING AND ITS LONG-TERM GOALS**

In the long term, the distal outcomes of community-based policing are widely regarded as including both democracy and development (International Peace Academy, 2003). However, there is an information gap between the activity and these distant goals, and no established tools for assessing the degree to which community-based policing is making progress towards them. The specific research question was: *what indicator measures the degree to which community-based policing is making progress toward democracy and development?*

According to the Vera Institute of Justice, indicators measuring progress towards a larger purpose such as development or democracy may not be obviously connected to the ultimate objective (2003). This means that the path to democracy and development, using community-based policing as the vehicle, will probably *not* be measured in the number of police officers in the field or the amount and type of training those officers receive. With this in mind, I undertook a literature review and found that a community-based policing project's advancement toward democracy and development may include a decrease in fear, an increase in police legitimacy, the creation of social capital, or some combination of the three.

### **Community-Based Policing and Fear**

Despite robust claims such as “community-based policing is not soft on crime!” (Mathias, 2003), recent studies show that community-based policing does not always control violent crime or have a significant impact on disorder (MacDonald, 2002). Community-based policing, however, appears to have a major impact on public perceptions of their safety. Findings indicate that community-based policing initiatives play an important role in reducing fear and increasing feelings of security (Reisig, 2004). For example, in Brazil community-based policing programs “function as a conduit to foster improved relations between the community and the police and reduce fear among residents” (Kahn, 2000). Findings such as these challenge the practice of using raw crime statistics in assessing the impact of a community-based policing program, and highlight the importance of increasing a community's sense of security.

Perceptions of security are important because of their real impacts on development and democracy. Although research has shown that actual crime rates and public perceptions are often unrelated (Lowry, 2003), fear can be used to fuel anti-democratic agendas (Schneider, 2003) and lead to further breakdowns of already stressed social and economic conditions (Wood, 2004). Clearly, if community-based policing can reduce fear and increase perceptions

of security, it will be no small contribution to the economic and political development of the country.

## **Community-based Policing and Police Legitimacy**

In their study of policing in Russia and Lithuania, Uildriks and Van Reenen (2003) found that it is not public fear but police legitimacy that is at the heart of security and development problems facing transitional states like Albania. In their view, public perceptions are one part of a vicious cycle: the increase in crime that typically accompanies transition pushes the public to demand more police action, and the demand-driven response of under-funded and under-trained police fuels public insecurity. Community-based policing can address this problem by making the police-public relationship a cooperative one where the police are accountable to the public they serve, improving both police performance and public perceptions of their actions.

In the long-term, this improvement in police legitimacy can contribute to the consolidation of democracy by building public trust in the government. The police are particularly important in transitional and post-conflict environments because they are in the “unique position to demonstrate publicly, on a daily basis, the benefits of the reform process” (Ferguson, 2004). For long-term development, real changes in police legitimacy have positive consequences such as allowing access to economic and political organizations like the EU (Uildriks, 2003).

## **Community-based Policing and Social Capital**

In addition to fear and legitimacy, community-based policing also addresses the basic building blocks of economic development and democracy: social capital. Robert Putnam’s (1997) definition of social capital is: “the features of social organization[s]...that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.” In a concrete sense, social capital can be observed in the horizontal and vertical linkages between individuals, civil society, and their governments. It is these linkages that allow democracy and economic development to occur in the long term.

Recent government reports from the United Kingdom suggest that social capital can be produced or enhanced by community-based policing initiatives (Home Office, 2004). A study of community-based policing in the United States by Nathan Pino (2001) found that social capital formation does occur and can be used as a measurement for project success. However, conclusive studies of this type with regard to the effects of community-based policing outside of developed countries—specifically in transitional states—are conspicuously absent from the literature. This void is not a testament to the number of community-based policing initiatives out there, and one worthy of being filled.

