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Community Safety Partnerships in Scotland: A comparative case study analysis.

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Declaration

I declare that none of the work contained in this dissertation has been submitted at any other university for any degree; and that all this research has been composed entirely by me.

Abstract

Increase in domestic violence amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-social behaviour, and the recent surge in drink-spiking and sexual harassment of women across UK; have highlighted how important it is not only to keep communities safe but also make them feel safe. Partnerships have been seen as a way of resolving these wicked issues; and have gained popularity over the years in Scotland, especially Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). To ensure community safety, public agencies work in these partnerships and make decisions on public services based on evidence. But whose evidence is used in this strategic decision-making? If these issues are suffered by local communities than should local community's insights be not considered as evidence to resolve them? Although, literature indicates otherwise, as majority policies might be decided by "literally one handful of individuals" (Koch,1998,p.173).

However, unlike England study on these partnerships have been limited in Scotland. Especially since the 2003 Local Government Act, which led to CSPs to work within the broader Community Planning Partnerships. More importantly austerity cuts have plagued local authorities across Scotland for a long time however the ongoing pandemic has worsened the situation, forcing many local authorities to decide whether to continue these partnerships or not; with some having already dissolving these partnerships. Such decisions must be based on sound evidence of whether CSPs are still relevant modes of ensuring community safety. However, as this has been a recent phenomenon hence, the broader literature consists only theoretical advances regarding evaluation of partnership-working (for instance Glendinning,2002; Sullivan and Skecher,2002), whereas whether CSPs actually work is limited. This is what this research aims to investigate, through a comparative case-study analysis of two different types of partnerships, using semi-structured interviews, it will argue why partnerships, particularly CSPs, are important within community safety; along with why local community's insights are key for these partnerships to help make communities safe.

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List of acronyms used:

CSPs	Community Safety Partnerships
CPPs	Community Planning Partnerships
EIPM	Evidence Informed Policy Making
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HITRANS	Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
IJB	Integration Joint Board for Health and Care
LOIP	Local Outcome Improvement Plan
MATAC	Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
RCTs	Randomised Control Trials
SCSN	Scottish Community Safety Network
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SOAs	Single Outcome Agreements
UHI	University of Highlands and Islands
NRS	Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

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Chapter 1. Introduction.

Global movements like the Me Too campaign and Black Lives Matter; and the recent increase in violence against young women and domestic violence all over the UK; represent several issues within the society including cultural, socio-economic and community safety. However, community safety although mostly seen in association with anti-social behaviour but within UK it is not considered to be the sole responsibility of a single organisation like Police, rather one that touches functions of several agencies (Henry,2012,p.414). Considered among the most important issues, community safety within Scotland encompasses services concerned with "quality of life" issues (Crawford,2007), and delivered by Police, NHS, etc. Within Scotland it is viewed as one that needs collaboration across agencies to "create safer and healthier communities" (Scottish Government,2018). Figure 1 showcases how community safety goes beyond criminal activities and why requires partnership-working.

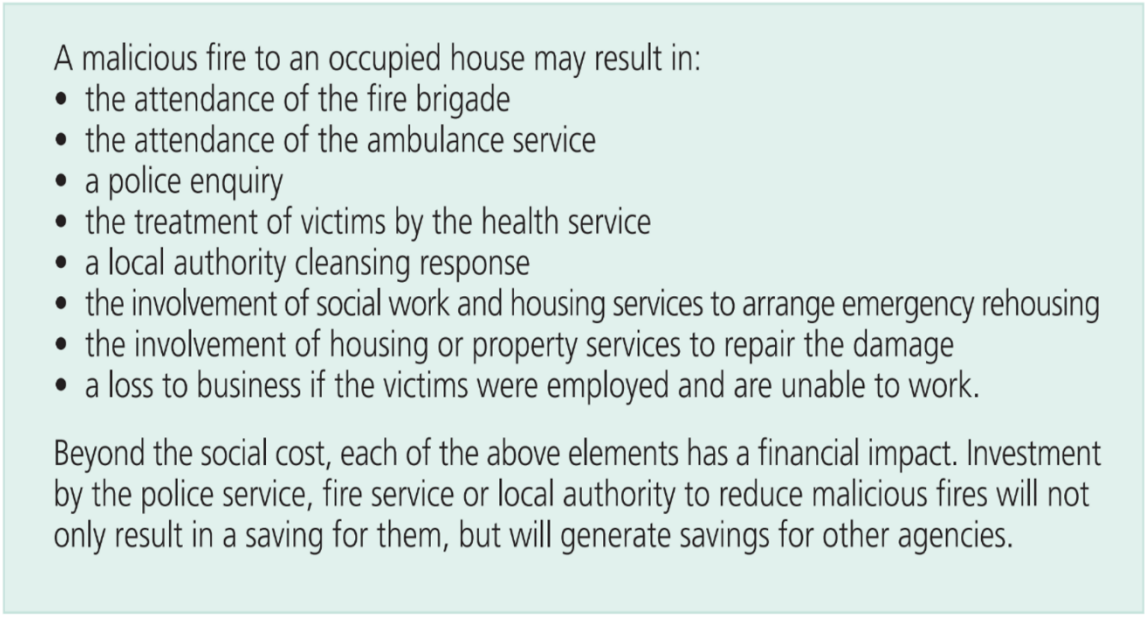

Figure 1. How multi-agency collaboration comes into play within community safety (Audit Scotland, 2000, p.4)

For efficiency in service delivery and enhancing chances of intervention's success, partnerships like Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are crucial (Bynner and Terje,2018,p.118). Although not a statutory requirement to specifically provide community safety, the Local

Government Act 2003 provided Community Planning Partnerships (involving CSPs) a statutory character. Under which local authorities are required to consult and co-operate with not only public agencies but also local communities to deliver services (HMSO,2003). Besides, partnerships like CSPs are effective means to resolve complex "wicked issues" (6,1997). As Hughes (2002,p.12) finds, "Wicked issues require joined-up solutions and new institutional arrangements which break down old compartmentalised professional and bureaucratic boundaries". But should this collaborative culture not extend beyond agencies; and involve local communities especially women and ethnic minorities who are usually ignored as "hard-to-reach" communities (Bynner, and Terje,2018). The Kilbrandon Report (1964) and Scottish Council on crime report (1975,p.22), both advocated collaboration among not only agencies but also with local vulnerable communities to resolve community safety issues.

Another way to deal with these issues is Evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM), which is among several approaches used to produce effective policy outcomes through decisions based on objective evidence (Cairney et al.,2016), and is considered among the most effective means to deliver essential services (Cabinet Office,2013). Within partnership-working the role of evidence and evidence-sharing for effective decision-making is important (Bynner and Terje,2018), and this is where engaging communities can further improve the policy process. As over the years reliance on evidence for policymaking has increased, resulting in discussion on types of evidence suited for specific contexts, raising the question that if community safety issues are local in nature, then should local communities be not engaged to resolve these issues? After all, local communities suffer from these issues and are hence best placed to identify root cause and even suggest ways to tackle them. This "customer insight" can enable organisations to "reassess and redesign how collaboration could improve the outcomes for citizens and communities they serve" (IDEA,p.10). Yanow (2004,p.10) describes this knowledge as one "developed within a community of practitioners". Being local in nature it is called as local knowledge (discussed in chapter 2.2). Although it should be valued in policymaking (Bynner and Terje,2018), but quantitative evidence like statistics or data from Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) are considered "scientific" and given preference, putting local knowledge at disadvantage (SCSN,2021;Yanow,2004,p.20). Issues have also arisen within and between public-sector organisations working in partnerships like CSPs, because changes in government apparatus have increased the role for communities and NGOs in policymaking (Eddy,2006), challenging existing power structures. Besides changes have occurred within CSPs and their members due to legislations like: Community Empowerment Act 2015 and Police Scotland

Act 2013, which affects delivery of community safety services. Tensions have also arisen within CSPs based on power imbalances and mistrust between members, data-sharing issues, etc (Davidones,2017;Henry,2009).

To overcome these issues new ways must be developed through innovative integration of different types of knowledge, like local knowledge, and by replacing old governance structures (Sultana et al.,2007). CSPs are this new form of governance, that bring change in existing organisational structures by increasing involvement of agencies, NGOs and communities in policymaking (Garland,2001). Although this "third sector of prevention" has extended government's reach (Garland,2001); yet it has faced difficulties when attempting to resolve wicked issues like community safety. As several CSPs have failed to identify root cause behind local issues or effectively incorporate local knowledge in policymaking (Audit Scotland,2000;SCSN,2021). Again, raising the question that given the recent rise in community safety issues like sexual harassment within Scotland, would it not be better to consult the most affected community, in this case young women, on how to make them feel safe. As without identification of issues, the quality of intervention designed to tackle them will suffer; and as some CSPs have failed in this, does this mean they are no longer relevant mode of ensuring community safety? Is there a scope of improvement for CSPs by using local knowledge? Or can any other partnership of agencies work better than a CSP in ensuring community safety?

Currently such questions are unanswered, as there is an ignorance in existing research regarding associations among collaborations and their EIPM (Bynner and Terje,2018,p.3); particularly on issues like how actors within partnerships view and incorporate local knowledge in their decision-making. Moreover, insufficient literature in this area hinders "sense-making" or explanation regarding local knowledge utilisation in partnerships policymaking (Gabbay and May,2004). Additionally because existing research either concentrates on wider Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) or individual agencies like Police (example Fleming and Rhodes,2018;Crawford,1995;Bynner and Terje,2018), hence, information regarding partnerships within community safety and their policymaking is less investigated. This research aims to contribute to this area and answer questions mentioned earlier. It commences with background on CSPs, in Scotland and existing utilisation of local knowledge through critical analysis of existing literature in Chapter 2. Next, to investigate whether information in literature reflects the reality on ground, it conducts a qualitative in-depth case-study of two partnerships, particularly in relation to how evidence is utilised in their decision-making. The research

questions, methodology and research challenges are explained in Chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 showcase key findings derived from semi-structured interviews along with associated literature-based theoretical discussion. Chapter 6 concludes with summary of key findings, suggestions based on best practices, and highlights main aspects which merit further investigation.

Chapter 2. Literature review.

The following literature review will provide an overview of existing information concerning partnerships within community safety in Scotland, primarily CSPs; and EIPM; and demonstrate the literature gap regarding CSPs and their utilisation of local knowledge in decision-making. Moreover, it will showcase the necessity to dive deeper into these concepts and shed more light in this area.

