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**Crime Prevention and Community: Operationalizing the Concept of Community in the City of Ottawa's
Community Development Framework**

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**Crime Prevention and Community:
Operationalizing the Concept of Community
in the City of Ottawa's Community Development Framework**

Laura Kristen Dunbar

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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Abstract

The ‘community’ has become one of the focal points of how crime prevention and community safety issues are addressed in Canada. However, empirical research has demonstrated that crime prevention programs delivered at the community level have generally fallen short of their promises. This suggests that the community and strategies of community mobilization have been used in crime prevention without a clear understanding of the meaning of the concept. A qualitative case study of the City of Ottawa’s Community Development Framework serves to illustrate how the concept of community is translated into practice, and reveals the gaps between conceptions of what community *ought* to be and the ‘messy actualities’ of community-based practices. It concludes that a greater appreciation of communities and their particular capabilities should help inform the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives in the local context.

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I would like to thank all of my research participants for giving their time and sharing their thoughts and insights on ‘community’ and other related concepts. I hope that this research accurately reflects your contributions. I hope that these findings help to inform the Community Development Framework process in the future, and that they serve to advance knowledge pertinent to the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives at the local level.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCP:	Community Crime Prevention
CDF:	Community Development Framework
CHRC:	Community Health and Resource Centre
CPS:	Community and Protective Services Department (City of Ottawa)
NCPC:	National Crime Prevention Centre
NPI:	Neighbourhood Planning Initiative
NCLB:	No Community Left Behind
OCH:	Ottawa Community Housing

I

INTRODUCTION

In Canada, our approaches to crime and public safety are changing. One approach that has gained recent recognition with policy makers and practitioners is community crime prevention, which sees the community as an important institution in and of itself (Schneider, 2010) in the reduction of crime and victimization. However, the faith in this crime prevention philosophy has not been translated into a common practical understanding of its fundamental components. In particular, there has been a lack of attention paid to the variation in the composition and capacity of communities (O'Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997).

At a conceptual level, the concept of community has multiple interpretations, each involving a complex set of ideas and practices (Hastings & Jamieson, 2002). It can be a place, a sense of identity, a political actor, or an instrument or agent of program delivery. Its meaning is largely reflective of the particular model on which appeals to it are made. However, when these definitions are applied in practice certain problems can arise, and there is often a discrepancy “between what community *is* and what it *ought* to be” (Crawford, 1999, p. 514, emphasis in original).

Empirical research into the overall effectiveness of community crime prevention has demonstrated that while several specific interventions delivered at the community level have been successful, most programs have generally fallen short of expectations; despite significant investments of resources, energy and effort, there has been little sustainable success (Crawford, 1998; Rosenbaum, 1988; Schneider, 2010; Sherman, 1997). These pessimistic results may be related to the ill-conceived and idealistic assumptions about community on which these programs are premised.

Despite these findings, the community continues to be relied on for the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives. Two interrelated claims can be used to make sense of the prominent role of the community: a shift in political discourse from welfarism to neo-liberalism and the assumption that crime and social control are issues best dealt with at the local level. Increasingly, the community has been given more responsibility for delivering crime prevention and is assumed to be willing, able and knowledgeable in the development and implementation of solutions to address issues of crime and safety at the local level.

While the community has been promoted as a focal point in crime prevention, little empirical research has been conducted on the operationalization of the concept in the local context. Appeals to the community for the management of and assistance in the delivery of crime control and community safety activities cannot be successful without a comprehensive understanding of the particular communities involved in the process. The objective of this project is to conduct empirical research at the local level in order to achieve new insights into the 'messy actualities' (O'Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997) of community-based practices.

Through an exploratory, qualitative case study of the City of Ottawa's Community Development Framework (CDF), this project seeks to provide a more grounded understanding of the conceptualization process and how it might influence the administration of crime prevention measures. Through a social constructionist approach, focusing on the processes by which people describe, explain and account for the world in which they live (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), this research study examines how stakeholders in the CDF have conceptualized community and related concepts, and how this conceptualization has impacted the development and implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety.

Data were collected through a review of key CDF materials and qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders. Through this methodological approach, comparisons could be made between the nature of the community and its role in the CDF process at the conceptual level and at the local level based on the perceptions of those involved on the ground in the implementation of the CDF. With this comparison, it became possible to see how the concept of community plays out in practice and to describe factors that might influence neighbourhood action plans. Hopefully the knowledge gained from this case study will lay a foundation for further research, and act as a reference for the development of community crime prevention strategies and initiatives in the future.

This research paper includes a literature review, a description of the research methodology, an overview of the Community Development Framework, an analysis of qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders, and a discussion of the key findings. The paper concludes with several recommendations for the Community Development Framework and identifies areas for future research.

II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 'Community' and Crime Prevention in Canada

In Canada, the crime prevention field is diverse and encompasses a range of measures that seek to reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of criminal activities, and to minimize their potential harmful effects on individuals and society (Crawford, 2007; Schneider, 2010; UN ECOSOC, 2002). These strategies include a number of different approaches, each with their own specific characteristics, targets for intervention, and agents of delivery (Linden, 2008; Schneider, 2010).

One that has gained international recognition with policy makers and practitioners is community crime prevention (CCP), which sees the 'community' as an important crime prevention institution in and of itself. It is promoted as the agent of delivery, instilled with the essential crime prevention prerequisites of social cohesion, collective action and informal social control (Schneider, 2010), and is described as the site where crime prevention solutions are located and administered. In 1990, the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders promoted the important role of 'community' in crime prevention through 'the safer communities' approach, arguing that it is the focal point of effective crime prevention (Clark, 1990). More recently, a comprehensive report on the theory and practice of crime prevention in the United States outlined the essential role that the community plays:

Communities are the central institution for crime prevention, the stage on which all other institutions perform. Families, schools, labor markets, retail establishments, police, and corrections must all confront the consequences of community life. Much of the success or failures of these other institutions is affected by the community context in which they operate. (Sherman, 1997, p. 1)

Finally, the centrality of the community in crime prevention is evident in Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy which reflects the view of the community as the source of solutions to crime problems and emphasizes the importance of community engagement and participation in crime prevention activities (Léonard, Rosario, Scott, & Bressan, 2005).

The community crime prevention approach is premised on the belief that both the problem of and the solutions to crime are strongly influenced by community (Schneider, 2010). This philosophy assumes high levels of capacity as CCP programs and initiatives rely heavily on community mobilization to encourage community members to act collectively and become involved in proactive interventions that are aimed at reducing or preventing criminal activity from occurring in their communities (Linden, 2008; Lurigio & Rosenbaum, 1986).

The recent increase in the popularity of community crime prevention can be partially attributed to the view that the community is an institution that can cut across all other approaches (situational, social development, community policing), that it has become an essential resource to be mobilized, and that community-based prevention measures represent an effective approach to reducing crime and disorder (Schneider, 2007; 2010). The community has effectively become a focal point for crime control and community safety issues in Canada.

2.2 Multiple Uses of the Concept of Community in Crime Prevention

The community has become an important force in the administration of crime prevention initiatives (Crawford, 1998; Shaw, 2006). By promoting the community as “an amorphous term with multiple meanings” (Shaw, 2006, p. 2), policy makers have been able to rely on diverse communal groups to address issues of crime and safety, thereby avoiding a clear commitment of responsibilities. Further, by focusing on an idealized notion of

community derived from a profound sense of nostalgia, based on past images that are either real or imagined, policy makers have been able to demonstrate that the community served as an ideal and desirable form of social control (S. Cohen, 1985). The ambiguity of the term and the idealized notions of community have been used to provide some of the justification for its prevalent role in crime prevention without having a clear understanding of its meaning. This amounts to a gap in the discussion of the 'messy actualities' (O'Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997) of community in action.

In particular, there is a lack of attention paid to the variation in the composition and capacity of communities (O'Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997) at the level of practice, which can serve to promote sites of resistance for the implementation of initiatives to address issues of crime and safety. Several assumptions about the meaning of community have made the local implementation of crime control programs problematic and created a context in which the individuals targeted by the policies might resist the conceptualization used at the centre of those policies (Miller, 2001).