## THE STUDY

This study examined the levels of fear, police legitimacy and social capital in the principal target areas of the SSSR Programme, and tested for statistically significant variation. The cases selected for this study were the two target quarters of the SSSR Programme (municipal administrative units of 7000-8000 residents); one in the city of Shkodra and the other in the city of Vlora. Since April of 2004, these two quarters have received similar community-based policing inputs from the SSSR Programme.<sup>1</sup> The null-hypothesis guiding the research was: *There will be no significant differences in the levels of fear, legitimacy and social capital in the two quarters.*

## Methodology

The method used to undertake this research was a rapid appraisal mini-survey of the target quarters and e-mail exchanges with SSSR Programme staff and other security sector reform actors in Albania and Kosovo. Although the reliability of these methods is obviously limited, they are recognized as being “good at providing in-depth understanding of complex socioeconomic systems or processes” and can capture more than formal methods of social inquiry (USAID, 1996).

## Mini-Survey

The principal source of data for this paper was a mini-survey of the two target quarters, using a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions. This was translated into Albanian, and undertaken by a researcher in Albania during the week of November 22-29, 2004. This researcher went to the target quarters and randomly interviewed a total of 80 people; 41 in Shkodra and 39 in Vlora. This was accomplished in two visits to Shkodra and one to Vlora. The results were translated into English by the researcher. A sample survey is included in Annex II.

The distribution between men and women was nearly 50% in both quarters, and the range of ages was from 14 to 67. Statistical testing of the gender and age variation showed no significant difference between the two groups.

## Other Sources of Information

Information regarding the SSSR Programme statistics and details of the target quarters themselves came from Harri Koponen, Deputy Programme Manager and Community-based Policing Specialist of the SSSR Programme, and the UNDP Field Officers in Shkodra and Vlora. Roland Sinteff of the Police Assistance Mission of the European Commission to Albania (PAMECA) was also a source of information regarding the state of community-based policing in Albania, and Dr. Tamara Duffey of the Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS) provided additional insight and comments. Evis Sakaj of Oxfam undertook the task of translation and also added to the interpretation of the results.

## RESULTS

### Social Capital

This study utilized recommendations presented by Grootaert and van Bastleer to develop indicators to capture the structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital through (a) membership in local networks; (b) trust and adherence to norms; and (c) collective action (2002). The indicators used in this study were concentrated on the micro-levels of social capital rather than the macro; they determined the degree of social capital *within* the communities being targeted by the SSSR Programme rather than the relationships *between* the community and government institutions.

The reason for choosing the micro-level was two-fold. Firstly, research of social capital in post-communist states shows that it is comparatively lower than in other states. This is due to (a) distrust of communist organizations, (b) the formation of friendship networks (rather than political ones), and (c) disappointment in transition (Howard, 2002.) It seemed likely that social capital, if it did exist, would manifest itself within neighborhoods rather than between the citizens and their government. Secondly, given time and space limitations, conducting research into all the dimensions of social capital would have been impractical. Rather than cast a wide net with large holes, I decided to concentrate on membership, trust, and collective action at the micro-level.

### Membership

Membership in local networks was ascertained by finding the relative number of residents who are members in a local club or organization (environmental, religious, political, or otherwise); the percent who choose their leaders by voting; and the number who meet neighbors for coffee on a regular basis (once or more per week).

Although Shkodra residents (24.4%) appear to be more likely than their counterparts in Vlora (10.3%) to be members of a local political, religious or other group, there was no statistically significant difference between them ( $p$  value=.096). However, it deserves mention that the majority of Shkodra residents who were members of a local group said that the association was a political party. In Vlora, the associations were either environmental or religious; no respondents from that quarter were members of political associations.

This difference was captured by the question concerning voting. Here, the researcher asked "how do you pick your leaders?" Residents in Shkodra had a higher tendency to vote (75.6%) while in Vlora it was substantially less (53.8%). A chi-square test ( $p$  value = .041) proves that the difference between the two quarters is statistically significant.

Because voting and free association in Albania are relatively recent phenomena, I also chose to include a variable in my basket specific to the Albanian context. I thought that coffee drinking with neighbors would capture the concept of membership, perhaps even more so than voting or membership in an association. My research found that the degree of coffee drinking was high, although nearly identical in each quarter: 41.5% of Shkodra residents and 41% of Vlora residents meet their neighbors more



than once per week for coffee. This slight difference is statistically insignificant ( $p$  value = .968), suggesting that while there is a lively coffee drinking culture in both quarters, that voting is the best measurements for the concept of membership.

## Trust and Adherence to Norms

Trust and adherence to norms was found by considering responses to the following questions: “What would you do if someone was robbing your neighbor’s home?” and “Would you help your neighbor if they were having financial problems?”