2.1 CSPs & key debates.

2.1.1 An Introduction to Community Safety Partnership-working in Scotland.

Partnerships within community safety, to develop and deliver local services in Scotland have not only grown over time, but also strengthened, as acts like Local Government Act 2003 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2004 have not just given CSPs a statutory look but also strengthened their position within community safety policymaking (Scottish Government,2007;Davidones,2017;Bannister et al.,2011,p.233). Moreover, in 2007 the Scottish government further attempted to strengthen this partnership delivered co-governance by issuing a set of 16 national outcomes inclusive of "Safer and Stronger Scotland", to provide guidance related to policymaking (Scottish Government,2018,p.8). Since then, partnerships led by local authorities have tried to achieve government set outcomes (Fenwick et al.,2012). But if partnerships are solely driven by these central government outcomes rather than local priorities then it downplays the overall partnership-building process (Craig,2001,p.251). Furthermore, this performance management system attempted through central government set targets for local authorities directly impacted the organisational functioning and culture of agencies like Police (Hastings et al.,2015). Thus, Community Empowerment Act of 2015 was introduced to transfer the focus being laid on Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) towards ensuring efficient delivery of integrated needs of local populace by involving them in decision-making (Scottish Government,2018,p.15). However, whether all partnerships in community safety actually practice this, is not known. Still Acts, like Community Empowerment Act 2015,

under which local authorities must publish their Local Outcome Improvement Plans and involve communities in decision-making (SCSN,2016); or formation of the Community Safety Unit by the Scottish Government, which is responsible for improving and sharing evidence for community safety policymaking across partnerships (Scottish Government,2010); all prove the trend of growth in partnerships within community safety.

2.1.2 Why Partnerships are good?

There are several reasons for increase in popularity of partnership-working, which is considered best practice and enshrined within UK's legislation as a necessity (Miller and Ahmad,2000). For instance, partnerships like CSPs, not only result in cross-agency collaboration to prevent duplication of services and thus, reduce government expenditure; but are also, means to empower local communities by engaging them in decision-making (Christie,2011). Additionally, partnerships have the potential to improve and enhance both the relationships between the civic society and government, as well as the policymaking process (Burton et al.,2006). Under such circumstances, partnerships are viewed as a "panacea" for community safety issues (Crawford,1995,p.17). According to Bailey et al., (1995,p.1) since 1990's partnerships have been seen "not only as an essential adjunct of policy but as the most important foundation of government's strategy towards urban areas". As evident from the "Safer Communities: The Local Delivery of Crime Prevention through the Partnership Approach (1991)", also called as the Morgan Report, which promoted not only a more localised collaborative approach among agencies for community safety but also advocated community engagement and youth development programmes as means of reducing anti-social behaviour via socio-economic integration (Home Office,1991,p.32). However, another reason why partnerships are considered good is that, partnership-working is a way used by governments to share their burden of policy response (Craig,2001,p.250). As governments allow local communities and NGOs to be part of partnerships, this diffuses the accountability of an intervention's success or failure (Jewson and MacGregor,1997,p.9). Moreover, the "means and ends" for programmes initiated for community safety by CSPs are associated with individual agencies within CSPs rather than CSPs as a whole, hence excluding it from wider public debate (Hughes and Edwards,2002,p.31). Still not just in Scotland but in UK as well, collaboration is a "statutory voluntarism" wherein "partnership, cooperation and collaboration are emphasised

and mandated at every turn" (Paton,1999,p.69). This is because partnerships are "a good thing" and necessary in public policy areas, (Clarke and Glendinning,2002); where partnerships include stable co-operation among its members all acting towards common goals (Mackintosh,1992).

2.1.3 Are Partnerships really effective?

Although literature is filled with theoretical benefits of collaborations but sound evidence regarding their actual benefits is thin (Asthana et al.,2002). For instance, superficially all partnerships portray ideals of equality among its partners as well as participatory democracy. But do all partnerships offer equal powers to all members? For instance, are local NGOs treated as equal to NHS/Police within partnerships? Now here literature is filled with studies that demonstrate how hierarchies of power exist within partnerships (example Balloch and Taylor,2011;Davidones,2017;Henry,2009). But whether these actually existed in community safety partnerships, was investigated in this research.

Partnerships are considered good as they seem to be a rational response to the currently fragmented services, and making these services more effective by bringing together not only different service providers but also the service users (Balloch and Taylor,2001,p.2). Besides by pooling knowledge and resources, partnerships allow generating "new insights or solutions" which are important to resolve complex issues, such as those related to community safety (Mackintosh,1992). However, this "new localism" (Raco,2003) fails to provide an actual structure for co-operative governance, as Burton et al., (2006,p.295) notes, "general tenor of most of the studies was that policy would be better in some way if there was more public involvement, although it was rarely specified what this might look like in practice". Moreover, as partnerships have several members with different aims, manpower and resources, hence, there remains lots of work to be done to observe whether partnerships are more effective in achieving intended goals than their members working individually (Craig,2001,p.250). Besides even though the role of communities in policymaking is important because the success or failure of an intervention depends on their willingness to participate; still existing relations among communities and partnerships are believed to be "top down" (Hart et al.,1997,p.193 cited in Hughes and Edwards,2002,p.186).

2.1.4 Partnerships are not without challenges.

Involving communities within decision-making is widely believed to be good yet it does not guarantee an intervention's success (Zakus and Lysack,1998). This is because involving communities in the first place is difficult, as communities are comfortable in engaging with particular agencies and expect their services to be delivered by these agencies on their own terms (Matthews,2012). There also exists what Ling (2000,p.82) calls a "methodological anarchy and definitional chaos" regarding what partnerships mean. Although partnerships are considered an important way for resolving "wicked" community safety issues like crime and poverty, still it can be problematic due to issues arising within partnerships like hierarchies of power and inter-organisational conflicts (Martin and Guarneros-Meza,2013;Davidones,2017). As Balloch and Taylor (2011) observe that powerful decision-makers within partnerships often establish hierarchies, which restricts the participation of smaller agencies like NGOs or local communities to the margins. Such issues create a gap between the reality on the ground and the policy on paper in context with community involvement in decision-making, and effectiveness of partnerships, this gap in networked governance is called "mea culpa" by Rhodes (2011). However, this does not reduce the importance of partnership-working rather partnerships are still among the most appropriate to tackle the effects of reduced public spending on the vulnerable communities and have a transformative potential to lesser the social inequalities by involving excluded groups in policymaking (Asenova et al.,2013,p,9). Yet austerity cuts and associated politics have influenced local authorities and henceforth CSPs. As facing reduced funding has forced agencies within partnerships to focus more on chasing new funding opportunities, sacrificing the time spent in fulfilling their core duties and those of their partnership's (Hastings et al.,2015;Asenova and Beck,2015,p.10).

Partnership benefits include resource pooling wherein powerful members can help others, however, resource dependency caused by austerity can influence smaller organisations and force them to accept the demands of powerful members (Coleman,1988). Literature is filled with research regarding power imbalances in partnerships where partners like police, who have huge financial and manpower resources, dominate the policymaking process (Crawford and Jones,1995;Pearson et al.,1992). Further strengthening this imbalance, Audit Scotland (2000) found that local communities and race-equality councils are under-represented within CSPs. Other issues within partnerships include unskilled staff, shortage of staff and data-accessibility

all of which prevent partnerships from functioning effectively. Still all these challenges only make partnerships more important as they are, "justified more in terms of providing a holistic approach to service needs than in terms of achieving cost savings" (Asenova et al.,2013,p.26).

Most CSPs consider community engagement through consultations as an essential part of their work (Audit Scotland,2000,p.15). Such engagement especially with those labelled hard-to-reach, allow the formation of more effective community safety interventions. But integrating evidence in decision-making can prove to be difficult as each partner may collect different type of data and have internal regulations which prevent data-sharing (Bynner and Terje,2018). Furthermore, burdening unskilled employees with huge quantities of evidence may not only cause "consultation fatigue" among staff but also ignorance of vital evidence (Bynner and Terje,2018,pp.16-25). Besides most CSPs lack appropriate data interpretation skills and only few implement evidence informed action plans (Audit Scotland,2000;SCSN,2021). Collaborative decision-making is good but only if it is accompanied with information-sharing and involves social inclusion; often partnerships lack these core features and hence literature has plenty of examples of failures in partnership-working.

Several causes are behind these failures ranging from mistrust among partners to contradicting objectives, all leading to conflict within partnerships such as between NHS and Police (Crawford and Jones,1995). This further has implications on the effectiveness of CSPs policymaking and lead to poorly designed community safety interventions. Moreover, CSPs key policy actors like Police have been affected by the "centralisation agenda of the Scottish government" through acts namely, the Police and Fire Reform Scotland Act 2012, that can directly interfere with not only Police's but also CSPs policymaking (Davidones,2017,p.53). Yet collaborations are key "instruments" for effective service delivery (Fenwick et al.,2012); and hence alternatives to traditional bureaucracies. They are "bedrocks of the new governance" (Hughes,2002,p.12); aimed to remove barriers among agencies, which prevents them from effective collaboration. Still more research is required within this area to observe the actual affect the abovementioned issues have on partnerships within community safety; and how they are trying to tackle them.

2.1.5 CSPs require more research.

Although it has been since 1978 that within UK, partnerships have been seen an important part of local governance, still research and associated theoretical discussion over them is less (Craig,2001,p.249). Specifically literature on Scotland's CSPs governance and policymaking is low (example Davidones,2017;Henry,2012) when compared to similar research on partnerships in community safety in England and Wales (look at Crawford,1995;Crawford,1998); moreover, research related to EIPM, specifically community involvement in policymaking far lower. Additionally, since 2003 Local Government Act Scotland, CSPs have been subsumed within CPPs; and austerity cuts have forced several councils to dissolve CSPs. Community safety in these areas is delivered not by a formal independent body like CSP rather a council-controlled partnership of agencies. All this has further reduced focus on CSPs by both literature and the government (Davidones,2017,p.48,). How CSPs dissolution/subsumption has affected their work? Whether community safety delivery would be better without a CSP? Or not? These questions are currently unanswered in literature, and this research will try answering them by analysing two partnerships: a CSP and a council-led partnership in Scotland.