2.2.1 Variation in the Operationalization and Capacity of Community

Community is a word rich in symbolic power and one with enduring significance (S. Cohen, 1985). It has multiple definitions, each involving a complex set of ideas and practices (Hastings & Jamieson, 2002). Within the context of crime prevention, 'community' can mean a variety of different things. In its most general form, community can refer to informal social control in contrast to formal social control, and thus includes that which is beyond the traditional criminal justice system of police, courts and corrections such as families, schools, social services, associations and religious organizations, among others (Crawford, 1998) . In more specific characterizations, community can refer to a 'where' or a 'who'; meaning either a location or a group of people with a need for intervention. Further, community can be used

to refer to citizen support politically for crime prevention. Finally, community can mean citizen participation in the development and implementation of crime prevention interventions. What is meant by community is largely determined by the conceptual model upon which appeals to it are made in criminal justice discourse and policies, which carries over to crime prevention programs and initiatives.

The following definitions of the community emphasize various aspects of the concept, grounded in an ideological understanding of the nature of crime, community and their inter-connectedness (Crawford, 1995). However, as will be demonstrated, when these interpretations of community are used in practice certain problems arise.

2.2.1.1 The Physical Aspect – Community as a Place

The concept of community has traditionally been defined in physical and spatial terms as a specific geographic area identifiable on a map (Schneider, 2007). In this instance, the community becomes a clearly defined neighbourhood whose geographic boundaries are plainly defined. Physical attributes are the principal defining characteristics and the ‘spatial’ becomes the point of entry for most crime prevention interventions (Crawford, 1995).

At the level of practice, this definition produces a number of tensions. The physical borders that separate communities are often arbitrary – enacted boundary lines imposed on the urban landscape on the basis of organizational proclamations, political jurisdiction, population size or sometimes by the constraints of funding – and mean little in human terms (Crawford, 1995; Suttles, 1972). As a result, there is little consensus on community boundaries¹, which can in turn create sources of local jealousy and conflict in relation to bordering areas. These largely revolve around funding initiatives where some communities

¹ This lack of consensus is due in part to the independence of organizations outside the community who choose boundaries that suit their own requirements without consulting the local community (Suttles, 1972).

are allocated government monies for the implementation of a crime prevention project while neighbouring residents with similar crime problems are excluded (Crawford, 1995).

The geographical boundaries can also create problems for community identity. The conceptualization of the community as a place is most effective when it represents the relevant community for most, if not all, of the individuals who reside within it. Brint (2001) contends that the physical aspect is most significant when communities are small and there is opportunity for frequent and continuous in-person contact. Members of these communities may be more likely to exhibit common interests, beliefs, values and visions deemed necessary for the promotion of broader community welfare. However, if the community covers a large geographic area and encompasses a diverse population, a community identity becomes much more difficult to establish.

2.2.1.2 The Social Aspect – Community as a Sense of Identity

More recently, the social aspect of the notion of community has been explored. Communities are seen as an organized collective of people who share common activities and who are bound together by enduring personal ties and networks, a high level of social interaction and cohesion, and a sense of wholeness (Brint, 2001; Crank, 1994; Crawford, 1998; Schneider, 2007). In this sense, the community can be seen as a social system that encompasses a diverse range of groupings and organizations including family, friendship networks, clubs, associations and organizations, which bring individuals together to transmit guidance concerning conduct and actions required to change the social conditions that are believed to sustain crime (Hope, 1995).

One assumption about this definition of community is that it represents a set of shared attitudes and interests. Consequently, references are often made to the importance of a 'sense of community' reflecting the belief that an individual belongs in and is a meaningful

part of a larger collectivity, where there is a network of and structure to the relationships (Crawford, 1997).

This definition of community assumes a degree of collective efficacy referring to the realization of “common values and the ability of groups to regulate their members according to desired principles” (Crawford, 1999, p. 518). Measures of collective efficacy tend to capture the extent to which members of a community share values, can rely on each other for support, and are willing to draw on those qualities to act in ways that protect the safety of their communities (Crawford, 1999). In a study of Chicago residents, Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1997) found that rates of violence were lower in neighbourhoods characterized by collective efficacy, which led to the conclusion that the willingness of local residents to intervene for the common good depends in large part on conditions of mutual trust and solidarity.

The important role of collective efficacy can be observed in the success of Together for Vanier, a community development and crime prevention initiative implemented in 2007. After the amalgamation of the City of Ottawa in 2001, Vanier began to struggle with higher levels of drug trafficking and prostitution. Increasingly unkempt streets and parks, and dilapidated businesses and residences contributed to a sense of decline. United by the goal to improve Vanier, residents, community organizations, and social groups joined with the *Services Communautaire Vanier* to establish the Together for Vanier Steering Committee. The Steering Committee brought together local service providers, ensured support for other committees and projects, maintained communication among initiative partners, and monitored and documented progress. Improvements to Vanier noted over the following two years included a greater police presence, fewer sex trade workers, beautification projects,

increased cleanliness, fewer drug dealers and an increase in overall community involvement (Makhoul, 2009).

However in most cases, the social aspect of the community that will be the focus for the implementation of a crime prevention initiative in practice is determined at the policy level rather than permitted to emerge organically. There tends to be an assumption by policy makers that individuals who share similar demographic characteristics including age, socio-economic status, education, and/or cultural background trust each other and are willing to intervene to protect the well-being of their fellow residents and the community as a whole (Schneider, 2007). What is ignored is that members of these communities often have very different attitudes towards and interests in crime control and community safety issues. This, in addition to a lack of belonging and attachment among community members, may in turn affect their participation, or lack thereof, in the implementation of crime prevention programs and activities (Schneider, 2007).

2.2.1.3 The Collective Action Aspect – Community as a Political ‘Actor’

This definition of the community builds on the previously-mentioned aspect of collective efficacy where the community represents a group of people who have common interests or concerns, and who are willing and able to act collectively in pursuit of their goals. However, instead of placing an emphasis on the responsibility of communities to participate in the delivery of crime prevention programs, this approach shifts the emphasis to the right of communities to exercise a greater degree of control over the practices of the criminal justice system. It rejects the notion that the criminal justice system has a monopoly over the expertise required to set goals and strategic directions, and reasserts the community’s right to control its destiny (Crawford, 1998; Hastings & Jamieson, 2002).

A recent instance of citizen support for local crime prevention can be used as an example of the politicization of the community. In the City of Ottawa's budget negotiations in January 2010, city councillors voted to slash funding to Crime Prevention Ottawa, an organization that works with communities to lower crime rates throughout the city. However, based on public outrage and support in the form of petitions and attendance at public meetings where several residents voiced their concerns and defended the program, city councillors reversed their decision and voted to restore funding to Crime Prevention Ottawa ("Ottawa Council Passes," 2010, January 28).

While there is an emphasis on the right of communities to exercise a greater degree of control over the goals and practices of the criminal justice system, and there have been several instances of successful lobbying, in practice the central government has avoided devolving any substantial responsibilities and powers to the community in the decision-making process (Crawford, 1998). Despite extensive public opinion research that suggests that the Canadian public has consistently expressed support for crime prevention – one of the most robust findings in the research literature is the strength of public support for spending money on crime prevention initiatives (Roberts & Hastings, 2007), – the majority of criminal justice funding continues to be allocated to enforcement and the punishment of offenders (Waller, 2006).

2.2.1.4 The Delivery Aspect – Community as an Instrument or Agent

This conceptualization focuses more on a community's capacity to administer criminal justice solutions on behalf of government agencies rather than on its actual composition (Bell & Newby, 1976; Hastings & Jamieson, 2002). This definition emphasizes the importance of mobilizing local agents and energizing the community as a whole to assist in the administration of crime prevention programs and services (Hastings & Jamieson,

2002). This understanding of the community emerged alongside the fiscal crises experienced by central governments in the 1980s and 1990s. It is based on the recognition of the limited ability of government agencies to continue the delivery of social services on their own (Schneider, 2007), and the need to enlist the assistance of local non-government agents, the community, in crime prevention (Hastings & Jamieson, 2002).

Community mobilization is an essential component in this understanding of community and refers to the process of organizing people and assembling local resources in order to address local crime and community safety problems through a range of crime prevention measures (Jamieson, 2008; Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2006). In practice, community mobilization has focused on assembling local resources to address local problems through a range of strategies that are part of a pre-set government agenda (Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2006). Overall, these strategies assume that communities have an inherent capacity to mobilize their own resources of social control (Crawford, 1995).