Here, the results were not as clear cut. In Shkodra, only 39% of respondents said they would help out if someone was robbing their neighbor’s home, compared to 66.7% in Vlora. With this information and a  $p$  value of .013, trust appears to be significantly higher in Vlora than in Shkodra. However, qualitative information gathered during the interviews suggests that despite the statistical significance, it is not a valid measure of trust. When asked about the burglary of a neighbor’s home, 29% of Shkodra residents who said they would “do nothing” also said their inaction was related to fear or distrust in the police. Responses include: “I don’t want any problems with the police or criminals,” and “the people who do crimes are connected with people who have power.” Rather than the trust between neighbors, this indicator demonstrates the degree of trust in the police and criminal justice system. It does not fit the social condition it was tasked to measure, and thus not valid.

Residents from both communities expressed willingness to help their neighbors unconditionally with financial problems, 78% and 59%, yet the difference is not statistically significant ( $p$  value=.066). The statistics suggest that the levels of trust in the two communities are similar.

## Collective Action

Collective action was measured by determining the degree to which participants were willing to participate in neighborhood clean-ups or development projects. Because of the continued stigma attached to collective action—a result of the communist era—four questions were asked. “How willing would you be to participate in a neighborhood clean-up?” “How willing would you be to participate in a neighborhood clean-up if paid?” “How willing would you be to contribute time or money to a development project in your neighborhood?” and “When did you last participate in a development or cleaning project?” A number of survey respondents suggested that they would be willing participants in a project, “but only if the others helped, too.”

A series of chi-square tests showed that there is no statistically significant difference in any of the collective action categories. The residents of Shkodra and Vlora were both likely to contribute time or money to the development of their respective quarters. Most residents of each quarter, however, had not contributed to a development project since the communist era. When asked why, a common response from Shkodra residents was “there are no development projects here.” From the statistical tests, it can be deduced that the levels of collective action are not significantly different between the two quarters.

## Police Legitimacy

Police legitimacy hinges on the extent to which citizens trust the police and see them as a provider of security. For the purposes of this study, legitimacy was determined by asking two questions. Specifically:

Do you trust the police?

What would you do if someone was burglarizing your home?

The residents of Vlora (51.4%) were more likely than their counterparts in Shkodra (12.8%) to express trust in the police. A chi-square test shows that this difference is significant. In fact, of all the indicators used in this paper, this indicator had the highest statistical significance (p value = .000).

Despite a distinct lack of trust in the police, a higher percentage of Shkodra residents (79.5% compared to 65.1%) would call the police if their home was being burglarized. However, the difference is not statistically significant. Residents in Vlora who would *not* call the police expressed their belief that they could solve the problem themselves; three responding that they would “kill the criminal,” and the others said they would call their neighbors for help. This contrasts with Shkodra, where those that would not call the police said “the police can’t help” or “do nothing; it doesn’t matter.”

In the original research design, I thought that legitimacy may be measured by the average number of citizen visits to the community-based police offices established by the SSSR Programme in the target quarters, as well as the number of community meetings attended by the police. However, I found that there was not a discernable difference in citizen visits or police attendance between the two quarters. According to the SSSR Programme, the police attend one hundred percent of community meetings, and average weekly visits to the offices since they opened in October 2004 were 8 in Shkodra and 8.3 in Vlora. These numbers do not appear to give an indication of the level of police legitimacy in each quarter.

## Fear

To determine the level of fear, the quarter residents in Shkodra and Vlora were asked “Is crime a problem in the quarter?” and “How does crime in the quarter compare to the rest of Albania?”

Using the first indicator, we can see that there is no variation between the two groups. One hundred percent of the respondents to the survey felt that crime was not a problem in their specific quarters, and this unlikely event may have been due to a badly-designed question. However, when asked how they felt crime in their quarter compared to the rest of Albania, 87.8% of Shkodra residents and 61.5% of Vlora residents responded “better.” A chi-square test showed that the difference is statistically significant (p value = .007). Using these indicators, both quarters appear to be relatively safe, and fear is low. However, the second indicator suggests that Shkodra is relatively safer than Vlora.