2.2 Evidence Informed Policymaking (EIPM) & Local Knowledge in context of CSPs

2.2.1 EIPM: What's all the hullabaloo around it?

Since 1980's, within public policy, policymakers desire for a more, "rational and optimal approach to public service delivery" (Walter et al.,2003,p.2); has led to a surge in popularity of EIPM as a process to ensure decisions are based on evidence (Nutley et al.,2003). Bowers and Testa (2019) describe it as a movement which uses data derived from partnerships to assist decision-making. Among CSPs the value of EIPM is important because the "organisational sensemaking" is a collective act, undertaken by all partners including communities, that comprises not only evidence-sharing on local issues but also their solutions (Gabbay et

al.,2020,p.3). Additionally, EIPM eliminates the dominance of political nature of evidence in decision-making as it advocates a detachment from the "ideological drivers" of decision-making (Head,2016). Yet this ideologically influenced policymaking has not been entirely renounced (Cairney,2019), instead to suit their own goals policymakers often indulge in "cherry picking" of evidence which erodes public's trust in policymaking (Lancaster et al.,2020). Still according to Bowers and Testa (2019, p.536) EIPM, "is not only good policy but also good politics". Theoretical discussion in literature is filled with views either favouring or disapproving partnership-working and criticising their policymaking process, however, CSPs value should be evaluated on the basis of specific issues they address, rather than judging them upon how other partnerships work (Harkin,2018). In general terms, CSPs role is to ensure community safety by resolving local community safety problems. Hence, the question arises, why should local knowledge be not considered as evidence in EIPM for tackling these specific problems which are local in nature?

2.2.2 What is Local Knowledge?

Before using local knowledge, we need to know what it actually is. Local knowledge encompasses opinions and views of people, specific to a context and particular time, and is recorded as qualitative data in the form of community consultations via questionnaires, interviews and community meetings (Yannow,2004). It is a vital piece of evidence to resolve community safety issues by helping in the formation of interventions which support local policies, because these complex issues are local by nature; and hence can be best understood by using local community's insights. Rittel and Weber (1973) observe that the nature of public policy problems is different to that of scientific problems; and hence these wicked issues might be tackled better by using evidence like local knowledge, even when it is looked upon as non-scientific (Yannow,2004). After all, even senior government officials in the UK have believed, "local communities are just better at dealing with their own problems" (Blunkett,2003a,p.1). Within Scotland legislations like Community Empowerment Act of 2015 provides an opportunity to communities to not only use their own assets to efficiently tackle local problems but also to assert influence (Bynner and Terje,2018,p.4). CSPs chief aim includes engaging local communities, in the form of consultations to gather their opinions, hence in the process

empowering them (Christie,2011). But does this consultation translate into community empowerment? This research aims to investigate this.

However, this does not mean other types of data are not important rather several types of evidence are required to decide how best to use finite resources; and collaborative processes like knowledge-sharing and interpretation fulfilled within CSPs, are key to translate all evidence into effective policies (Bynner and Terje,2018,p.4). To resolve local issues different types of evidence is produced which includes both scientific evidence, and local knowledge derived from experiences of communities and frontline workers (Gabbay et al.,2020,p.2). However, ensuring both efficient delivery of services and community involvement in decision-making, is more complex than it appears (Bynner,2016), because involving many members risk creating a "messy engagement of multiple players with diverse sources of knowledge" (Davies et al.,2008, p.190).

2.2.3 Local Knowledge: An Important evidence.

If community safety issues are local in nature, then should local communities' views be not considered to evaluate the situation on the ground? In other words, will it not be better for CSPs to know what their service-users want from them rather than assuming what is wanted. A local knowledge based EIPM helps in effective understanding of combined community safety issues like fire, health risks, and anti-social behaviour; hence providing a problem-solving perspective that can be further utilised to not only improve service delivery but also their design (Taylor et al.,2013). Besides as Experian (2013,p.1) notes, citizens, "don't want a one size fits all, approach: they want services that are personal to them". Local knowledge is best placed to understand local communities' expectations in the form of their views and deliver if not a personalized than at least a localized approach, which would be better than a centralised approach because different local areas have different local issues. These insights can assist partnerships to identify root-cause of problems, prioritise their services, and prevent duplication of resources (IDeA,n.d.); saving time and resources, which are already limited. More importantly as observed by IDeA (n.d.,p.6), "Only by better understanding and engaging with customers can public service organisations hope to become both more efficient and more effective".

Furthermore, best value for services or better decisions can only be achieved via community engagement (DTLR,2001,p.20). Yet at the same time other evidence sources should not be rejected as Fleming and Rhodes (2018,p.31) find, "There are many sources of knowledge, and we need to weave them together. In this weaving, local knowledge, or experience, is one source of evidence, and is essential given the limits of social science knowledge". Still like any other evidence local knowledge must be gathered and interpreted to make it meaningful for utilisation. As among the main problems facing EIPM is that evidence is often presented in a complex format which prevents policymakers from making effective use of it (What works,2013,p.i). This job is either done by "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky,1980) or "peripheral workers" (Yanow,2004). They represent their organisational policies, and regularly communicate with the local community to whom they deliver services. Their experience and rapport, built over time with local communities, equips them with skills required to translate people's perspectives into actionable evidence. Hence, these peripheral workers are critical for CSPs knowledge mobilisation. Within CSPs this role is fulfilled by NHS field workers, police officials, etc. However, literature related to community safety in Scotland is only able to convey how these workers act as experts in local knowledge with respect to their individual organisations such as Police (see Fleming and Rhodes,2018), whereas how knowledge is translated to be incorporated within CSPs policymaking is heavily lacking.

2.2.4 Local Knowledge: An evidence ignored.

Even with all the benefits associated with local knowledge it is still ignored within policymaking, where majority information on local populace is quantitative in the form of socio-economic data (IDeA,n.d.). This does not mean qualitative data is not collected rather CSPs successfully perform community consultations and collect data still they lack the appropriate qualitative data analysis skills (Audit,2000;SCSN,2013). This would mean the issue is not whether local knowledge exists, rather it is its ignorance. The "source of problem" is the "politics of science and expertise", as it is only the scientific evidence which is preferred because it is believed to be "technical" and based on "professional expertise" (Yanow,2004,pp.9-11). However, local knowledge should not be ignored on grounds of lacking expertise because "it is the character of expertise that is different: local knowledge legitimates the experiential-contextual as a type of specialization equal in value to the

scholarly-academic" (Yanow,2004,p.12). Still its ignorance is common across policy areas (Yanow,2004); as decisions are made without considering community's views. This occurs even when RCTs, considered to be a gold standard in scientific evidence, are aloof from local issues. Instead, it is knowledge derived from local community in the form of customer insights that assists in comprehending local issues effectively; and in the context of community safety helps in targeting service delivery (Bovaird and Loeffler,2013;Experian,2013). However, preference is still accorded to some evidence over local knowledge because selection of evidence is "value-laden and political in itself" (Botterill,2017,p.1).

2.2.5 Local Knowledge is not without issues.

Local knowledge cannot be claimed to have no issues, rather like any other knowledge in EIPM it can be biased and political in nature as well (Gill et al.,n.d). As the source of this evidence, are perceptions and beliefs of local people; and they can have preconceived misconceptions or be driven by ideological motivators, which may bias their views. Moreover, these biases also exist among the peripheral workers, as Fleming and Rhodes (2018, p.3) observe police officials select evidence "based on whether it makes sense to them and fits in with what they 'know' already". These biases are inherent part of policy process, which by nature involves trade-offs and conflicts where evidence is gathered not just for serving public but also to serve goals like furthering an argument (Lindblom.1979). A dilemma occurs because as Botterill (2017,p.1) claims, "attempts to take the ideology or politics out of policy are also potentially undemocratic". The way out of this is to use evidence to assist policymaking, not dominate it, thus evidence-informed policymaking must be practiced not evidence-based policymaking. Moreover, the choice within partnerships is not just related to which evidence but also whose evidence to use, and under such circumstances it is often the powerful members who dominate evidence selection (Davies et al.,2008). There are other barriers to EIPM in partnerships, such as partners commitment to collaboration or data-sharing, capacity of staff, etc (Bynner and Whyte,2016). Besides community engagement in policymaking is considered good yet it often lacks a proper direction due to undefined targets/outcomes, leading to a "unique but puzzling" situation (Chanan,2003,p.15). Also creating more evidence when different types already exist, risks falling into a "knowledge mobilisation swamp" (Ward,2018).

Such issues prove that EIPM in practice is much more complex and messier (Oliver et al.,2014); and local evidence "complex, differentiated, and dynamic" (Greenwood and Levin,p.109). To overcome these challenges there is a need for innovation and stronger community engagement. On the contrary, innovation among public agencies is "limited in the extreme" (Osborne and Brown,2011,p.5); and community engagement to be among the "weaker aspects of community safety to date" (Henry,2009,p.262). All causing failure in "negotiated risk governance" or failure to account for evolving community needs especially those of most vulnerable (Osborne and Brown,2011). However, these issues should not underplay the benefits associated with local knowledge. As within UK several agencies have accepted that although scientific evidence is good but other forms of evidence are important too (UK Treasury,2007;UK Cabinet Office,2008); along with stable partnerships for knowledge-sharing (Bynner and Terje,2018). Hence, across UK the value of community involvement in local governance has been emphasised upon (Blunkett,2003b). Besides successful international programmes like the online community engagement platform Decide Madrid or approach like Assets Based Community Development; and on a national level within UK, Communities First Programme and New Deal for Communities all prove that local knowledge can not only be used to improve public services but also empower communities (García,2020;Involve Uk,n.d;Pill,2012).

This chapter concludes with the view that although both partnerships and local knowledge are plagued with several challenges still, they are important within community safety. However, whether CSPs are effective means to tackle community safety issues, can only be judged if they are resilient and successful in overcoming their challenges and using local knowledge along with other evidence in their EIPM. This must be researched and is what this dissertation aims to undertake.

Chapter 3. Methodology.

3.1 Research Questions.

It is important to explain the research questions before moving forward as they not only identify study's aim but also provide implicit presumptions on research methodology (White,2009). This research "Community Safety Partnerships in Scotland: A comparative case study analysis", aims to investigate:

a) Whether CSPs are still an effective means to resolve community safety issues? If not, then could they be replaced by other partnerships which fulfil broader duties that include community safety? Or if individual agencies are better on their own without partnerships?

b) Whether local knowledge derived from community engagement is recognised and used as evidence in policymaking by partnerships within community safety? There is a necessity to comprehend how evidence, all types including local knowledge, is utilised because without this understanding the money and time spent on generating it can be compared to "shouting in the wind" (Bynner and Terje,2018).