The main problem is that there is disconnect between community mobilization and capacity, the knowledge, skills and resources needed to effectively implement crime prevention programs and initiatives at the local level. Communities vary enormously in the problems they face and their capacity to engage in successful prevention activities, and there is often an inverse relationship between the extent of the problems and the capacity of the community (Hastings, 2005). Community responses to crime are easiest to generate in the areas where they are least needed and hardest to establish where the need is greatest (Crawford, 1999; Rosenbaum, 1988). The communities that are identified as most lacking in capacity, those that do not have access to the knowledge, skills and resources they need to mount an effective response, are often the ones with the highest needs for prevention initiatives (Hastings, 2005; 2007; Roberts & Hastings, 2007).

This conceptualization describes the community as a government agent and a policy instrument recruited to assist in the delivery of crime control and community safety initiatives at the local level. Through community mobilization, community members are encouraged to act collectively to become an important part of the crime prevention effort (Linden, 2008). However, this enthusiasm for community mobilization is often based on the ideological construct of the community and what it should ideally be able to accomplish rather than on an understanding of its actual capacity to deliver crime prevention initiatives (Jamieson, 2008).

In practice, part of the responsibility for the management of crime prevention has been effectively transferred to the community (Hastings & Jamieson, 2002; Rochefort, Rosenberg, & White, 1998). However, this shift has not been accompanied with support for community capacity building, increasing access to the knowledge, skills and resources needed to successfully implement crime prevention initiatives.

2.2.2 The Community is a Homogenous Entity

A dominant understanding of the notion of community is the assumption that communities are largely homogenous entities with easily identified needs and objectives. Communities are believed to be naturally stable and unified phenomena. Moreover, this characterization is seen to be both desirable and achievable, where any decline in unity and stability is viewed negatively (Kenyon, 2000). This notion of the community has been used to invoke images of cohesion in a variety of social settings. However in practice, this conceptualization of community tends to result in the concealment of the more common fragmented relations between community members (A. Cohen, 1985; Urry, 1995).

The ideology of unity tends to silence intra-communal conflicts by first excluding non-consensual voices, and second through the working assumptions that homogeneity of

interests actually exists (Crawford, 1995). This tends to result in the acceptance of the views of the most powerful or well-organized interests in a given community. In this sense, communities are characterized as hierarchal formations structured upon lines of power relations (Crawford, 1999) where one dominant group is able to impose its values upon others and to justify this by claiming it is 'in the name of the community' with little regard for respecting individual rights.

2.2.3 Sites of Resistance to Implementation

Resistance represents the opposition, on the part of an individual or a group, to the implementation of a crime prevention strategy or initiative (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). Participation, or lack thereof, in the implementation of community-based crime prevention programs may be the result of the influence of several factors, including the demographic characteristics of community members (age, socio-economic status, education, length of residence), their feelings of attachment and belonging to the community in which they live, their feelings of personal efficacy, the amount of time they have to dedicate to and opportunities to engage in preventative measures, the extent to which their friends and neighbours are involved in crime prevention activities, their perceptions of safety in their community, and the presence and perceived credibility of local crime prevention programs (Hope & Lab, 2001; Schneider, 2007). All of these factors can affect the willingness and ability of the community to act to prevent crime and increase community safety.

A degree of homogeneity and shared interests are important to the effective implementation of crime prevention programs (Schneider, 2007). In practice, this may result in the avoidance of any intra-communal conflicts in the development of community-based crime prevention initiatives whereby any non-consensual voices are excluded and ignored. By presuming an existing social consensus within a community, there is an assumption that

crime prevention goals are universally shared and as a result, any disparate values and needs of certain individuals or groups within the community are left unheard (Schneider, 2000). Dominant groups within a given community construct, dispense and impose particular representations of crime and community safety issues which support their own interests (Howarth, 2001). As a result, these community members may be less likely to support community crime prevention strategies and initiatives.

This assumption of social consensus also has an important impact on the process of community mobilization. Community participants in crime prevention strategies and initiatives are often drawn from a “narrow group of residents characterized as white, well-educated, middle-class homeowners with a strong attachment to their neighbourhood and involvement in local volunteer groups and activities” (Schneider, 2000, p. 39). Community crime prevention strategies and initiatives may be guided by the dominant interests of a narrow demographic group and may be less relevant to the needs, values or cultural backgrounds of many community members (Skogan, 1989). As a result, the latter may be less likely to participate in the implementation of community crime prevention programs.

The use of the construct of the homogeneous and unified community can contribute to a failure to address the complex issues of representation and participation at the level of crime prevention in practice. Not all groups within the community are equally powerful and consequently certain interests and crime problems tend to dominate the policy agenda. This allows for the prioritization of certain forms of intervention against certain types of crime (Crawford, 1998; Stephens, 2007). This, in turn, can lead to the formation of sites of resistance (Crawford, 1995) to the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives at the local level.

In crime prevention rhetoric and practice, the community is a notion around which complex and contradictory effects, meanings and definitional struggles coalesce. When examining the concept of community, it is necessary to remain sensitive to the tensions that exist between ideology, policy and practice (Crawford, 1995). There is often a discrepancy “between what community *is* and what it *ought* to be” (Crawford, 1999, p. 514, emphasis in original). At the level of practice, this confusion results in the promotion of a dominant set of understandings and images of the community from which a host of complex contradictions, inconsistencies and sites of resistance can take form (Crawford, 1995).

When considering the potential role of the community in crime prevention, it is important to recognize that the overall ability of the community to implement strategies and initiatives in practice may be influenced as a consequence of the way that the community is defined, and whether this understanding acknowledges the true capabilities of the community or focuses on the ultimate potential for participation attributed to the community by its definition.

2.3 Limited Success of Community Crime Prevention

The characterization of the community as a focal point in crime prevention and community safety initiatives, promoted at the level of ideology and reflected in current criminal justice policy, provides little insight into the ‘mundane processes of rule’ (O’Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997), or into how community crime prevention strategies and initiatives are developed and administered at the local level. There is a tendency in criminal justice policy to separate programs and initiatives from the processes of their ‘messy implementation’. At the conceptual level, crime prevention strategies and initiatives are described as coherent, systematic ‘perfect knowledges’ (O’Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997), a characterization that is expected to carry through to the implementation process. However

in practice, crime prevention programs are multifocal, internally contested and often undergo a transformation during the implementation phase (Rose & Miller, 1992).

Empirical research into the overall effectiveness of community crime prevention has demonstrated that while several specific interventions delivered at the community level have been successful, most programs have been unable to achieve their crime reduction and community safety promises (Schneider, 2010). Much of the research has involved evaluations that assess the application of community crime prevention theories and strategies, and have shown that CCP models have generally fallen short of their theoretically prescribed expectations.

Both internationally and in Canada, a number of focused community crime prevention initiatives have been successful in achieving reductions in crime and victimization. In the United Kingdom, the Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project, which engaged a community support team and employed cocoon neighbourhood watch, demonstrated a substantial drop in the level of residential burglary in a local authority housing estate in Rochdale (Forrester, Chatterton, & Pease, 1988; Waller, 2006). In the United States, the original Neighbourhood Watch program in Seattle known as the Community Crime Prevention Project, which relied on resident vigilance and on close groupings of dwellings sharing information to support each other, caused significant reductions in residential burglaries that were sustained for several years (Schneider, 2010; Waller, 2006). Communities that Care, a program promoted internationally and now implemented in Canada, is a risk and protection based system that enables local communities to engage in multi-level, multi-sectoral prevention planning and implement evidence-based programs. To date, this program has obtained promising results in its small number of Canadian applications suggesting that it should receive more frequent implementation

(Flynn, 2008). What is common among these successful community crime prevention initiatives is that they have all employed some form of a strategic planning process² in order to analyze the particular crime problem and then to identify and implement an effective crime prevention solution (Hastings, 2009; Waller, 2006).

However despite these encouraging findings, a host of empirical studies, meta-analyses and evaluations have produced more pessimistic results. Norris and Kaniastry (1992) and more recently Welsh and Hoshi (2002) have reached the conclusion that community-based crime prevention does not, at the present time, demonstrate evidence of proven effectiveness in reducing crime and fear of crime. Sherman (1997) concluded that “there are no community-based programs of ‘proven effectiveness’ by scientific standards to show with reasonable certainty that they ‘work’ in certain kinds of settings” (p. 30). Rosenbaum (1988) suggested that there is little hard proof to assert that community-based crime prevention is effective in reducing community crime rates, encouraging collective action or building community cohesion. Hope (1995) further stated that “much of the effort to alter the structure in communities in order to reduce crime has not been noticeably successful or sustainable” (p. 23). In general, community crime prevention programs have been unable to foster social and behavioural preconditions (collective action, social interaction and cohesion, informal social control) deemed necessary to reach their ultimate crime control and community safety objectives (Schneider, 2010).