## Results Summary

This research disproved my research hypothesis; there is significant variation in the levels of social capital, legitimacy and fear in the two target quarters. Shkodra scores higher than Vlora for social capital. The Shkodra quarter has less fear than Vlora, and yet it has a significantly lower degree of public trust in the police. Vlora, on the other hand, has a lower social capital score, and more fear. However, it does have a significantly higher level of trust in the police.

## SITUATIONAL VARIABLES

What explains the variation in social capital, legitimacy and fear between Vlora and Shkodra? The *situational variables* that I considered as having the potential to influence social capital, fear and legitimacy were: socio-economic level of the target area; actual crime rate; history of police and resident interaction; and level of police politicization.

## The Socio-Economic Level of the Target Area

Studying community-based policing in the United States, Reisig and Parks found that positive outcomes are not limited to affluent neighborhoods (2004). In Brazil, it was found that participation in associations was higher in communities with fewer resources (Kahn, 2000 cited in Davis, 2003). This seems to suggest that the lower the economic level of the target level, the greater the base for building social capital through community-based policing, the higher the trust in the police, and the lower the degree of fear. I asked the SSSR Programme for information regarding the economic income of average residents each quarter, and whether or not the residents owned the land they had built their homes on. These indicators would serve as a position from which to compare the relative economic levels of the two quarters. My hypothesis was that a significant difference in socio-economic level between the two quarters might explain the variation found in the survey.

Determining the relative economic levels of the target quarters proved problematic. According to the project staff responsible for the SSSR Programme in Vlora, such a number would not be indicative of actual income; most families depend on some remittances from abroad and still own property in the countryside that they still may use for income generation.

Nevertheless, there are significant differences in the composition of the two quarters. The Vlora quarter is made up of four administrative blocks, three of which were established since the end of communism and whose residents came from rural areas. According to the SSSR Programme Field Officer there, "None of them is the legal landlord of the land that they actually occupy." In Shkodra, the quarter is made up of a more homogenous group of long-term residents who own the land they have built their homes on. Using the issue of land ownership as an indicator of socio-economic level, Shkodra appears to be relatively better off than Vlora. However, the variation in the dependent variables is such that it is logical to look for causality elsewhere. Whilst there are important differences in the social conditions in each quarter, it does not appear to be

enough to explain the levels of fear, legitimacy, and social capital found there.

## Actual Crime Rate

I initially intended to find an estimation of the actual crime rates in the quarters through information from local police departments. However, given time and physical constraints I was unable to do so. The SSSR Programme Field Officer in Vlora described crime as being connected to property disputes, usually a “quarrel for a fence, channel or path that should or should not pass in ‘their’ land,” but did not indicate the level or amount of crime taking place there. Certainly, there appear to be important public safety issues that community-based policing can address in these communities. However, there may be conceptual differences between outsiders and local residents in their respective definitions of crime.

## History of Police and Resident Interaction

Police history may be important because it can determine the degree to which the community members are willing to participate in the initiative itself—and the degree to which subsequent outcomes are realized. I hypothesized that the area where residents have grievances with police actions during the previous regime and/or were recent victims of police human rights abuses would have comparatively less social capital, more fear, and less legitimacy. However, collecting data to determine the police history proved problematic. The primary sources that I selected for this variable, the SSSR Programme field officers, were unable to provide me with information specific to their respective quarters. The field officer in Vlora did give a general picture of the police in Albania under communism, saying that “the police were not really respected by the population, the population feared the police. The Big Brother tentacles were spread in every part of society. They had people’s life in their hand in the context that an un-based accusation made by the police inspector might [have] turned really bad for the person and his family.” This indicates that in general, the police experience for all Albanians under communism was bad, but does not show any difference between the quarters. With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been sensible to have included a question about police history in the mini-survey.

## Level of Police Politicization

Commenting on a draft of my original research design, William Godnick of International Alert recommended that I look into the degree of perceived politicization of the police. Unfortunately, the question of police politicization was attached to another question in the questionnaire, and the answers proved difficult to disaggregate. However, there were instances where the response was clear such as “police are politicized” or “the police are corrupt.” Running a chi-square test revealed that there is a slight statistically significant difference between the two groups, with p value =.051. The results are displayed in table 7, showing that Shkodra residents were more likely than their counterparts in Vlora to see the police as corrupt or politicized, 41.5% compared to 21.1%.