3.2 Research Design.

This research aimed to discover whether CSPs were still effective within community safety, or a partnership with broader duties that included community safety replace CSPs, by being more effective in ensuring community safety. Research also investigated how local knowledge was perceived and used in such partnerships. Thus, a qualitative comparative case-study, supported by semi-structured interviews, between a densely populated urban area (named Arrochar for research) with a council-led partnership; and a remote rural (named Balmaha) with dispersed population, and a structured CSP, was considered as best approach.

3.2.1 Case Study Process & Case Study Areas.

A case-study helps in understanding complex organisational procedures, like policymaking (Denscombe,2010,p.55;Crowe et al.,2011); and even though other approaches like experiments can be utilised, however when research like this intends to discover how a phenomenon occurred then case-study is better (Yin,2003). Besides, practical questions cannot be answered by other approaches like an empirical study (Bickman and Rog,2009,p.231), whereas case-studies allow a deeper understanding of actions by actors and organisations (Woodside,2010). Moreover, case-study's strength lies in its flexibility to allow tailoring approaches to answer "why, what, and how of an issue and assist researchers to explore, explain, describe, evaluate, and theorize about complex issues in context" (Harrison et al.,2017,p.14). However, a single case-study is criticised for being not rigorous, lacking generalizability (Flyvbjerg,2013;Yin,2014;Zainal,2007) and is accused of being "aberrant in some undesirable manner" (Bickman and Rog,2009,p.259).

To counteract these claims this research used a comparative case-study approach using two case-studies, across two distinct geographical and demographical areas. As using cases with different contextual conditions, broadens the research's scope, and allows not only an in-depth analysis of the complexities involved in utilising local knowledge in partnership-working but also increases research's robustness, reliability, and external validity (Bickman and Rog,2009,p.261). Hence, invitations were sent via Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN), to five partnerships (two rural, two urban, and one semi-urban). One of the key requirements of case-study is that sites should allow researcher access to what "constitutes the chosen unit of analysis for the study" (Crowe et al.,2011,p.6). This study aimed to obtain insights through interviews from decision-makers within partnerships in community safety and hence, partnerships were requested to permit their members to voluntarily participate. The two partnerships that accepted the invitations, although as an overall goal aimed ensuring community safety, but both had different characteristics, which was also the reason for their selection. Arrochar was among the few local authority areas with over 90% population residing in "Large Urban Areas"; whereas Balmaha had over 60% of population residing in "Remote Rural Area" (Scottish Government,2016); how this impacted both their local community safety issues and their partnerships work, was investigated. Balmaha's CSP was structured, and aimed to deliver community safety by fulfilling following three priorities:

- Sustainable Recovery (including financial recovery for local communities and climate-based strategies),
- Connectivity: Digital and Transport,
- Community Wellbeing

according to its Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2021-2023 (Balmaha Website).

Whereas Arrochar before the COVID-19 pandemic, had a structured CSP like Balmaha, called Community Safety Arrochar (CSA), however, amidst the pandemic it was dissolved, returned to Arrochar City Council (ACC) and its services shifted to other departments primarily Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS). Within ACC's broader agenda, community safety priorities could not be discovered hence, these were requested from ACC participants, and the researcher was directed to Arrochar CSA's website, which had not been updated since 2016. Several issues with these priorities were discovered in chapter 5.

These priorities were:

- Alcohol and drugs consumption,
- Anti-social behaviour,
- Home Safety,
- Violent crime especially against women.

Such priorities led to questions whether these were based on demographical traits in case-study areas? Were they decided by engaging communities? if yes, then what was the extent of community involvement? Or which partnership was better in community engagement? or were priorities decided by few powerful members? as, both partnerships had resource rich members like Police Scotland and Scottish Fire & Safety Services. Besides. In which way this influenced their collaboration and utilisation of community insights in decision-making was investigated. Having two distinct case-studies, also permitted investigation of similarities or differences within their policymaking; providing an exhaustive investigation where thematic deductions derived from two case-studies were much robust than ones derived through only one case-study. In addition, if research ended up with "common conclusions" then it would have strengthened research's generalisability, as findings were from two different cases rather than a single (Yin,2003,p.53). Besides, it not only gave an opportunity to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, EIPM and partnership-working, within real-life context (Yin,1994); but also valuable insights into gaps that might have existed (Crowe et al.,2011,p.4).

3.2.2 Data Collection and Analysis.

Key insights can be effectively obtained by a case-study supplemented by qualitative methods; and among the most common methods are interviews (Merriam,2009;Yin,2014;Newton,2010). Other methods like experimental and surveys can also be used, however, they are considered less effective than qualitative methods in identification of reasons behind outcomes (Maxwell,2004). Thus, this research used semi-structured interviews, to obtain insights in the form of perspectives/ideas expressed by participants (Flick,2009). This allowed data to be gathered along with humanistic characteristics and in an interactive manner (Campbell,2014); which further allowed in-depth data exploration. Initially eight interviews were planned with key decision-makers from case-study areas, however as explained later in chapter 3.4 only seven interviews could be undertaken. These included two participants from SCSN, and two participants from Balmaha and three from Arrochar. They belonged to agencies who worked in these partnerships. Although randomisation of participants is considered good when conducting interviews, yet this research used purposive sampling because its aim was to investigate existing partnership-working and policymaking within these partnerships, and this could be best accomplished by interviewing "key informants" in these partnerships (Yin,1994). These informants are those who are best in position to give insights that answer the research questions (Yin,2014,p.28), in this case the policymakers and knowledge mobilisers. Both primary and secondary data was used; and as secondary data on this topic was limited, majority research was considered, including both partnerships internal documents which were publicly available. In addition, relevant literature was reviewed to identify best practices that successfully used local knowledge. Similar qualitative case-study approach has been used for research on CSPs (see Davidones,2017;Henry,2009;Henry,2012), yet several have undertaken focus groups as well, which given the time constraints in this project were not used.

This research was thematic using Ryan and Bernard's (2003) "key word in context" strategy to draw out re-occurrent themes that addressed questions, for instance inter-organisational conflicts. Thematic analysis is considered significant to ensure the research quality (Merriam,2009). Moreover, this research aimed to examine how policymakers made meaning of their experiences with evidence for policymaking; and thematic analysis was effective in this case as the focus was on the "material experiences and contexts" of participants (Flick,2009,p.3). To focus on interviews and effectively validate research conclusions, data

gathering and analysis must be done simultaneously (Coffey and Atkinson,1996,p.2). So systematic documentary analysis accompanied by investigative interviews, that delivered key themes was done. This strengthened research's robustness as it allowed triangulation across methods. Moreover, thematic analysis for interview data allowed discovering unanticipated insights and differences/similarities in themes (Braun and Clarke,2006). From a data perspective it allowed analysing large data into themes, and to conveniently produce an organised report (King,2004).

3.3 Potential limitations & Ethical Considerations.

Academics have discussed how researcher's thought process can affect the construction of findings and influence research (Gibbs,2007;Ritchie et al.,2014); hence it is important to reflect upon any potential biases and difficulties that may have occurred. Among semi-structured interviews used in this research, an associated issue is utilisation of lead questions influenced by researcher's pre-conceived conceptions, causing observer bias. According to Olsen (2012,pp.6-7), this further causes "one-sided viewpoint"; addressing this requires production of a "fair and unbiased" balanced account (Denscombe,2010,p.236). There could also have been the "interviewer effect", where researcher's age, sex or ethnic origins influenced participants responses (Denscombe,2007,p.184). Interviews also allowed participants to divulge private thoughts, which were ethically sensitive and led to concerns on ethics and data privacy.

According to Crow and Wiles (2008,p.1), "Anonymity and confidentiality of participants are central to ethical research practice"; and pseudonyms for participants and case-study location is the primary method to achieve this (Crow,2008,p.1). Thus, all participants and places were pseudonymised (see chapter 3.5). Additionally, informed consent was taken from all participants before data collection began; which involved explanation of research objectives along with their voluntary participation (Oliver,2003,pp.28–30). As this was a collaborative project, participants were informed that research findings would be shared with SCSN. Moreover, to maintain anonymity, websites from respective partnerships were referenced as "Balmaha Website"/ "Arrochar Website". Links to these websites will only be provided to examiners if requested.

3.4. Research Challenges.

As this research aimed to investigate partnership-working in two partnerships, hence permission was requested, through SCSN, for conducting research upon them. Once permission was received, specific individuals representing agencies within these partnerships were contacted for interviews. However, issues emerged in both case-study areas as several participants refused with most common reasons being that they were occupied in work, or believed they had nothing relevant to discuss on community safety. This was common with NGOs, and NHS. Due to these reasons and time restraints seven interviews were conducted instead of initial planned eight. Thus, no participants from NHS and NGOs were part of this research, although this research believes that these organisations are important in community safety landscape.

3.5 Presentation.

Key findings and supported explanations are presented in sections based on themes discovered. Relevant new literature added after additional literature review done to support findings have been presented as thematic analysis. Statements of participants have been referenced and italicised showing them with area they belonged to and a digit; for instance, A1 (Arrochar), B1 (Balmaha); participants from Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Services and SCSN and were additionally referred as representatives from their organisations.

Chapter 4. Local Knowledge & Community Engagement.

4.1 Recognition of its Importance & Shortcomings.

To discover which evidence was preferred in decision-making, questions were asked how data was collected and what sources used. Initially all participants spoke in detail about quantitative data specifically statistics from Police, NHS, and City Council; and how these were used in decision-making. Only four participants continued speaking and discussed qualitative data but in little detail, others had to be nudged towards it by asking about their community consultation methods. This behaviour highlighted how quantitative data dominated not just the mindset but also the working across all agencies in both partnerships. Moreover, all participants agreed that local knowledge was important, still not effectively used, and a weakness which needed improvement.

> *"So, I think that's (qualitative data) one area we can definitely improve upon. We do it but we know that we need more of it..."*. **A2**

> *"Qualitative tells us individual stories and adds context and nuance to quantitative data. I think community safety is a complex picture; and evidence you gather must account people's personal circumstances and stories. But do all partnerships use them, I don't think so"*. SCSN Representative **1**

4.2 CSP is better for Local knowledge.

Both these partnerships do not have the power to collect data themselves, rather they depend upon their members to generate, analyse, and share data. Hence, engaging communities to collect local knowledge depends on individual members. A difference was observed as all participants from Balmaha were more confident in their future community safety work in

context of qualitative data usage, as they believed that if their internal organisation's regulations or resource constraints prevented them from collecting qualitive data then they will receive it through effective data-sharing made possible by their CSP. On the contrary, two participants from Arrochar complained that they performed better in collecting and using local knowledge when they were a CSP.