Despite recent investments of resources, energy, and effort into community crime prevention there has been little sustainable success (Crawford, 1998). Some researchers have

² This process involves a number of steps including: understanding the problem and developing an action plan and responsibility centre; concentrating resources where they are most needed; relying on evidence-based approaches; assuring adequate and sustained supports; and informing and engaging the public (Hastings, 2009).

argued that these negative findings may be partially blamed on theory failure and on program implementation deficiencies (Rosenbaum, 1988) related to the contradictory and ill-considered assumptions on which policies of community crime prevention are premised (Crawford, 1998). What this amounts to is that the success of community crime prevention strategies and initiatives are contingent on the institution of 'community' (Schneider, 2010), without a common practical understanding of what this concept means and its capacity to implement solutions.

2.4 Why Community, Why Now?

Despite the findings by leading scholars in the crime prevention field that little empirical evidence exists to suggest that community crime prevention initiatives have achieved their desired impact at the local level, the community continues to be relied on for the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives in Canada. Two interrelated claims can be used to make sense of the growing importance of the community: a shift in political discourse from welfarism to neo-liberalism and the assumption that crime and social control are issues to be dealt with at the local level. These explanations can help to clarify the prominent role that local communities have been attributed in addressing problems of crime and disorder (Rosenbaum, 1988).

2.4.1 Shift in Political Rationality

The increasing focus on community and its role in crime prevention in Canada is reflective of an overall shift in political rationalities³ during the twentieth century from welfare to neo-liberal tendencies. This shift was accompanied by changes in governmental

³ These identify the proper sphere, the legitimate ends, and the appropriate means of government (Curtis, 1995).

technologies⁴ which placed increasing pressure on the community to target and address issues surrounding crime control and community safety.

During the first half of the twentieth century, many western societies became 'welfare states'. Under this mode of government, the state sought to calculate, regulate and govern social, economic and moral affairs including employment, economic progress, health and housing, and social security (Rose & Miller, 1992; Schneider, 2007). A whole series of issues previously considered private or individual problems were now characterized as social concerns, with social causes, to be dealt with by various forms of state intervention (Garland, 2001). Accordingly, the state became disproportionately responsible for matters pertaining to crime control and social order in society and the centralized bureaucratic apparatus was expanded to control crime and delinquency (S. Cohen, 1985).

In the mid-1970s, the welfare state came under challenge (Rose & Miller, 1992). As the range and complexity of the tasks required and the level of expectation and demand for services by the public overwhelmed the state's capacity to satisfy them (Crawford, 1995; Rose, 1996), arguments were made that welfarist policies served to generate government overload, fiscal crisis, dependency and rigidity (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006). This prompted a reassessment of public expectations and the legitimate responsibilities of the state (Crawford, 1995; Garland, 2001) in the management of social problems.

A new rationality of government emerged which argued for an arrangement in which a plurality of groups, organizations and individuals would interact in the administration of social services (Rose & Miller, 1992). Neo-liberalism utilized a range of techniques that would enable the state to divest itself of many of its obligations, transferring them to other

⁴ The practices and techniques through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions (Curtis, 1995; Rose & Miller, 1992).

entities that would be governed at a distance through governmental technologies that were both autonomizing and responsabilizing (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006).

Under neo-liberalism, crime control came to be seen as 'beyond the state' and government agencies could not, by themselves, succeed in controlling crime (Garland, 2001). So, in a reversal of the long-term tendency towards the monopolization of crime control by specialist government agencies, the state made efforts to decentralize the social response by allocating tasks to various non-state mechanisms (Garland, 2001). The state pursued responsabilization strategies which included efforts to encourage the community to take responsibility for crime control, in turn relieving the state and its agencies part of the growing burden of delivering crime reduction to society (Garland, 2001). Under responsabilization, crime prevention became a matter of individual or local responsibility, where citizens and agencies of civil society were assumed to be willing and able to act rationally in their own self-interest to protect themselves against crime (Beck, 1992; Hope, 2005).

Since the 1980s, there has been a significant growth of appeals to communities to become engaged in implementing crime prevention strategies (Crawford, 1999). Crime prevention initiatives have enlisted the support of communities in order to harness the social control efforts of these bodies and to align them with the efforts of official crime control agencies (Garland, 2001). However, this reliance is not a result of the proven effectiveness of communities as a solution to crime problems and community safety issues; instead it has occurred largely by default.

In Canada, an emphasis on the cost-effective management of risks and resources under a neo-liberalist discourse has produced a criminal justice system that is selective in its responses to crime and offending (Garland, 2001). This is evidenced by the reluctance of the

federal government to invest in new prevention programs or to divert resources away from the traditional criminal justice system: the police, the courts and corrections (Hastings, 2005). Additionally, while the private sector has been willing to address gaps in crime prevention left by the criminal justice system, it tends only to be interested in participating in areas where profit can be made, limiting involvement to situational crime prevention techniques and the selling of security equipment, target hardening interventions and private security. It is unlikely that the private sector will become involved in long-term crime prevention strategies and initiatives which seek to address the risk factors of criminal offending (Hastings, 2005). Further, the movement to decentralization has led to an increased reliance on municipalities to manage crime prevention activities (Hope, 2005; Paquin, 2005). However, a number of challenges exist in implementing and sustaining comprehensive initiatives at the municipal level, including funding issues, lack of resources, and differing levels of capacity for building partnerships and mobilization (Johnson & Fraser, 2007). This is compounded by the fact that municipalities are still too often looking to expand police budgets as a primary response to crime problems (Janhevich, Johnson, Vézina, & Fraser, 2008). This has contributed to the community becoming the main focus for the implementation of the majority of crime prevention strategies and initiatives in Canada (Hastings, 2007; Jamieson, 2008).

The significance of this shift in political rationalities from welfare to neo-liberal tendencies is that the responsibility for crime control has been partially transferred from the state to the citizenry. Ideally, individual citizens and communities are provided a greater role to play in preventing crime, and government agencies become subordinate in the planning and implementation of crime prevention interventions (Schneider, 2010). However, with the implementation of these neo-liberal responsabilization strategies, the community has also

become something of a scapegoat for policy makers. It is seen as a policy-instrument of government where it becomes responsible for the delivery of crime prevention services. Through the process of transferring certain powers and responsibilities for the management of crime prevention to the community (Hastings & Jamieson, 2002; Rochefort, Rosenberg, & White, 1998), both government and state agencies have sought to distance themselves from association with the failure and blame related to crime control and community safety issues (Crawford, 1995). As noted by Walklate (1991), the political implication of contemporary crime prevention is 'victim blaming' at the level of individual responsibility for the management of personal risk, and 'community blaming' at the level of collective responsibility for the local environment. While community crime prevention initiatives have been treated as an alternative to conventional criminal justice solutions, they might be better seen as supplements to the status quo, where the state uses the institution of community to make minor calibrations appear as fundamental change (S. Cohen, 1985).

2.4.2 Crime Control and Social Order Are Local Issues

In conjunction with this shift to neo-liberal tendencies is the belief that crime and social order are local issues. A general trend in recent crime prevention policy has been to assume that crime, victimization and insecurity are local problems, and therefore local communities are best able to identify and solve these issues (Cherney, 2004; Crawford, 1998; Hope, 2001; Jamieson, 2008). This development can be demonstrated in the increasing emphasis being placed on the potential of municipal governments to provide support to diverse community groups and organizations in reducing crime and enhancing community safety (Janhevich et al., 2008). In 2003, the Canadian Forum for Crime Prevention recommended that municipal governments should create and support local crime prevention bodies based on a recognition that municipalities are the level of government closest to the

community and are in a strategic position to mobilize at the local level in order to engage and provide focus in the development and implementation of effective crime prevention solutions (Johnson & Fraser, 2007; Shaw, 2001) to address local problems.

The community crime prevention approach is predicated on the assumption that private citizens should play a major role in maintaining order in a free society, and therefore should be encouraged to accept more responsibility for interventions to address issues of crime and safety (Schneider, 2007). The theoretical heritage of CCP can be found in the first half of the twentieth century, when social theorists at the University of Chicago articulated a relationship between delinquent behaviour and the immediate social and physical environment. Based on these delinquency causation theories, the 'urban village model' was formulated. It operated on the following premise: because social disorganization is a primary cause of crime, efforts promoting strong, cohesive and well-functioning communities that positively engage, supervise, and socialize young people can ameliorate crime and delinquency problems at the local level (Graham & Bennett, 1995).