An Albanian development worker, Evis Sakaj of Oxfam, stated that this difference in perception may be due to national politics. Shkodra residents are predominantly supporters of the opposition party, and there is considerable belief by the opposition that the entire justice sector works in the interests of the governing party. In fact, this was reflected in the survey with one vocal respondent from Shkodra saying “I don't trust them. I think they're with the Socialist Party, here in Shkodra people are with the Democratic Party.”

While the data are far from perfect, they still indicate that the police in Albania face a hostile public that views them as corrupt and politicized. With respect to the target quarters of the SSSR Programme, the police are more likely to be perceived as politicized and corrupt in Shkodra than in Vlora. The perceived police politicization and corruption may be affecting social capital by encouraging Shkodra residents to vote, or to become strong supporters of political organizations. The belief that the police are politicized and corrupt seems to be the most logical explanation for the low levels of police legitimacy expressed by residents in the target quarters.

## POLICY VARIABLES

The *policy variables* that I hypothesized which may influence social capital, fear and legitimacy were:

### Understanding of Community-Based Policing

Groenwald and Peake make the point that a community-based policing initiative will generate little without a clear conceptual framework of what community-based policing actually is (2003). Their findings are bolstered by a real-world example from Kenya, where a lack of understanding of community-based policing on the ground resulted in police reinforcing elite interests and further marginalizing the poor (Pommerolle, 2003). Whilst the SSSR Programme has a clear conceptual framework written into its program operating documents (Mathias 2003, Koponen 2004), the degree to which community-based policing is understood by its beneficiaries is critical, and can be a proxy indicator for the SSSR Programme as a whole.

Mini-survey participants were asked if they had heard of community-based policing, and if they had, were further asked to provide a definition of what they thought community-based policing is. Some responses are listed below:

“It's the cooperation between the police and the community so that they can tell the police of any problem.” *42-year-old woman in Vlora.*

“I think it's about co-operation between the police and people, it's very difficult to achieve though.” *54-year-old man in Vlora*

“Co-operation between the police and the community so that people can call them and inform about a particular crime.” *16-year-old boy in Shkodra*

“More and better communication between the police and the community, in this way there is more trust between the two.” *65-year-old woman in Shkodra.*

Of all the respondents who had heard of community-based policing, none gave a definition that was at odds with the definition provided in SSSR Programme documents. In fact, a number of respondents in Vlora had heard of community-based policing on SSSR Programme-sponsored television commercials.

The mini-survey found that there was a statistically significant difference in the levels of understanding of community-based policing between the two quarters ( $p$  value=.042). In Vlora, 30.8% of respondents had heard of community-based policing and could offer a definition for it. In Shkodra, on the other hand, only 12.2% had heard of community based policing.

Using this as a proxy indicator for the SSSR Programme, we can deduce that the project is reaching a larger number of people and more effective in Vlora. With relation to the dependent variables, it is possible that there is a relationship between the SSSR Programme and the high degree of police legitimacy seen in Vlora. In Shkodra this does not appear to be the case; very few people have heard of the very concepts that support the project. However, ascertaining the different approaches to SSSR Programme implementation there are beyond the scope of this study.

Applying the chi-square test to understanding and legitimacy showed that all respondents who had heard of the SSSR Programme were significantly more likely to trust the police. 60% of the total respondents who could define community-based policing also expressed trust in the police. 75.4% of those who had not heard of community-based policing, on the other hand, did not trust the police. A Pearson's coefficient of 6.987 with  $p$  value=.008 indicates that there is a strong relationship between understanding community-based policing and police legitimacy.

## Gender Mainstreaming

According to the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), gender mainstreaming is a strategy for the promotion of gender equality that "involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities." The UNDP highlighted the connection between gender and development in their 1995 Human Development Report and included the catch-phrase "Human development, if not engendered, is endangered" (1995). Gender mainstreaming is important for community-based policing because of its potential to affect the program outputs. Gender mainstreaming involves gender equity and identifying and addressing the needs of both women and men needs and including both in making decisions about how projects are created and affect them. This variable was determined by counting the number of women involved in the implementation of the project. According to the Deputy Programme Manager and Community-based Policing Specialist of the SSSR Programme, there are few women involved in the project in either quarter. He named a total of 6 women with key positions in the project; four in Shkodra and two in Vlora.