> "*We were better at it (gathering & using local knowledge) when we were a CSP, then we are at the moment 'cause now we're part of much bigger organisation"*. **A2**

Since 2003 Local Government (Scotland) Act, CSPs have been subsumed within CPPs, which has led to conflict in CSPs aims and functioning (McAra,2007); under such circumstances when CSPs were already weakened Arrochar's CSP had been dissolved and its duties shifted within Arrochar council's Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability department, with assumptions being that community safety was still covered. However, this has meant that Arrochar lacked official oversight or direction on community safety through a community safety focussed strategic board. Being part of a "*bigger organisation*" has not only affected their community engagement but also their ability to overcome issues like data-sharing, power imbalances, and most importantly absence of community safety from their agenda (see chapter 5).

4.3 Local knowledge: A means to Decide & Deliver services.

Participants perceptions on community's role within community safety were taken to see how local knowledge was generated and more importantly whether community engagement and qualitative data were considered important. According to Carr (2012) there are four types of citizens:

- Citizen partner
- Citizen associate
- Citizen bystander
- Citizen opponent

What had to be seen was how these partnerships perceived their own citizens. As only if communities were perceived more than just bystanders then there could be a potential to engage them.

> "*They (communities) are key players because I've always felt it's fine for us to sit and think what we believe community needs to live safely. However, we need to hear that from the community themselves to allow us to target work and meet those needs"*. **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

> *"If you only focussed on statistics you'd be working in leafy suburbs 'cause they have very low tolerance of antisocial behaviour. So, we need to look across an array of information. Call it what you like because not everyone will phone the police to report ongoings. So, it's about how we engage in a much more local level to get that richer picture"*. **A2**

Similar comments from other participants proved that community was seen as a source of insights to decide 'which' and 'where' services had to be delivered. Hence, citizens were commonly engaged as associates and partners, as a source of information. This appreciation of "citizen data" led to a potential to improve service delivery through evidence-informed planning, using community's insights as key evidence (SCSN,2021,p.10). This knowledge as stated by another participant allowed agencies

> "*to extend our resources to the places of greatest needs*". (**A2)**

4.4 Community empowerment through engagement.

4.4.1 Differences in opinion.

Partnership's value to empower communities lay in their ability to "provide genuine opportunities to consult, engage and involve" local communities (Scottish Government,2012). However, what should be the level of this engagement? The level of engagement directly affects community's empowerment and the quality of data collected. Within the case-study sites engagement took several forms with the most common being "*surveys*", "*public meetings"* and *"questionnaires*". Balmaha participants were satisfied with existing methods and only believed their frequency needed to increase. Whereas Arrochar participants recognised need for new consultation methods specifically "*participatory budgeting"* and *"citizen panels*"; to allow not just consultation but also community empowerment. As a participant from Arrochar explained:

> *"We were looking at how Participatory budgeting was a real opportunity for community safety and other partners to be part and parcel along dialogue and discussions and have done couple pilots".* **A1**

4.4.2 Recognition of challenges to new community engagement strategies.

However, allowing citizens to attend such consultations is one thing, but transforming this into actual representation, another. As an effective representation would mean a representative of every section of society to reflect the views of all communities; and achieving this in an urban area like Arrochar is difficult due to existence of several mixed communities. Besides a study regarding public involvement in crime prevention mechanisms in Amsterdam by Van Steden et al.,(2011,p.436) discovered that achieving active citizen participation was difficult in diverse urban areas because "strong homogenous groups of people have never existed".

Moreover, not all people have the same level of input and commitment to participate. Within UK active participation usually occurs in areas characterised as middle class with low crime rates (Van Steden,2011). Whereas it remains lower in high crime areas where in fact it is needed more. This "internal exclusion" (Young,2000) of under-privileged groups who suffer inequalities both within society and within participation methods, is a major challenge.

Two participants from Arrochar acknowledged these challenges.

> *"'These (initiatives) are just another forum, and we need to be mindful that some folks are very active, because they hold a particular view about certain things. It's maybe not the view that is shared by masses…".* **A2**

Recognition of challenges meant that if such initiatives were introduced in Arrochar, then they knew beforehand issues associated with them and hence could deal with them. Whereas all Balmaha participants believed new methods were not required. This did not mean that new methods were required in Balmaha, on the contrary new ways of empowering communities should always be considered to overcome existing inefficiencies. However, this research acknowledges that decisions on implementation of such methods requires input from local communities; and further research that investigates communities view is required.

4.5 Solution: Collaboration & Balanced EIPM.

Five participants believed the solution to most challenges including lack of local knowledge and its utilisation, was partnership-working and using different data types.

> "*we need to look at other sort of feedback whether that is regular newspaper articles, or academic journals or any kind of emerging trends that point towards the picture, I think we have to look at it altogether and together with other partners*". **B2**

All types of evidence (quantitative & qualitative) from local communities, third sector and public agencies should be considered for decision-making; however, this should also be accompanied with recognition that every type of evidence has its strengths and weaknesses (Paterson,2021). What this chapter makes clear is that both partnerships realized how important local knowledge and community involvement was within community safety. Although there were several challenges associated with these processes, but effective partnership-working was believed to assist in overcoming these barriers as well as others related to resource constraints and data-accessibility. However, whether this occurred in these case-study areas was explored in next chapters.

Chapter 5. How priorities are decided, and decisions made.

5.1 Priorities require regular updates.

To begin and succeed in partnership-working what is required is a mutual agreement among partners regarding the purpose and need for their partnership (Asthana et al.,2002;Evans and Killoran,2000;Knight et al.,2001). This can be best achieved through establishing strategic priorities towards which the partnership aims to work (Audit,2000,p.18).

Both case-study areas had an established set of objectives outlined on their respective websites (chapter 3). But when participants were asked how these were established, it turned out that Balmaha followed Government of Scotland's best practice in context of constantly updating their strategic priorities every two years, and later adding these to its partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2021-2023 (Audit,2000,pp.18-21;Balmaha Website).

Whereas participants in Arrochar disclosed:

> *"Community safety agenda hasn't been looked at for a number of years, and if you look at the current administration's manifesto, where it mentions violence against women & anti-social behaviour, those commitments have been there for a long, long time. I mean, since even before I joined…".* **A2**

> *"I would say priorities need to be visited because they haven't been revised or reviewed for a number of years".* **A1**

Having old objectives directly affected Arrochar's ability to resolve community safety issues, because local issues might have changed over time or had become more severe; and outdated priorities failed to reflect these changes. On the other hand, Balmaha 5 years ago had injuries and death caused by traffic accidents as their priority, however, change in time and through evidence in the form community's insights and statistics, they changed their objectives in 2021.

As a participant noted:

> *"As infrastructure (traffic related) was put in place people began to feel much safer and through statistics we saw a decline in road injuries. This made us re-think our work (as a partnership) so we replaced some old priorities with new".* **B2**

The new priorities mentioned here are related to Balmaha's financial recovery from the ongoing pandemic and climate emergency (see chapter 3). This linking of community well-being with sustainable recovery demonstrated not only Balmaha CSP's ability to effectively use their local knowledge along with other data, but also, that they had accepted and adjusted to the fact that local needs evolved over time. This also showcased the importance of local knowledge in strategic decision-making.

5.2 What's more important: Local needs vs Central Government?

Several factors affect how priorities are decided, for instance, central government, through its powers like legislations and resource allocation can steer partnerships by establishing their goals, or by establishing agenda for agencies within these partnerships (Crawford,2006,p.453;Marinetto,2003). Hence the question arose whether these case-study partnerships prioritised their work based on goals decided by Scottish Government, like based on SOAs (see chapter 2.1.1) rather than local needs. Besides Audit (2000,p.19) finds, "these different sources of priorities may conflict with each other, or cause tension among partner agencies"; additionally may even lead to ignorance of local needs by subduing to pressure from government. This pressure existed in both partnerships.

> *"They (priorities) have always been aligned to government, like national regulations".* **A1**

"The single outcome agreements for Scotland are key player in all agencies outcomes. So, it's difficult because local outcomes must meet local needs, but they also must meet outcome agreements for Scotland". **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

What emerged upon analysing all participants comments was that partnerships priorities were directly influenced by individual members priorities which in turn were till some extent influenced by government regulations like SOAs. This made their work difficult but did not mean that local needs were ignored, rather local insights were prioritised because only through local knowledge they could identify local needs. As a Balmaha participant explained:

"Emerging issues regarding water safety in Balmaha. Like you got coastal water, but we've got several inland water supplies where we've experienced safety concerns of people entering reservoirs… so there are things that might be of national theme, but very much shaped by local priorities...". **B2**

All participants gave responses which included words like "*balancing", "equal importance*" or "*evenly distributed*" to balance national and local pressure in decision-making. These responses showed that their work was shaped by local needs but also based on recommendations from central government as guidance.

Frustration emerged only in Arrochar where two participants explained how although partnership objectives were decided by local needs, but these did not actually represent local community safety needs.

"Council manifesto probably for strategic plan for next five years of our commitments and priorities had nothing about safety. If you look at City Council website and you find the plan for 2017- 2022 and, you know, search safety within that I'm telling you now, the only thing you'll find is safety by design, and that's related to planning". **A2**

This showcased that unlike Balmaha, Arrochar neither updated their community safety priorities regularly nor did they base them on their local community's needs. This was due to Arrochar's inability to understand local needs as effectively as Balmaha did, as shown in chapter 4 where participants in Arrochar agreed that there was a lack of local knowledge; because of reasons like mistrust, and inability to effectively resolve other barriers to its partnership-working (see chapter 6); all due to absence of a structured partnership like CSP that entirely focusses on community safety issues.

Chapter 6. Challenges to effective partnership-working.

This chapter not just elaborates on challenges faced by partnerships in case-study areas, rather it also analyses how partnerships had attempted or not, to tackle these barriers. Such issues do not make community safety partnership-working impossible, but "they have contributed to its fragility and may yet contribute to its demise" (Henry,2009,p.276).

What had to be seen was which issues had persisted overtime or which new ones had emerged? Whether a council-led partnership in Arrochar was more successful in tackling these issues or was it Balmaha's structured CSP? Relevance of these partnerships could only be observed if they were resilient in the face of their challenges.

6.1 Impact of Austerity on partnership-working.

6.1.1 Innovation in the face of austerity.

Innovation is important within public sector to overcome challenges, especially those arising due to financial cuts (Asenova and Beck,2015). Reduced funding for public and third sector in Scotland has become a barrier to their working (Hastings et al.,2015). To comprehend the impact of financial cuts on these partnerships, questions asked aimed to elicit information around whether new creative methods for community engagement were developed or old methods were preferred; questions were asked about what work had been prioritised, and in turn what had been deprioritised.