Crawford (1997; 1999) suggests that recent appeals to the community are a consequence of the belief that crime problems are associated with the degeneration of the community, resulting from the failure of processes of communal socialization and informal social control. The assumption is that mobilizing communities to create and implement local crime prevention strategies will facilitate reorganization and will act to counter the degeneration associated with crime problems (Crawford, 1997). In turn, this community involvement will further facilitate informal social control mechanisms, which will prevent future crimes (Crawford, 1999).

This is the premise on which Neighbourhood Watch or Block Watch programs are based. The expectation is that watch-type activities will increase social contact and social

interaction, thus helping to strengthen social bonds, increase social support, enhance social cohesion, and reduce fear of crime by reducing isolation and distrust. They are further expected to reduce opportunities for crime by enhancing human surveillance of and intervention in, suspicious criminal activity (Rosenbaum, Lurigio, & Davis, 1998). This approach shows clear echoes of the 'broken windows' thesis where the community is expected to exert its authority in order to reverse the spiral of disorder. Communities are promoted as a powerful site of social order and central to the process of halting neighbourhood decline (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

The community is thus portrayed as the underlying solution to crime problems and community safety. Hope and Shaw (1988) suggest that community involvement in crime prevention appears to be a promising way of reaching ordinary people and encouraging them to adopt protective measures to promote community safety. The focus on communities seeks to encourage civic engagement which, it is hypothesized, should result in more positive outcomes such as a more civil society, better policies and overall stronger communities (Phillips & Orsini, 2002).

For the past fifteen years, the Canadian federal crime control agenda has reflected the belief that crime control and social order are local issues to which the community is the solution. In their report on crime prevention, the Horner Parliamentary Committee recommended that future federal crime control policies be premised on the belief that "crime occurs in communities and priorities concerning crime prevention are best determined at the local level" (House of Commons, 1993, p. 33). In 1994, the Federal government created the National Crime Prevention Council as Phase I of a National Strategy on Crime Prevention and Community Safety. The Council's work emphasized community mobilization and capacity building as important elements for a National Strategy. In 1998, the Federal

Government withdrew its support of the Council and launched Phase II of its strategy which included the creation of the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) (Hastings, 2005). The NCPC sought to provide communities with the tools, knowledge and support they needed to deal with the causes of crime and established a 'community mobilization' funding component with the aim of helping communities develop localized initiatives to deal with crime and victimization. However, regardless of the NCPC's emphasis on community capacity building and social development approaches, this approach allows the state to 'steer' crime prevention by funding projects that fit within its mandate, but requires the 'rowing' and hard work to come from communities (Paquin, 2005) as they are seen to be responsible for organizing themselves and securing funding to implement programs and initiatives.

These two justifications provide theoretical accounts as to why the community has been accorded a prominent role in crime prevention, whether it is largely by default as a result of the limitations of the state in managing crime control and the implementation of neo-liberal responsabilization strategies (Beck, 1992; Garland, 2001), or by merit through the belief that communities experience crime problems first-hand and have valuable knowledge that may be critical to the success and sustainability of crime prevention interventions (Jamieson, 2008; Schneider, 2007).

It is important to note that the above-mentioned explanations of the role of the community in the administration of crime prevention solutions only focus on the micro dimension. The emphasis is on the process of self-regulation and responsabilization of the community as an agent of delivery, and on the positive aspects of the communal entity, including the benefits that stem from informal support networks, a sense of identity, security

and trust, which are believed to be important to the implementation and sustainability of solutions to reduce crime and disorder (Hope, 1995).

What this ignores is the macro dimension; there is a failure to direct attention to the position that the community has within the wider social structure and its relationship to sources of power and resources. The emphasis is on the limited ability of the community to prevent crime and increase community safety in the face of its powerlessness to address the structural dimensions of crime, whose source or forces that sustain them are derived from the wider social structure (Hope, 1995). The macro dimension shifts attention away from a focus on building community capacity (Crawford, 1998) towards an understanding of the underlying social determinants of well-being (poverty, unemployment, social exclusion) which are beyond the control of the community (Torjman & Levitan-Reid, 2003). This macro dimension helps to explain why even fully mobilized and resourced communities have significant limits in reducing crime and victimization, and why crime prevention and community safety cannot be within the sole competency of the local community (Schneider, 2007).

2.5 Investigating the Concept of Community through Empirical Research

A better and more coherent understanding of the concept of community and its role in the development and implementation of crime prevention solutions at the local level in Canada is needed. There are discrepancies in the definition and understanding of community that arise between ideology, policy and practice which can expose weaknesses and which form the sites of resistance (Crawford, 1995). Appeals to the community for the management of and assistance in the delivery of crime control and community safety activities cannot be successful without first understanding the variation that exists in the composition and capacity of the particular groups involved. Consideration of the role that these issues play in

the development and successful implementation of crime prevention initiatives tends to be absent from the dominant discourse and from much of the practice of community crime prevention.

In Canada, little empirical research has been conducted on the workings of community in practice. Studies have been conducted, both in Canada and abroad, on the functions of the appeals to the community in the field of crime prevention (Crawford, 1995), the factors that affect the willingness of communities to participate in organized crime prevention efforts (Schneider, 2000; 2007; Skogan, 1989), and the strategic policy issues involved in developing an approach to community crime prevention (Hope, 2001). More research is needed at the local level in order to develop more nuanced understandings of the 'community' and to better appreciate the ways in which appeals to communities for crime prevention and community safety often misunderstand the dynamics of the groups involved (Crawford, 1999).

Empirical research conducted in the local context can serve to reveal the gaps between conceptions of what the community *ought to be* and the 'messy actualities' of community-based practices. It is expected that this research can achieve new insights and generate a clearer understanding of how the concept of community at the ideological level translates into practice and how discrepancies in conceptualization influence the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives in specific instances at the local level. This will necessitate investigation into the practices, materials, agents and techniques that are deployed at the local level to put crime prevention programs and initiatives into effect.

Through a qualitative case study, a comprehensive understanding of the concept of community and its role in the development and implementation of crime prevention

strategies and initiatives can be generated. This approach emphasizes the importance of diversity, disagreement and negotiation in the definition of community in different instances. In each case, it seeks to identify the criteria, processes and practices upon which the community is structured (Crawford, 1997). Ultimately, a more fluid understanding of the notion of community will allow individuals to evolve in society without being designated to a specific and predetermined community identity (Fremeaux, 2005) which tends to constrain individual participation and overall community mobilization in the implementation of community-based crime prevention strategies and initiatives.

2.5.1 The City of Ottawa's Community Development Framework (CDF)

In the pursuit of the goal of operationalizing and understanding the concept of community in practice, and thereby of gaining insight into its role in the context of community crime prevention, this research project will use the City of Ottawa's Community Development Framework (CDF) as a case study.

As previously discussed, crime prevention in Canada is primarily dependent on bottom-up initiatives implemented by the community. In addition, increasing emphasis is being placed on the potential of municipal governments to organize partnerships of city services to prevent crime (Hastings, 2005). The CDF exemplifies these two principles. It is a comprehensive community initiative that brings together diverse residents, organizations, businesses, service agencies and municipal departments to solve problems in communities in a way that will create long term change at the local level (City of Ottawa, 2008a). It aims to improve community conditions and outcomes for diverse individuals and families through multi-sectoral collaborations that work comprehensively on various social and economic issues (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). While the CDF is not exclusively a community crime prevention approach, one of its goals is to increase neighbourhood safety and

perceptions of safety (City of Ottawa, 2008a), which it believes can be achieved through the administration of community crime prevention strategies and initiatives.

This research study examines how the CDF has defined community and related concepts, and how this conceptualization has impacted the development and implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety in the Ottawa communities selected for inclusion in the process.

2.6 Theoretical Approach: Social Constructionism

This paper proposes a social constructionist analysis to examine how the concept of community is operationalized in practice. While there have been previous attempts to capture and understand the ‘specificities’ of community, there has not been sufficient weight given to what happens at the grassroots level. In particular, there has been a gap between the analysis of the conceptual and structural composition of communities, and an understanding of what they actually mean to those whose lives are led within them (Day, 2006).

Social constructionism focuses on what happens ‘on the ground’, and is concerned with the processes by which people describe, explain and account for the world in which they live (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This approach treats human beings as active agents engaged in the creation of a shared social reality; and suggests that it is important to understand society from their point of view. It entails an investigation into their purposes, and the way in which they give meaning to their situation and behaviours. In other words, the focus is on individual perceptions and interpretations of community (Day, 2006).