I hypothesized that where engendering is low, the effectiveness of the community-based policing initiative in regard to social capital, legitimacy will be high and fear will be low. However, in both cases the level of engendering was low, meaning that engendering does not explain the variation in the dependent variables.

Was gender affecting the observed variation? This question was answered by running a series of chi-square tests of the statistically significant dependent variables by gender.

| Dependent Variables | Women | Men   | Pearson's coefficient | p value |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|---------|
| Social Capital      | 70%   | 60%   | .879                  | .348    |
| Fear                | 75%   | 75%   | 0.00                  | 1.0     |
| Legitimacy          | 34.2% | 28.9% | .244                  | .622    |

These numbers show that there was no difference in social capital, fear and legitimacy by gender. Surprisingly, the levels of fear were exactly the same for both men and women.

Running another test by gender concerning police corruption/politicization and understanding of community-based policing also brought interesting results. Women were twice as likely as men to have a negative perception of the police, and the difference is statistically significant (p value= .036). As for understanding, disaggregating by gender does not reveal any differences in having heard of community-based policing.

| Independent Variables               | Women | Men   | Pearson's coefficient | p value |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|---------|
| Police politicization or corruption | 42.5% | 20.5% | 4.413                 | .036    |
| Understanding                       | 20%   | 22.5% | .075                  | .785    |

Whilst the statistically significant finding indicates that gender is important in public perceptions of the police, the badly-designed question from which the numbers were culled means that it must be treated with caution. Furthermore, this seems to contradict the more robust finding concerning the dependent variable that there is no relationship between gender and police legitimacy. However, a comprehensive exploration of this topic is still warranted. As for understanding, the statistical testing shows that while the SSSR Programme does not have a large number of female participants, the message of community-based policing is reaching both women and men equally.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **Social Capital**

The different levels of social capital in Shkodra and Vlora are most likely related to the situational rather than policy variables. As discussed earlier, the high degree of membership in Shkodra could be related to the

perceived politicization of the police. It is quite possible that the opposition party, which has a large base of support in Shkodra, attracts members and increases voter turnout by highlighting the real or perceived connections between the police and politics. Certainly, the fact that the police were a tool for political control under communism means that the population would be wary of any politicization of the police forces and keyed-up by this issue. This connection between democratic politics and public perceptions of security institutions is a topic worthy of further inquiry.

As for trust, the indicators used in this research were limited, but revealed that there is a relatively equal amount of trust between neighbors in the two quarters. Similarly, levels of collective action were alike in Shkodra and Vlora. However, the research would have been bolstered by more questions dealing with these issues.

A lesson learned from this study is that developing an indicator to measure collective action in a post-communist setting is problematic because of the stigma attached to working together. This is especially true for neighborhood clean-up, a regular activity required by the communist regime. I was told by a colleague that until the 1990s, he and his neighbors were forced to clean their Tirana neighborhood every Sunday. Littering became an act of defiance to communism and a testament to one's belief in democracy, partly explaining the proliferation of litter and rubbish on Tirana's once immaculate streets and public spaces.

## Fear

Operationalized through crime, this study found that the level of fear was higher in Shkodra than in Vlora. However, the reason for this difference does not appear to be related to the situational or policy variables. Further, both groups expressed their belief that the neighborhoods did not have a crime problem. The low degrees of fear suggest that the project has no work to do in regard to lowering crime in the neighborhoods. This is positive because, as noted in the literature review, community-based policing does not always reduce crime anyway. Nevertheless, this issue deserves more study.

One issue for consideration is the fact that one hundred percent of the residents responded that crime is not a problem. It would be interesting to learn what effects community-based policing has on quarters with higher crime rates. While there have been studies concerning this issue in the United States, it does not appear to have been examined in developing countries. Because community-based policing philosophy continues to insist that there are positive effects on crime, it should receive more attention.

## Police Legitimacy

The mini-survey found that police legitimacy is quite low in Shkodra and significantly higher in Vlora. There appears to be a relationship between these findings and:

A situational variable: the level of politicization; and

A policy variable: understanding of community-based policing.



This research has brought another question to light, is the variation more related to the policy variable or the situational variable?