All participants agreed that austerity had impacted their capacity to deliver community safety.

> *"Austerity cuts or just the funding landscape in Arrochar, can be frustrating at times as we lose partners that we work with and have to go through the rigmarole of trying to find another one".* **A3** Police Representative

"It (austerity) has affected the fulfilment of any commitment done during community engagement…". **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

What emerged in both partnerships was that austerity had forced their individual members to spend more time on securing new funding streams. This in turn meant less time spent on fulfilling their duties, and hence members often decided to focus on their organisation's core aims rather than partnership's aims. Often this approach translates into failure to adapt creative strategies, to deliver on communities changing needs (Asenova and Beck,2015,p.10).

However, although all participants from Arrochar accepted that getting finance was difficult, but they also acknowledged that innovative ways were the only way forward.

"Now it's trying to be innovative trying to create new ways of working, but is it always possible? No, sometimes we have been honest with our communities that at times there's no money". **A1**

When asked to elaborate these "*innovative ways of working*" the most common ideas among all three participants in Arrochar was collaboration with private sector (especially bars and clubs) and inter-agency collaboration, particularly with third sector. However, this collaboration was outside the existing partnership. Additionally, all participants from Arrochar agreed that community safety approaches used a decade ago were irrelevant today and needed change. The biggest change in Arrochar was prioritisation of work.

"Nowadays it's all about prioritisation of issues. Our approach has changed in the face of austerity because we realized we can't be everywhere, every time. So, we adopted a prioritization approach focusing efforts rather than a shotgun response over entire place". **A2**

Prioritisation of issues aimed to target services and deliver the right intervention at the right place is an effective tool given both the resource constraints in Arrochar, and the fact mentioned in chapter 4 about geographical inequalities in Arrochar; where some areas were more impoverished and prone to anti-social behaviour than others. However, this prioritisation was effective only within agencies working individually or outside existing partnership; because as mentioned in chapter 5 the priorities within Arrochar were outdated, and mistrust within its partnership (see chapter 6.3) meant trust had to be established in partnerships outside existing one.

On the contrary participants in Balmaha accepted creative ways were good but did not elaborate on these. Instead, they pointed out reasons why they could not use new methods even if they wanted.

> *"there's opportunity for innovation to take place, but there are certain organisations, who's hands are almost tight, ourselves included. Because myself, police and the ambulance service, we're sort of tight within our code of conduct"*. **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

Balmaha's preference for old methods was because old methods had been tested and tried before, and hence involved less uncertainty on outcomes than new methods. This also highlighted how favourable environments, including institutional and legal structures (Miller and Ahmad,2000;Knight et al.,2001;Asthana et al.,2002), within which partnerships like Balmaha operated, directly affected their ability to resolve barriers like funding crunch. Balloch and Taylor (2008,p.10) observe, "There are genuine difficulties involved in breaking down existing cultures and working in new ways, and this takes time and investment". This did not mean Arrochar did not face similar issues, rather agencies in Arrochar accepted their old methods were outdated and pro-actively moulded their internal structures and methods to adapt to changing funding landscape.

6.1.2 Shortage of key personnel: Data Analysts & Community Safety Designated Officers.

What was understood by now was that budget crunch was felt across agencies within community safety. But did this affect the efficiency of partnership-working due to lack of personnel?

Data either qualitative or quantitative is vital for decision-making however to be used by policymakers it must be provided in an easy-to-understand manner, and this is where data analyst comes in. However, all participants in this research said that austerity cuts had led to a decrease in data analysts.

> *"Data analysts within our community safety are certainly less now than before, authorities have looked at spending and have either stopped the position entirely or if someone leaves the job then we will take it across other organisations".* SCSN Representative **2**

Reduction in data analysts directly affected each member's ability to interpret their collected data and hence rendered it meaningless. If communities and more partners are to be effectively engaged in planning then they must be provided evidence in a format they can understand (Bynner and Terje,2018). Without data analysts this transformation of technical data into useable information became difficult for both partnerships. As accepted by a participant:

> *"Analyst capacity has gone down but need for clear understanding of data has gone up, affecting agencies ability to interpret and communicate data".* SCSN Representative **1**

Similar trend was observed with Community Designated Officers who according to Henry (2009,p.187) are ,"the most important members of the Community Safety Partnership". Shortage of these officers was accepted by two participants in Arrochar, one from Balmaha and both experts. With those not accepting acknowledged that they did not know this position

existed at all. This is a serious issue as by involving themselves in countrywide forums on community safety these personnel play the crucial duty of developing and sharing ideas on most effective approaches; and assisting across agency co-operation (Henry,2009). However, these officers were on the decline,

> *"It's becoming increasingly difficulty for local authorities to have a de-facto community safety designated officer without adding additional duties".* **B2**

What was clear was that loss of funding had translated into shortage of key human capital in the form of data analysts and designated officers; and this not only affected the quality of work of all agencies in both case-study areas, but also their ability to work/contribute to their partnerships.

6.2 Power inequalities & Third sector.

Majority research on partnership-working focusses upon power imbalances in partnerships like CSPs and how these allow resource rich partners (like Police) to dominate and drive the partnerships (Pearson et al.,1992;Crawford,1997;Crawford and Jones,1995). This research discovered similar themes at play in both case-study areas, for instance inequalities among members in partnerships based on personnel, capacity, and resources; however, what was new were issues of slightly different nature that focussed upon how personality of individuals who represented agencies in partnership had a huge impact upon partnership-making, hence these barriers were explored in detail.

6.2.1 Power inequalities exist: But are they always bad?

The New Labour rhetoric in UK emphasized how cooperation within partnerships would assist in achieving unachievable goals (Mackintosh,1992); and in turn increasing effectiveness within community safety. However, if individual members dominated these partnerships, then it

would seriously hinder collaboration; as the powerful would not only enforce their agenda but also prevent other members to be an effective voice for community interests they represented (Davidones,2017;Henry,2009,p.211).

Surprisingly during the initial questions on this topic, only one participant accepted existence of power inequalities.

> *"CSPs are designed to be a partnership of equals, but I absolutely don't think that would be the case because power is perceived in different ways. Some organizations like police for example, on table appear to be unequal, just because of their sheer size, and will be listened more attentively…."*. SCSN Representative **1**

The above response goes in line with majority of literature regarding power imbalances within partnerships due to more resources and size of organisations (for instance Henry,2009;Davidones,2017;Whitehead,2003;Whitehead,2007). These concerns have arisen due to the centralising of former Police and Fire & Safety regional entities by the Scottish Government (Donnelly et al.,2002). For instance, this amalgamation has led to the disposal of resources of former separate police services under one single command. Hence, Police Scotland and Fire & Safety have become the most resource rich members in not just case-study partnerships but throughout all CSPs in Scotland. A point reiterated by another participant:

> *"Police and Fire & Safety are national organizations who deploy resources from a national perspective, whereas Balmaha local authority can't do that, so you will have certain organizations who dominate".* **B2**

However as mentioned by SCSN representative **1** that "*power is perceived in different ways*", similarly its impact is also perceived differently. For instance, when questioned regarding partnership-working participants spoke about how resource-rich members like Police dominated but contrary to majority literature this dominance was rather positive.

"Their (Police & Fire safety) skills and experience are much greater, so their contribution is more, and I think it's quite right they will do that (take dominant role). They have resources that we don't…". **B2**

However, concerns regarding dominating role of these organisations were still common as this participant continued:

"I do, always wonder and I know certain time my colleagues both council and third sector say, how dominant we can allow those organizations to be?" **B2**

Two participants from each partnership believed that power was only a perception.

"You would be surprised if I say I don't I actually think they (power imbalance) exist. Sometimes I'm quite shocked at how other agencies view council as a monster". **A2**

Power as a concept is impossible to define (Haugaard,1997;Haugaard,2010), and it does not have to be restricted to resources but can also be in the essence of "prevailing in decision-making" (Dahl,2002,p.6). In both partnerships although all participants accepted Fire & Safety and Police as powerful members based on their resources, yet no information pointed that these organisations influenced others decision-making, and although they could dominate partnership's agenda, it did not translate into other members being forced to act upon that agenda. However, this does not mean that it had no negative impact rather as chapter 6.4 found, it led to instances of mistrust that hampered partnership-working.

6.2.2 Is Third sector an equal partner?

Power can also be in the form of practices like "institutional bias" where powerful organisations limit the deliberation of certain issues or participation of certain organisations (Bachrach and Baratz,2002,pp.26-30). This phenomenon was observed in Arrochar where two

participants noted how third sector was essential for engaging communities and delivering community safety intervention, still they were not involved in important meetings.

> *"Third sector are not a member of MATAC. When we meet it's restricted to Police, City Council and Fire & Rescue. That's probably unfair because third sector in relation to anti-social behaviour provides a lot of interventions".* **A2**

On paper Police Scotland's initiative MATAC (Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination) is aimed to identify and manage the most harmful domestic abuse perpetrators (Whole Lives,2017,p.4). But within partnerships it was more than that, it was among the key tools that had improved data-sharing across agencies.

> *"Through MATAC in terms of safety services, we sit around the table and discuss what analysis of all of statistics are telling us of our problem-areas or here's what the narrative from communities or from elected members is…".* **A1**

Not involving the third sector in such platforms seriously hinders effective community safety intervention formation and such exclusion according to Davidones (2017,p.221) "goes against the principles of community planning". Because as found in chapter 4, local knowledge is critical evidence in decision-making; and NGOs are valuable repositories of this knowledge. As NGOs through their work are deeply embedded with disadvantaged communities, and their staff has direct work experience with these communities (Paterson,2021), positioning them best in understanding local challenges. Moreover, they are key to empower local people as they help build communities capacity "to contribute their own insights based on their lived experience into policy" (Paterson,2021,p.11).

Contrary to Arrochar, Balmaha showed a better acceptance of third sector voice. Although a single member's ability to dominate and drive the agenda was accepted but was not considered negative in any way.

> *"I think imbalance is dependent on organizer. If Fire & Safety arranged a meeting, I would expect them to have more input then perhaps third sector groups. But on the flip side, if it was one of the voluntary action groups, I would expect they would have more proactive engagement".* **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

The reason why Balmaha did not show similar problem to Arrochar was because they had a much more structured and organised partnership in place with roles identified for each member.