This approach sees community as a social construct that is used variously and pragmatically. It is constructed in multiple ways by people using representations dependent on the situation and purpose of their practice (Stephens, 2007). Social constructionism suggests that once community is understood to be ‘essentially contested’, or as the focus of

struggle rather than simple uniformity, then attention can be turned to the ways in which it is defined and used by individuals themselves (Day, 2006), to give meaning to daily practices and significance to an overall understanding of self (Howarth, 2001).

This theoretical approach is important for this case study as it demonstrates the need to be critical of conceptual representations of community and the implications that they have in terms of identity and power relations (Day, 2006). Further, social constructionism suggests that there are multiple levels and possibilities for conceptualization and rather than searching for concrete definitions, 'community' must be continually interrogated at every level and every step of theory and research in the development and implementation of community crime prevention interventions.

III

METHODOLOGY

While the community has been promoted as a focal point for crime control and community safety issues in Canada (Crawford, 1999; Hope, 1995; Schneider, 2007), little empirical research has been conducted on the operationalization of the concept of community in the local context. By employing an exploratory, qualitative case study research design, this project sought to address this gap in the research and to provide a more grounded understanding of how the operationalization of the concept of community in a specific instance can influence the development of crime prevention strategies and initiatives at the local level.

3.1 Case Study: The CDF

As outlined in the previous section, the Community Development Framework (CDF), a comprehensive community initiative currently underway in the City of Ottawa, was the focus of this case study. By focusing exclusively on one initiative, I took an idiographic approach to the subject matter by providing an in-depth account of one particular case (Bachman & Schutt, 2001). The use of a qualitative case study in this instance was an effective research method for generating a comprehensive understanding of community through the extensive description and analysis of the CDF taken as a whole and in its context (GAO, 1990).

This case study was exploratory in nature as the goal was to learn ‘what is going on here’ and to investigate social phenomena without expectation (Bachman & Schutt, 2001). The main goal of the research was to achieve new insights into how the concept of community translates from theory to practice and how its operationalization may influence the development and implementation of community crime prevention measures. This

research goal was realized through a comprehensive examination of the conceptualization of community, both in general terms and specifically in the case of the CDF, and of the development of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety in the four Ottawa neighbourhoods currently participating in the CDF process.

3.2 Methodological Approach

The use of exploratory research to examine new issues and investigate the subjective meanings that motivate individual action are particularly well served by the techniques of participant observation, intensive interviewing and focus groups (Bachman & Shutt, 2001). The current research study used a review of key CDF materials and qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders in order to address the research goal. The strength of this methodological approach was that information from different sources could be compared and, through the technique of triangulation, the reliability of the findings increased (GAO, 1990).

3.2.1 Review of Key CDF Materials

This component of the case study involved the review of municipal reports that led to the development of the CDF, as well as documents and presentations that outlined its processes and explained its functioning. The contents of these materials were used as background information from which to generate a comprehensive description of the Community Development Framework at the conceptual level, presented in Chapter IV.

The following materials⁵ were key sources of information:

⁵ All materials are publically accessible from the 'Community Development Framework' section of the City of Ottawa's website (www.ottawa.ca/residents/cdf/index_en.html).

1. City of Ottawa. 2008. Community Development Framework. Report Submitted to the Community and Protective Services Committee by Steve Kanellakos, Deputy City Manager Community and Protective Services. Ottawa: June 2.

This document is the official proposal submitted to the Community and Protective Services Committee of the City of Ottawa to support the creation of the Community Development Framework. It includes detailed explanations on the purpose of the CDF as well as its objectives and proposed structure. It also outlines the approach that will be used for neighbourhood selection and the next steps in the process.

2. City of Ottawa. 2008. Community Development Framework Update. Report Submitted to the Community and Protective Services Committee by Steve Kanellakos, Deputy City Manager Community and Protective Services. Ottawa: November 3.

This document is an update on the official proposal submitted to the Community and Protective Services Committee of the City of Ottawa supporting the creation of the Community Development Framework. It contains a review of developments to date and outlines the CDF processes including a detailed description of the multiple component tables that work together at the neighbourhood, community and systems levels. It also discusses neighbourhood selection, including the criteria and rationale used, and identifies the four neighbourhoods prioritized for inclusion in the initial implementation of the CDF approach.

3. Jan, Abid. 2009. The ABCs of CDF. Ottawa: June 23. (Unpublished).

The Community Development Framework Coordinator produced this reference document for all partners in the CDF. It incorporates 'community development' literature with an overview of the CDF components and processes in an attempt to clarify three key terms (community, development, and framework) in the CDF context.

4. Community Development Framework Learning Forum. September 14-15, 2009. City of Ottawa.

The purpose of the Community Development Framework Learning Forum was to introduce participants to the main concepts, principles and techniques of community development as well as to increase their knowledge and participation in the CDF. This forum was attended by almost 350 registrants, including residents, partner organizations, researchers, funders, community workers and volunteers, and City of Ottawa staff. The objectives of the Learning Forum were to: review the latest trends in community development to strengthen the work undertaken in the neighbourhoods; network, share ideas and learn from one another; and build on existing work in neighbourhoods. With permission from the organizers, I attended both sessions as an observer and took detailed notes. I also reviewed presentations produced for the CDF Learning Forum as well as the CDF Learning Forum Feedback Summary.

3.2.2 Qualitative Interviews with CDF Stakeholders

This component of the case study involved conducting qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in the Community Development Framework. These interviews provided rich qualitative data and were used to gain insight into interviewees' experiences, opinions, values, attitudes and feelings concerning community, in general and in the context of the CDF, and its role in the development of solutions to address issues of crime and safety at the community level. The summary of interview participants' perceptions on these issues is presented in Chapter V.

Following ethical approval from the University of Ottawa's Research and Ethics Board, interviews were conducted with several stakeholders in the CDF. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select interview participants. In order to

ensure that the stakeholder interviews reflected all aspects of the CDF planning process (neighbourhood level planning, community action planning and systems action planning), interview participants were selected from each of the various CDF component tables (see Figure 1.0 in Chapter IV) based on their knowledge concerning the issues under investigation and their active role in the CDF process. However, a higher proportion of interview participants were drawn from the Local / CHRCs Level Steering Tables because of their prominent role in the implementation of the CDF process on the ground at the neighbourhood level. The potential interview participants were identified at the CDF Learning Forum held in the City of Ottawa in September 2009. They were formally recruited to participate in this research study through an e-mail invitation distributed in December 2009.

The interviews were semi-structured and loosely followed an interview guide.⁶ They were conducted at a location convenient for the interviewee. With the consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded and transcripts were subsequently developed from each interview. I continued to select participants for interviews until two criteria were met: (1) completeness, which was achieved when I felt that I had gained an overall understanding of the issues under investigation; and (2) saturation, which was achieved when I felt confident that I was learning little that was new from subsequent interviews (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002). In total, interviews were conducted with twelve CDF stakeholders.

The questions for the interviews were specified based on a thematic guide that was derived from important issues identified in the research literature. As the interviewer, I was able to maintain a certain amount of freedom to probe beyond the answers given in order to seek clarification and elaboration, which resulted in more qualitative information about

⁶ See Appendix A for the complete Interview Guide.

interviewees' perceptions surrounding the notion of community and other related concepts. Further, this type of interview allowed stakeholders to answer more on their own terms than is permitted in the standardized interview, while still maintaining a greater structure for comparability than possible in an unfocused interview (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; May, 2001). These interviews have allowed me to observe how community is defined and understood in the real world by key stakeholders in the CDF process.

On the written ethical consent form⁷, interviewees agreed to have the institution/organization to which they belong identified in a list of interview participants. Included were representatives from various municipal services and community organizations; City of Ottawa staff; community developers; and researchers.⁸ However, in order to protect the anonymity of the participants, all of the information gathered from the interviews has been pooled together and is not attributed to individual contributors.

The methodological approach employed in this case study of the CDF has allowed me to enhance my understanding of the operationalization of community in the local context. By reviewing key materials and conducting qualitative interviews with stakeholders, I have been able to make comparisons between the nature of community and its role in the CDF process as described at the conceptual level and at the local level based on the perceptions of those involved on the ground in the implementation of the CDF. With this comparison, it becomes possible to see how the concept of community plays out in practice and whether there are any discrepancies between the two sources that could influence the development and implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety.

