Resident Involvement in Community Policing Increases Public Safety

-Examining “Community Commitments” (Medborgarlöften) in a Socially Disadvantaged Area in Sweden

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Introduction

- Increased fear of crime in Sweden
  - Age
  - Women
  - Socially disadvantaged areas

- “Community commitments”
  - Increased engagement by citizens decreases fear of crime
  - Weakness in previous implementation:
    - Low involvement
    - Difficulties reaching citizens in areas with low trust in police.
Community Commitments in Vivalla

- Violent crime
- Vandalism
- Littering
- Illegal traffic
- Stolen and illegal mopeds
- Manned police station
- Police presence at evenings in the area.

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The Aim of the Study

• Examine levels of fear of crime in a socially disadvantaged area in Sweden.
  • Differences regarding gender and age
  • Factors leading to fear of crime

• Examine the experience of increased feelings of safety based on the work with “community commitments” in the area.
  • Differences regarding gender and age
Method

- Quantitative method - cross sectional
- Questionnaire
  - 37 item questionnaire.
- Selection criteria
  - 15 y ->
  - Resident in Vivalla
- Data gathering - on site and social media
  - 62 respondents (59, 7 % women, $M=35$, $SD=17.5$)
Results – Fear of Crime

• Higher levels of fear of crime in Vivalla compared to Sweden in general.
  • 13.2% were classified as particularly unsafe (4% in general).

• Women in the area felt more unsafe than men
  • Fear of crime increased with age (15-24, 25-44 and 45->) but not significantly.
Results – Fear of Crime

• Factors causing fear of crime in the area according to the citizens →
  • Littering, dark areas, arson and housing used for dealing drugs.
  • Increasing age → more likely to indicate that several factors caused unsafety.
  • Women → felt more concerned of being victims of violence and robbery.
Results – "Community Commitments"

• Low knowledge about the content of the “community commitments”
  • Between 25 to 56.7% knew about the preventive actions made by police (Except for manned police station in the area – 70%).

• Citizens in age 25-44 experienced significantly higher levels of increased safety based on the work with “community commitments”.

• If the citizen were aware of the content of the “community commitments” it was significant related to perceive higher levels of increased safety.
Conclusions

• The importance to reach out and involve citizens in the work with “community commitments”.
  • Prioritize adolescents (15-19), middle-age and older people (45-).
  • Prioritize women
  • Prioritize and prevent crimes and other factors that matters most to the citizens.

• Suggestions:
  • Safety Tour → Community commitments
  • Bridging the gap
Strengths and Weaknesses

• Weaknesses:
  • Skewed age categories
  • Relatively few respondents.  

  May effect the representativity negatively.

• Strengths:
  • Questionnaire translated to Arabic and English.
  • Questions, index and age categories from previous studies → Reliability and validity.
Thank you!

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