As a participant from Balmaha explained how their CSP meetings took place:

> *"Each organization has a named representative with at least one substitute so that there would always be a key stakeholder present, that includes third sector, council and public agencies, and later either feeding directly into group or taking information from group".* **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

This again showcased how Balmaha's well-structured CSP (figure 2), which had written agreement to clarify contributions for each member, and strategic priorities; was what assisted them to give an effective voice to all members, and hence work more effectively within partnership. These laid down mutually agreed rules are according to Scottish Government (Audit,2000) key to effective partnership and all these were missing in Arrochar because of absence of a CSP.

Balmaha CSP Structure & Composition

The Executive group:

1. Balmaha Council.
2. NHS.
3. Police Scotland.
4. Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.
5. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).

Other Board members:

- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).
- Integration Joint Board for Health and Care (IJB).
- University of Highlands and Islands (UHI).
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS).

Other Local and co-opted partners:

- Voluntary Action Balmaha.
- Balmaha Community Safety Justice Partnership.
- Scottish Ambulance Service.
- Balmaha Housing Association Ltd.

Figure 2.

6.3 Role of Individual's Personality & Mistrust.

To succeed, partnerships require not only respect but also trust among partners (Hardy et al.,2000). Although these partnerships are established on trust, but these can deteriorate over time as well due to lack of trust (John,2011,p.141). Within case-study partnerships, member-agencies selected representatives to represent them in multi-agency meetings like MATAC; and this research discovered that a lot of positive and negative occurrences in-relation to power

or data-sharing were in fact related to trust issues within partnerships; which were directly related to personality of these individual representatives.

As one participant in Arrochar mentioned how multi-agency collaboration had improved overtime due to individuals working in these agencies; and although it was good, but it was an issue as well.

> *"How much collaboration across agencies has improved is down to personalities and this is potentially the issue because it's about who you know, not what you know. It needs to be not just dependent on personalities rather needs to be written into strategy/practice as well. Because institutional memory of certain people may leave".* **A1**

Reiterating the point again that a well-structured CSP like Balmaha with clearly laid out aims and responsibilities of each member, might have resolved this issue in Arrochar as it would have fulfilled the gap of a written strategy.

Additionally, another participant in Arrochar observed that when officers were recruited from areas outside Arrochar then mistrust occurred.

> *"What tends to happen in both Fire & Rescue and Police is personnel change a lot. They don't always come from* Arrochar *and don't get challenges that* Arrochar *has. Therefore, they think they have got a grip on it and they don't really have a grip on that".* **A2**

The afore-mentioned comments by a prominent and experienced figure within Arrochar's partnership, pointed-out towards a very important development because this illustrated how much partnership-working depended upon individual members. This participant continued with sharing a personal experience where Fire & Safety had claimed to engage all stakeholders including council in relation to community safety around Bonfire night. However, the participant claimed that such an engagement had never occurred. The bigger issue according

to this participant was *"lack of appreciation for challenges that a big city like* Arrochar *can give".*

A Scottish Government report on CSPs (Scottish Government,2018) found that CSPs worked effectively when partners agreed on priorities and worked along local communities to comprehend local issues and had it written down as strategy. To reach such consensus on priorities, trust and relationships are key (Audit,2000,p.24).

Balmaha was able to overcome most issues Arrochar faced not only because of a structured CSP that allowed them better, coordination and delivery of specific projects; but also, because of better trust, relationships and how organisations in Balmaha structurally operated. As explained by a Balmaha partcipant:

> *"We are quite unique here in Balmaha because we predominantly employ local employees….they have a primary employment and live within a station area. So, they develop a good understanding of local community needs...".* **B1** Fire & Safety Representative

This proves that although selecting the right partner agencies is an important step in partnership-working, however "this advantage can be quickly lost if the right individuals are not chosen as representatives" (Audit.2000,p.11). Balmaha has an edge over Arrochar in this area.

6.4 Data-sharing issues.

Data-sharing is crucial for successful partnership-working as it helps members to make decisions based on what they know communities need rather than assuming what communities need (SCSN,2021).

6.4.1 Does GDPR prevent data-sharing?

All participants recognized that since pandemic began social media had become their main mode of community engagement and hence, source of data. This made questions regarding whether information-sharing issues arose due to privacy concerns brought by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It is among the stringent data-privacy rules; put into effect in 2018 across European Union (GDPR.EU,2022). SCSN conducted a series of surveys, focus groups and questionnaires on data-accessibility within CSPs. Among the key issues their report highlighted were GDPR and lack of data-sharing from Police (SCSN,2021).

This research uncovered some perceived difficulties regarding data-accessibility; however, to a level much less than found in previous research (example SCSN,2021;Henry,2009;Davidones,2017). As a participant from Arrochar stated:

> *"If you'd asked me about GDPR five years ago, I would have jumped out of a window. But now I think people are getting with the beat".* **A2**

All participants had views like above upon GDPR, as they all said that when GDPR regulations came in none of them were prepared for it, however with passage of time all had adjusted to working with these regulations. However, this did not mean that GDPR issue had vanished entirely as one participant noted:

> *"What's a big hindrance to me is that GDPR has been a difficult thing to navigate. I think there was time we may have shared data more freely than we can now".* **A3** Police Representative

Additionally, participants from both partnerships believed that as data-sharing regulations nowadays were complied with hence, data-sharing had improved. Only in Arrochar two participants complained that NHS and Police were organisations who were reluctant to share data.

"NHS has always been a thorny one in terms of data-sharing. They're not the easiest". **A1**

"We had significant challenges with police. We have a wee bit of ongoing have always have ongoing challenge with NHS". **A2**

However, this reluctance of NHS/Police to share their data easily, should not be always seen as a barrier because these agencies have sensitive individual data and thus are right to be concerned about sharing it and breaching their clients confidentiality (Balloch and Taylor,2008,p.10). Thus, this might be the legal and hence proper thing to do, as Police representative from Arrochar said:

"*we are gatekeepers to very private information".* **A3**

6.4.2 Informal Data-sharing networks.

6.4.2.1A solution to overcome data-accessibility barrier?

Barriers to data-accessibility should not be seen as an excuse to circumvent existing regulations through informal deals (Bottoms,1990). However, this research discovered that information-sharing challenges led to formation of informal networks of data-sharing between agencies outside existing partnerships. Participants from both partnerships accepted existence of these networks.

"Sometimes maybe someone uses their phone to share information. But it's informal as it would be." **B1** Representative Fire & Safety

> *"Yea we fly under the radar with them (other partners). Some data we might be sharing and there might be informal discussions about certain things…".* **A3** Police Representative

This was an important issue because if organisations like police, who are gatekeepers to private information, were flying under the radar, then it meant existing data-sharing structures within both partnerships were not working as intended.

6.4.2.2 Power inequalities within informal networks.

An SCSN representative pointed out how informal networks were dependent on individual personalities; and that power imbalances and institutional biases (especially against third sector) existed even within these networks.

> *"These networks often come down to personalities and types of people. How willing they are to share and make these informal networks. Third sector are important to community safety… but only some CSPs are good at having informal relationships with them, even if they're not formally a part of CSP".* SCSN Representative **1**

Participants from both partnerships agreed that informal networks existed, but only when they quickly needed information to ensure community safety. These networks can be seen as means to overcome existing data-sharing barriers. But as SCSN representative mentioned some CSPs were better in having these networks, especially with third sector, than others. Chapter 6.2 found, how third sector was not involved in formal data-sharing discussions like MATAC in Arrochar, hence the need to have informal networks for Arrochar was much more important than Balmaha. However, if third sector was not part of these informal relationships then it would further increase power inequalities; as access to these informal networks itself became a source of power and those excluded were henceforth marginalised (Crawford and Jones,1995,p.27).

Whether third sector was part of these networks in either partnership cannot be answered in this research due to lack of third sector representatives. However, one participant from Arrochar mentioned how even when their agency (not from third sector) was crucial to community safety yet sometimes they were not invited to meetings.

> *"I would genuinely like more engagement with other partners and elected members. I just think that there's lots of people having meetings and I genuinely don't know what goes on there…"* **A2**

Initiatives formed in partnerships like Arrochar, where some members were uninvited to discussions, "are often vague", as decisions on partnership's agenda are made with assumptions that all members would follow them, without all members even knowing that changes had taken place (Crawford and Jones,1995,p.27). These further increased power inequalities in Arrochar as those part of these networks operated largely unchallenged.

Chapter 7. Discussion & Conclusion.

This research explored partnership-working in community safety within two local authorities of Scotland, to discover whether CSPs were still relevant for community safety, and how they used local knowledge (see chapter 3.1). A comparative case-study using semi-structured interviews was adopted, and research questions posed (see chapter 3).

Participants response to interview questions allowed several themes to emerge, after briefly analysing these themes in earlier chapters, this chapter will now summarise major findings, and then reflect upon implications these have within community safety policy and practice. However, views from local communities and third sector are important in answering these questions as well, because they are key stakeholders in community safety. But resource and time restraints meant vast research covering all opinions could not be undertaken in this research, hence it is acknowledged that further research consisting of these views is required.

7.1 Acknowledgment of the importance of local knowledge & related shortcomings.

All participants not only agreed that community engagement in the form of data derived from community consultation being used in decision-making was important, but also that their efforts in this area were limited. This "practical wisdom" of local communities must be given more recognition to truly identify local community's needs (Bynner and Terje,2018). Both partnerships looked at this data for deciding which services to deliver and where to deliver them, however Balmaha realised that this wisdom of local communities could also be used in deciding their partnership's agenda, and in the process empowering local communities. Safer communities in Scotland recommends that strategic objectives and priorities of partnerships should be based on community consultation and community safety audits (Scottish Executive,1999). Issue among partnerships like Arrochar, regarding establishing priorities that did not reflect the threats faced by local community, due to lack of understanding of local needs, was found more than two decades ago by a Scottish Government report (Audit,2000).

This research proved that although local knowledge was important but so was having a structured partnership like Balmaha which translated these “people pieces” (Hughes and Edwards,2002) into meaningful data and effectively shared it across partners and in turn established trust which led to mutual agreement on objectives that reflected local needs. All of this was missing in Arrochar due to lack of a formal CSP.

7.2 Community engagement more than just qualitative data.

All participants recognised that community had important role within community safety, however, in Balmaha this role was limited to community as participants in “surveys” and “questionnaires”. Whereas Arrochar had begun to think and even test participatory methods like participatory budgeting and citizen panels.