⁷ See Appendix B for the Ethical Consent Form.

⁸ See Appendix C for the List of Interview Participants.

3.3 Analytical Framework for Qualitative Interviews with CDF Stakeholders

In order to investigate how the concept of community translates from theory to practice and how its operationalization may influence the development and implementation of community crime prevention measures, a framework was needed to analyze the transcripts developed from qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders.

3.3.1 Use of Grounded Theory in Analysis

In employing a case study research design, I took an approach which sought to understand actions in context, and then to generate explanations based on themes that emerged from the data (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002). In this case, the development of theory occurred continually and explicitly in interaction with the analysis of the interview transcripts. The goal of this research was to generate theory 'grounded' in or based on the observations (Bachman & Shutt, 2001), which relied on the systematic gathering, coding and analysis of data. The use of this approach was based on recognition that the large amount of non-standardized data produced by qualitative interviews makes analysis challenging and further, it allowed structure to be derived from the data itself by requiring that it be coded and analyzed systematically to bring out key themes or patterns (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007).

3.3.2 Coding and Analyzing Qualitative Interviews with CDF Stakeholders

In order to proceed with the analysis of the qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders, coding sheets were created as a means for: documenting important text segments including key statements and quotations and to indicate their location in the interview transcripts; identifying concepts and categories and the procedures for applying them; and recording overall comments that help make sense of the situation (Bachman &

Shutt, 2001; Lindof & Taylor, 2002). Coding sheets were divided into four sections, reflective of the thematic sections of the interview guide:

- Section 1: The Concept of Community
- Section 2: The CDF and the Concept of Community
- Section 3: Crime and Safety and the Community
- Section 4: Final Comments from Interview Participants

Each of the four sections was then broken down into the general questions and sub-questions that were asked in the interview. From there, the key component of each question and sub-question was identified.

The analysis of the qualitative interview data proceeded systematically. First, interview transcripts were reviewed in their entirety and important text segments relating to each question/sub-question were copied into the 'key statements and quotations' section of the coding sheet. Next, key concepts and categories relating to the key component of the particular question/sub-question were identified in the text segments and then listed in the corresponding section of the coding sheet. Subsequently key concepts and categories, identified based on the responses of all participants, were used to generate overall comments for a particular question. Once this process was completed, the coding sheets were reviewed and modifications were made as needed: text segments were shifted to the most appropriate question/sub-question and similar responses to questions/sub-questions were combined.

It is important to note that based on the fluid nature of the semi-structured interview process, the flexibility of the analytical framework, and the small number of interview participants, the frequencies of individual responses to questions were not calculated as these numbers were not meaningful. Instead, the information contained in the coding sheets was summarized in order to generate overall impressions based on participants' responses and

comments. These summaries were used to form the basis of the analysis of qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders presented in Chapter V.

Table 1.0 Example of Coding Sheet for Qualitative Interviews with CDF Stakeholders

Section 1: The Concept of Community			
Question 1: In very general terms, what does the concept of 'community' mean to you? Key Component of Question: What IS Community?			
Interview Participant	Key Statements and Quotations	Key Concepts and Categories Identified	Overall Comments for Question 1
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

3.4 Limitations of Methodology

A main limitation of the case study research design is the generalizability of the findings; the extent to which the results of this research can be used to inform us about similar situations and circumstances that were not directly studied (Bachman & Schutt, 2001). This case study has a limited generalizability as a result of the sampling technique employed in the selection of CDF materials and interview participants. The CDF materials were selected based primarily on availability and comprehensiveness, while interview

participants were selected based on their particular knowledge of and vested interest in the CDF. In reference to the qualitative interviews with CDF stakeholders, it is particularly important to note that certain populations are missing from this case study. I did not conduct any interviews with residents who are members of the four selected CDF neighbourhoods. Also, I have not engaged those who may be resistant to the CDF process or those who may be considered as members of 'out-groups', as gaining knowledge of and access to these groups is difficult. There is an absence of feedback from these groups which makes it difficult to assess their perspectives on the conceptualization process employed by the CDF. The only data that I have been able to gain in this area are the perceptions of those I did interview on their thoughts and views concerning these missing populations. Overall, the non-probability sampling technique used in this research study and the small number of materials reviewed and interviews conducted suggests that these elements may not be representative of the total population from which they were drawn.

The external validity of this research study is also weak. The particular initiative under investigation, the Community Development Framework, and the context under which it was implemented in the City of Ottawa influence how the concept of community is ultimately perceived and understood. It is not evident that these findings could be transferred to other similar situations and circumstances. If a similar research project was conducted using a different initiative as the focus for investigation, it is expected that the process leading to implementation and the operationalization of the concept of community would also be different. It is not possible to generalize the process through which the concept of community translates into practice as it relates to the implementation of various crime prevention strategies and initiatives in other local contexts (Gray, Williamson, Karp, & Dalphin, 2007).

An important limitation to note with respect to the review of key materials in this case study was my ability to access sufficient information concerning the development and execution of the CDF. In particular, there is very limited written documentation available on the theoretical framework that underlies the CDF's approach to community safety and well-being. This lack of information lessens the confidence in comparisons that are made between interviewees' interpretations of the community and those that are recorded in official documents.

Another important consideration in this component of the case study is the potential for bias. The CDF materials that are publically available may themselves be selective in nature suggesting that what is recorded is informed by decisions which relate to the social, political and economic environment of which they are a part (May, 2001). The way in which the concept of community is operationalized in the official documents is a result of the experiences, opinions, values, attitudes and feelings of the particular individuals involved in their creation, and it is important that attention be paid to the process and social context in which they were constructed.

A limitation of the qualitative interviews is the lack of standardization in the interviewing procedure. Since the goal of the interview was to ask the interviewee questions in a way that yielded the most complete and accurate information possible on the conceptualization of community, the way in which I posed the questions and the length of the response given by a particular respondent on a question varied considerably. Overall, this lack of standardization in data collection may have weakened the reliability of the findings (Gray et al., 2007).

Further, it is important to note that the majority of the data collected through the qualitative interviews was based on individual participants' impressions and perceptions of

the community and issues surrounding its role in the development of neighbourhood action plans under the CDF. Since the interviewees were affiliated with external institutions/organizations, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to whether their attitudes and beliefs concerning community were their own, or whether they were 'towing the company line'. The research findings may have been different had members of different partner organizations been interviewed. This element would make it difficult to ensure that findings were representative of all CDF stakeholders.

IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

This section provides a comprehensive description of the City of Ottawa's Community Development Framework (CDF). This overview is based on a review of the municipal reports and other documents and presentations identified in Chapter III; these outline the CDF processes and explain its overall functioning.

4.1 Overview

In September 2005, the Community and Protective Services Department (CPS) of the City of Ottawa was directed to develop a collaborative and coordinated model of community development to address social needs and issues. Consultation with community partners highlighted that the recent increase in demand for issue and place-based interventions had led to a stretching of limited community and city resources, and a reduced capacity to cope with the changing needs of communities. The lack of strategic focus and service integration led to an agreement by members of the CPS for a need to develop a new approach.

In June 2008, Ottawa City Council endorsed the CPS Community Development Framework (CDF) intended to move the City from fragmented approaches to addressing community needs in neighbourhoods, to an approach that supports a focused, coordinated and strategic effort to align services and resources.

The Framework bring together funders, community organizations, residents, researchers and city services to share information and leverage opportunities to support targeted neighbourhood-based initiatives in a strategic and coordinated fashion. (City of Ottawa, 2008a)

This approach aims to enable municipal staff and service providers to align and focus efforts under a common philosophy and way of working facilitating directed resources and

proactive services that meet the expressed needs of communities and thereby decreasing duplication.

The overall intent of the CDF is to bring systems and community supports together in an organized and focused manner in order to create healthy and safe environments and provide accessible, integrated and holistic services to communities in need. The following are the goals of the CDF at the neighbourhood and systems levels:

1. Increase neighbourhood capacity to enact positive change.
2. Improve planning and service delivery to achieve neighbourhood defined goals by increasing collaboration and coordination between and within city services, community agencies and their partners and residents.
3. Improve health of individual residents and their neighbourhoods.
4. Increase neighbourhood safety and perceptions of safety.
5. Promote sustainability of positive change at the neighbourhood and systems levels.

The four key principles of the CDF are collaboration, coordination, community participation, and leveraging of resources. These guiding principles are built on those of community development and community-based problem solving, and were derived from substantial consultation and research on neighbourhood-based initiatives.