In undertaking this research, I assumed that the SSSR Programme inputs were equal. If this were the case, then the variation in legitimacy could be attributed to the situational variable, and the level of politicization would correctly be linked to the level of legitimacy. In fact, with one exception, all the residents of Shkodra who had heard of community-based policing also responded that they did not trust the police. This means that the SSSR Programme alone will not change police legitimacy.

However, placing such weight on the situational variable is premature because the residents of Shkodra were significantly less likely to have even heard of community-based policing. In Vlora, more than twice as many residents had heard of the concepts, and only one who had heard of community-based policing expressed distrust in the police. This variation indicates that something is being done differently by the SSSR Programme in the quarters such that in Shkodra, few residents have become aware of the basic concepts driving the project. Further research in this matter is certainly warranted, and would contribute to the best practices of community-based policing. These differences will most likely come to light in the final project evaluation.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

My original research question was *what measures the degree to which community-based policing is making progress toward democracy and development?* From the mini-survey and input of field officers and experts, it appears that the most likely candidate for this task is legitimacy. Simply asking residents if they trusted the police revealed considerable variation between the target quarters, and this variation appears to be due to factors under the control of the SSSR Programme, especially its public awareness and information campaign. Although discovering the difference between activities in Shkodra and Vlora are beyond the scope of this paper, the expected illumination of these differences in the final evaluation of the SSSR Programme will be a positive addition to community-based policing best practices.

This study found that fear is the most unlikely measure for a community-based policing project's march toward development and democracy. The low levels of fear found in this survey may be due to the relatively safe quarters selected by the SSSR Programme; judging by the responses of the residents, neither quarter has a crime problem that community-based policing could address anyway. Nevertheless, an absence of crime is not synonymous with security and in other contexts this issue deserves more detailed scrutiny.

One such context is in post-conflict reconstruction. In such a situation, community-based policing may have a positive contribution in increasing perceptions of safety and aid in the reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation process. In this case, a clear distinction needs to be made between "crime" and "safety." Whilst crime may be a measure of safety in a transitional state such as Albania, it may not be relevant in a place like

Kosovo that has a recent experience with war, and ethnic tensions that continue to simmer and boil. According to Dr. Tamara Duffey of the Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS), community-based policing surveys there place more emphasis on safety than crime, and “yield much better, more useful results.”<sup>2</sup> It makes sense that the context of a community-based policing project will be reflected in both measurement and activities. In recent years, the concept of social capital has emerged as a promising measure of progress toward democracy and development. However, while community-based policing is a form a development, it appears difficult to measure in Albania through the micro-levels of social capital. The only variation in the micro-levels of social capital in the two quarters was found in membership, specifically, the degree of voting. This propensity to vote is more likely a function of situation variables and outside of the control of the SSSR Programme or other security sector reform actors.

This does not mean that social capital should be discounted. On the contrary, the findings of this study suggest that the measurement of community-based policing and its distal outcomes might very well exist in the macro-levels of social capital, between the community and government institutions rather than within the communities themselves. As a matter of fact, the concept of legitimacy used in this study could be considered social capital at this level. Having examined the micro-level and pointing out the promising leads of legitimacy, future research should examine the effects community-based policing has at the macro-level, taking care to measure both its structural and cognitive dimensions.

This study also found that the politicization of the police is a situational variable that should be considered when implementing community-based policing. In Shkodra, SSSR Programme activities are hindered by the existence of strong anti-police sentiments. Particular strategies for dealing with these peculiarities would be a positive addition to community-based policing activities there. In such a situation, a project should gather information regarding the anti-police sentiments, and be certain to look at differences by gender. In Shkodra, the mini-survey unveiled an information gap in public understanding of police activities; although the present Albanian justice system does not allow for the police to release criminals, a large number of Shkodra residents said they do not trust the police because “they capture the criminals one day, and release them the next.” An activity that a community-based policing project could undertake to address this problem would be a concerted campaign to educate the population as to how the justice system actually functions.

Another issue is the use of anti-police sentiment in electoral politics. Obviously, the SSSR Programme’s public information efforts will run into problems if a political party is using the police politicization as a campaign issue. A possible course of action for the SSSR Programme would be to meet with those political parties and at a minimum, have them reduce their demonization of the police, and in a best-case scenario, bring them in with other political parties as stakeholders in the community-based policing project itself. Given the nature of politics in Albania, the former is probably more likely than the latter.