These mini-publics or initiatives to co-produce services allow a systematic engagement of service users in not only giving feedback on services but also deciding upon service process and delivery. Bovaird and Loeffler (2013,p.2) observe that involving “service user at all stages, increases the likelihood that the service user’s criteria and weights (rather than just the producer’s) are applied in the evaluation of what should be produced and how”. This co-production can happen at anyone stage of community safety decision-making or at all stages, shown in figure 3.

Types of co-production:

1. Co-commissioning of services:
    - Co-planning of policy
    - Co-prioritisation of services
    - Co-financing of services
2. Co-design of services
3. Co-delivery of services
4. Co-management of services
5. Co-performing of services
    - Co-assessment
    - Co-monitoring of services
    - Co-evaluation of services

Figure 3. Different types of co-production of public services (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2013)

Although difficult, yet this co-production is not impossible as proven by successful examples of local communities' engagement with authorities. For instance, The Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network, seen as a model for user-led evaluations within community safety and social services (Evans,1996;Balloch and Taylor,2001,p.169); or users defining their service-outcomes in The Shaping Our Lives project (Evans,1998; Balloch and Taylor,2001,p.174). What CSPs through such participative methods should focus is on how to make local knowledge more valuable in decision-making. Agencies dealing with community safety need not only key personnel like data-analysts and designated officers but also external expertise. For instance, the Edinburgh Community Health Forum a partnership working to reduce health inequalities in Edinburgh; has collaborated with an independent organisation, Matter of Focus that specialises in data evaluation. Matter of Focus helped Edinburgh Forum to transform their local knowledge in a story for deciding strategic priorities (Paterson,2021). However, this

transformation for Arrochar without a formal CSP would be like "moving from a 'blunderbuss' to a 'rifle' approach to citizen involvement" (Bovaird and Loeffler,2013,p.12) and all this would require not just material resources like money but also changes in the attitudes of staff. This "political change" or the will to resolve existing barriers (Balloch and Taylor,2001,pp.284-286) is more difficult in Arrochar currently as one participant complained how their work with other agencies had issues because

"Every organization has folk that say I been that way always been that way". **A1**

No amount of financial resources can change such behaviours among policy actors (Craig,2001,p.252). This brings us to how individual personality influenced partnerships.

7.3 Role of Individual Personnel & their Personality.

All partnerships have important personnel who are their key drivers (Hudson and Hardy,2002). Within community safety data analysts and community safety designated officers are these key personnel who are pivotal in ensuring effective data interpretation and multi-agency communication continues (Riggs et al.,2013,p.787;Henry,2009). However, all participants in this research acknowledged that these personnel were important but now were either on decline or their position no longer existed. The work of designated officers as "boundary spanners" with networking skills to work across agencies or as "knowledge brokers" (Balloch and Taylor,2001,p.288;Henry,2009), is of central importance. To make collected data meaningful it must be translated, analysed, and communicated; all this requires these key personnel who are "speaking the right evidence language in the right context" (Bynner and Terje,2018,p.1). Absence of these personnel impacts the quality of working within all partnerships in community safety.

Besides these personnel other staff especially senior leaders of agencies within these partnerships are also key to effective collaboration. However, mistrust existed within partners in Arrochar as its participants gave several instances where an individual's personality had interrupted their work. Analysis of all interviews showed that to resolve ever-evolving

community safety issues partnerships required more communication between staff who worked on same issues but in different organisations, this could even stimulate creative approach and problem-solving. However, Balloch and Taylor (2001) find that, "there are genuine difficulties involved in breaking down existing cultures and working in new ways, and this takes time and investment". Thus, what is required is not only a structured communication platform like CSP but also staff with characteristics that favour communication and innovation. Balmaha thanks to a CSP seemed to be progressing in communication area, whereas lack of a CSP meant Arrochar struggled.

Issues caused by individual's personality is why Government of Scotland recommends attributes (figure 4) that representatives of agencies should possess.

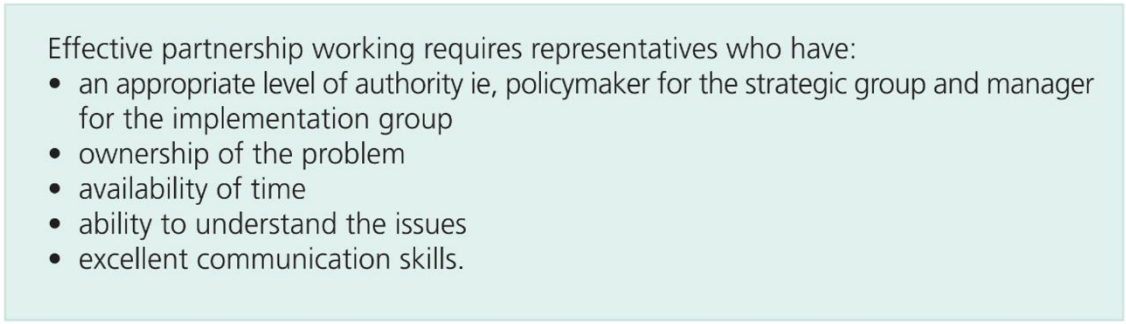

Figure 4. Attributes which representatives of agencies to partnerships should possess (Audit,2000, p.11).

7.4 Power Inequalities & Mistrust exist, especially against Third Sector.

As a concept power and trust are never permanent rather, they are ever changing (Mayo and Taylor,2001) and although power imbalances in partnerships were found in this research, these imbalances could shift (Clegg,1997), as members might learn from their past mistakes and adapt. For instance, Fire and Safety's status in Arrochar might change if they develop their local knowledge by collaborating more with communities and agencies in policymaking and in turn also increasing their capacity to bridge social capital. Establishing and maintaining trust is not only essential for Arrochar but all CSPs, because existing cordial relationships can deteriorate due to misunderstandings (John,2011,p.141) such as in the case of Arrochar.

All participants accepted that collaboration was essential for their work and that it had improved over the years. However, it was Balmaha which gave all stakeholders including third sector an effective voice through a seat at the table. Whereas Arrochar which had dissolved its CSP, failed to engage third sector in key decision-making and had several instances where even key stakeholders like Fire & Safety and local council did not collaborate effectively due to mistrust and individual personalities of key personnel. Mistrust can be resolved through better lines of communication across agencies, as lack of communication is often the reason for failure in partnerships (Nash,2010;Watson,2010); and again due to a formal communication platform like CSP Balmaha was better in resolving mistrust than Arrochar. Still importance of collaboration especially with NGOs was well recognised even in Arrochar, where agencies often collaborated with specific NGOs outside existing partnership. Whereas agencies in Balmaha did not have to do this as NGOs were well represented there.

7.5 Importance of partnerships especially that of CSP in community safety.

Another important finding was that rather than members due to different organisational cultures passing "each other like ships in the night" (Sampson et al.,1988,p.488); they made creative and sometimes unconventional efforts to collaborate, either in the form of informal networks of data-sharing or inter-agency partnerships outside existing partnership. This occurred more in Arrochar, where policymakers had to work towards making communities safe, amidst the absence of a CSP. Barriers to collaboration like data-sharing existed in Balmaha as well, however, existence of an organised partnership allowed effective information-sharing and hence provided a sort of cushion. Whereas lack of such a formal structure that encouraged and facilitated information-sharing meant informal networks of data-sharing seen by Bottoms (1990) as "informal deals", had popped up more in Arrochar. This also proves individual agencies alone cannot effectively deal with complex issues like community safety, and hence all types of partnerships within community safety are important.

Moreover, to work successfully in a collaboration "partner organisations need to know why they are involved in the partnership and what is expected from them" (Audit,2000). An entity like Balmaha's CSP allowed all members to interpret and communicate goals derived from mutually agreed agenda, which was important as all individuals think through institutions

(Douglas,1986,p67). Whereas in a partnership like Arrochar that had responsibilities other than community safety, meant that several members were confused of their work and on agenda decided within partnership, which had community safety priorities not only outdated but also not mutually agreed upon.

It could be argued that community safety had become deprioritised within Arrochar, especially since its CSP was dissolved; because currently there was no specific board/committee/group that focussed entirely on community safety. In meetings which took place participants from Arrochar expressed how community safety was not prioritised anymore; as community safety as a strategic priority got dissolved with other issues. The reason why CSPs should not be dissolved was clearly expressed by SCSN representative **1**:

> *"If CSP gets wrapped up into community planning or other departments then community safety becomes less focused. CSP's strength is the people around its table, who are members of organizations with very specific interests and expertise".*

It is this vital connection between group of people with expertise and shared interest (in community safety) that Arrochar had lost, and it had made overcoming barriers related to partnership-working more difficult for Arrochar, as compared to Balmaha. Hence again proving CSP's importance.

To conclude partnerships, especially CSPs, within community safety are important to resolve community safety issues, however in order to remain effective in the future there is a need for development of a balanced pool of evidence, that includes local knowledge, by sharing among partners. Along with a result driven approach, this can help agencies tackle issues related to unskilled staff and lack of data (Bannister et al.,2011,p.235); and to achieve all this a structured CSP is the most effective. Through a CSP, challenges to partnership-working can be better resolved, and effective collaboration established. However, CSPs like Balmaha should not ignore innovation instead through innovative joint initiatives, and removal of outdated organisational cultures that prevent development of new ideas; CSPs have the potential to remain not just relevant but also become a more effective means to deliver community safety. These efforts must also include hiring key personnel like community designated officers as they are the ones who "challenge inner-circle assumptions and encourage 'real' rather than

pseudo-partnership-working" (Hughes and Edwards,2002,p.192). If CSPs and community safety have to remain a meaningful and recognised practice, then they must be perceived as essential among their member-agencies. These member-agencies must carefully nominate skilled representatives to these partnerships. As they are face of agencies at CSP's table, and their failure to work or get their agency to act upon key issues, will always be seen as lack of commitment on agency's part; hence causing mistrust and affect overall partnership-working. CSPs are the radical collaborative culture within community safety services without which "both budgets and provision will buckle under the strain" (Scottish Government,2011,p.viii). Additionally, to keep CSPs relevant for future and have a lasting impact on community safety, local communities must be engaged within key community safety decision-making. Achieving all this requires not just internal commitment from organisations and their staff but also requires local authorities support in the form of establishing and maintaining a formal board/entity in the form of a CSP that facilitates these developments, all aimed to make local communities safe. Without such actions the probability of CSPs (along with community safety) becoming a relic of the past becomes much higher, or in the words of a participant:

> *"Fear of community safety to potentially flip off our agenda in the future, may actually become true".* **A1**

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