Although beyond the scope of this small research project, it would be useful to explore other policy variables, such as the degree of integration

between the community-based police project and other security sector reform activities. In a place like Shkodra, real changes in the criminal justice system, such as reductions in corruption, would certainly bolster the efforts of a community-based policing project to increase the levels of public trust in social institutions.

At the time of writing, there have been movements to coordinate security sector reform in Albania. Real leaders in this regard have been PAMECA and the SSSR Programme, who formed a Community Policing Working Group with the US Justice Department's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM). To-date, meetings have been held, yet the group is still lacking a chairperson (PAMECA, 2004). This indicates that whilst there is a means for coordinating action, there is still room for improvement. Electing an individual to coordinate these groups would be a significant first step in making more cooperation, partnership and security sector reform possible.

This study showed that measurement of a community-based policing project's success in reaching democracy and development will not be found in the number of community meetings or even the number of visits to a community-based policing office. This is not to say that those numbers should not be collected, but that in order to understand how it is changing the human condition, this type of development project can and should be monitored using rapid appraisal methods, and focus on legitimacy and other manifestations of macro-level social capital. Other ways of monitoring and measuring a community-based policing project using this methodology are direct observation, focus groups, and key informant interviews (USAID, 1996). Hopefully, future community-based policing projects can be improved by including this type of data collection and analysis into their operations.

## Appendix I: The Support to Security Sector Reform Programme

The SSSR Programme emerged from a mid-stream evaluation of a weapons in exchange for development project, the Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) Project. In early 2004, the SSSR Programme completed its weapons collection activities and began its community-based policing activities in earnest. Its stated objectives are:

“improving the environment for sustained public order at local level, strengthening police capacities, promoting a positive police image and the police role as a provider of public services, enhancing mutual trust in social cohesion and cooperation and contributing to the perfection of the rule of law and the security and safety of ordinary citizens.”<sup>3</sup>

Although originally planning to implement the project in the five prefectures where it had undertaken the SALWC Project, limited resources and recommendations from independent pre-project evaluators resulted in a piloting of the project in only two quarters in the cities of Shkodra and Vlora. These quarters are administrative units of the city, and have between 7000-8000 residents each. The particular quarters selected by the SSSR Programme were chosen in collaboration with local officials and other stakeholders. The bulk of SSSR Programme activities that have taken place in those quarters since April of 2004 were as follows:

**Public Awareness and Information Campaign:** Promoting philosophy of community-based policing through TV, print and radio advertisements; supporting police media liaisons.

**Support of Community Problem Solving Groups:** Training and support for group of citizens tasked with identifying problems and working for their resolution in the target quarters in the cities of Shkodra and Vlora.

**Support for Community-based Police Officers:** Providing training, assistance, equipment and neighborhood office for officers tasked with bringing police services to the communities selected in Shkodra and Vlora.

**Transformation of Police-Public Space:** Reconstruction of reception areas of police offices.

## Appendix II: Sample Questionnaire

Age

Gender

Resident of quarter:

Do you belong to a local club or organization? (ex. religious, political, other)

How do you select the leaders? (voting, appointment, don't know)

How often do you meet with neighbors for coffee? (Never, Once in a while, Once per week, Twice per week, Every Day)

What would you do if someone was committing a crime in your neighborhood?

If someone was committing a crime at your house (burglary) who would you ask for help?

What would you do if your neighbor was having a hard time, and asked for money?

If you were having a hard time, who would you ask for help?

How willing would you be to take part in an unpaid neighborhood clean-up?

How willing would you be to take part in a paid neighborhood clean-up?

How willing would you be to donate money/time to development project (ex: road, sidewalk, lights)

When was the last time you participated in a neighborhood clean-up?

When was the last time you participated in a neighborhood development project?

How is crime in your neighborhood? (not a problem, problem)

How does crime in your neighborhood compare to the rest of Albania? (better, same, worse)

Do you trust the police or, are they politicized?

Have you ever heard of "community-based policing?"

What is "community-based policing?"

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<sup>1</sup> For more details regarding the SSSR Programme activities and its background, see Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tamara Duffey, e-mail message to author, December 14, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> UNDP, Albania, “Support to Security Sector Reform - Programme.”  
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