The CDF adopts the core principles of the No Community Left Behind (NCLB) strategy, a local social development initiative to prevent crime and address social determinants of health through a collaborative approach and integration of services at the neighbourhood level. Since July 2005, working in close partnership with various other agencies and stakeholders including the City of Ottawa, the United Way, the Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Community Housing, community development specialists and neighbourhood activists, the South East Ottawa Community Health Centre has effectively engaged and supported social housing communities to restore their sense of safety and pave the way for effective service delivery through this initiative. The NCLB strategy is a grassroots, community engagement and empowerment strategy that has demonstrated how

collaborative problem-solving efforts between community members and organizational stakeholders can lead to healthy, thriving neighbourhoods. The results of the NCLB strategy's community health and safety surveys indicated that between 2005 and 2007 perceptions of safety increased in the neighbourhoods where the strategy was employed.

The CDF also builds on the experience and recent success of the City of Ottawa's Neighbourhood Planning Initiative (NPI), a strategic priority of the CPS designed to develop a new process to improve the way the City plans, designs, and (re)develops its neighbourhoods. The intent of the NPI is twofold: to create active engagement with citizens in the planning of their neighbourhoods, and to develop strategies and processes to better coordinate all planning and related City services in a geographic area. The NPI is a successful planning tool that embeds community development principles and approaches that can be applied to any neighbourhood.

The City of Ottawa saw value in building on already successful community-led initiatives. The CDF expanded on the NCLB approach by broadening the scope beyond crime prevention in social housing neighbourhoods and built on the NPI by developing a city-wide structure to support neighbourhoods to grow into and remain healthy communities.

4.2 Key Concepts and Definitions: Community, Development, and Framework

The following descriptions of key concepts and definitions are taken exclusively from *The ABCs of CDF* (Jan, 2009), a document with the purpose of clarifying key terms (community, development, and framework) for all partners in the CDF context.

From the perspective of the CDF, *community* represents a geographically-based form of social organization with several inter-related characteristics including scale, identity and belonging, obligations, and close interaction. For CDF purposes, the main focus is on geographic communities or neighbourhoods identified by residents as small areas and shared

spaces delineated by geography. However, the CDF also recognizes the importance of social communities and works with partner agencies to leverage their potential through complimentary capacity building and civic engagement activities in order to nurture and establish a more viable structure for geographical communities. Based on this conceptualization, the scale of the community is limited to one where people know each other or can easily get to know each other as needed, and where interactions are readily accessible to all. Structures must be sufficiently small so that people are able to own and control them, thereby allowing social interaction, organization and genuine empowerment.

The concept of community in the CDF also incorporates some sense of 'belonging' or being accepted and valued by the group. It is more than a group established for administrative convenience; it has some of the characteristics of a society to which people belong and where this sense of belonging is significant and positively regarded. The CDF believes the community can become part of one's self-concept, and is an important part of how one views one's place. Further, there is an expectation that people will contribute to 'the life of the community' by actively participating in some of its activities and helping to maintain its structure. Being a community member should not be a purely passive experience, but should involve some level of active participation where individuals use their abilities to benefit others and the community.

The CDF seeks to incorporate and reflect contemporary approaches to community *development* that involve local-level development, a grounding in local culture rather than imposing a model from outside, indigenous leadership, and high levels of participation by locals. While embracing other key collaboration principles such as coordination, community participation and leveraging of resources, the CDF approach also provides integrated systems-level support from service providers and all levels of government. It does not

suggest that communities struggle against the system. Prominent community development approaches also suggest that programs be grounded in people's real-life experiences, sufferings and aspirations, as expressed by the people themselves. At the same time, these subjective experiences must be linked to an analysis of the broader social, economic and political structures that are the cause of people's disadvantages (Freire, 1972). In this regard, the CDF is an initiative that engages local communities in the awareness, assessment and analysis of their issues and needs. It engages service providers, elected representatives, municipal services and other stakeholders in the realignment of programs and systems to address local needs. The main focus of the CDF approach is to provide opportunities for integrated and holistic community development work at the grassroots level and community-oriented systems-level support at the macro level.

In the development of the CDF, the City of Ottawa was cognizant that every community development agency works differently, and builds a different practice *framework* that changes with experience. To seek to impose a single framework on all community workers and all partners is to fall into the trap of assuming there is only one 'right' way to do community work and is contrary to the principle of diversity and the need to establish 'bottom-up' constructions of wisdom. In partnership with several other agencies, funders and researchers, the City has attempted to develop a framework that makes sense to all partners, but that still allows partner organizations, Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRCs), to develop their own approaches and to use community development traditions and tools according to the realities, needs and existing structures in their communities.

4.3 Neighbourhood Selection

The neighbourhoods prioritized for inclusion in the CDF were selected based on the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. The Study divides the city of Ottawa into 94 geographic

areas, of which 87 are defined as habitable (minimum 3,000 persons/neighbourhood), and provides demographic profiles based on social determinants of health and neighbourhood well-being.

The neighbourhoods in the Study were delineated using a specially developed methodology built on qualitative and quantitative analysis. To build the neighbourhood profiles, various factors including an analysis of community health indicators (the built environment, food and nutrition, health care services, education, financial services, recreation and natural environment) were considered and their relationship to community indicators (neighbourhood income, neighbourhood resources and health outcomes) were mapped. The actual boundaries were drawn based on existing physical barriers, demographic similarities, real estate maps, and research team member knowledge. Additionally, some neighbourhoods were merged so that minimum sampling requirements for health analysis could be met (approximately 4000 persons/neighbourhood). Each profile in the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study shows both the strengths and needs of the neighbourhood. This knowledge can be used for neighbourhood planning and as a stepping-stone to coordinating efforts to have a more substantial impact and to improve the places in which citizens live.

The data from the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study was used as the starting point from which to develop objective, empirical criteria for neighbourhood selection under the CDF. The CPS engaged researchers to create a methodology using statistical analysis of criteria to produce a ranking of communities who would benefit from this type of collaborative approach. These criteria focus on social determinants of health (physical health, poverty, early childhood indicators and crime) as well as other indicators of community strengths.

Neighbourhood health and socio-economic status were the most heavily weighted considerations in the overall decision of which neighbourhoods would benefit most from

CDF involvement. Information provided by the Ottawa Police Service on crime rankings also provided some context on neighbourhood dynamics. Consideration was also given to neighbourhood readiness and the self-reported capacity of CHRCs to initiate the CDF approach in their catchment areas. Finally, the following neighbourhood descriptors were also used as secondary considerations: visible minority distribution, recent immigrant settlement, language, Aboriginal distribution and the geographical spacing of neighbourhoods selected.

It was initially determined that three neighbourhoods would be identified to strategically focus all efforts. Given that the measures were relatively close between two neighbourhoods, consensus was reached to increase to four neighbourhoods after assessing sustainability, existing resources and deployment of staff. Based on the aforementioned methodology, the following four neighbourhoods were selected to initiate the CDF approach: Bayshore, Carlington, Overbrook-McArthur, and West Centretown.⁹

Prioritization was necessary in order to ensure the maximum, sustainable positive impact for each chosen neighbourhood, and because the City could not initiate this level of investment in all neighbourhoods at the same time. There was assurance that existing City investments and services in other neighbourhoods would continue, but where possible will be tailored towards informing the CDF's goals. Over time, the CDF will be incorporated into all neighbourhoods and in the interim, neighbourhoods not participating in the process will be supported with access to the same tools used by the four selected neighbourhoods.

4.4 Functioning: Structure and Processes

The CDF has multiple components that work together on several levels. At the community level residents, facilitated by CHRCs, initiate the implementation of the CDF

⁹ See http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/cdf/cdf_neighbourhoods_en.html for complete Neighbourhood Profiles.

through neighbourhood activities. The designated neighbourhoods work closely with service providers, City staff and various agencies through Local Steering Committees. The Coalition of CHRCs leads the Community Table that facilitates the sharing of approaches and good practices across neighbourhoods. This table aligns neighbourhood-based community developers, currently working in CHRCs, towards the CDF objectives and creates a mechanism for collaboration across grassroots community organizations and with residents.

At the systems level, several component tables work together in tandem to meet the objectives of the CDF. The Community Development Roundtable works as a ‘community leadership team’ to promote, guide and facilitate the implementation of the CDF within the City of Ottawa. Its focus is on ensuring the functioning, evolution and promotion of the CDF. In turn, the other component tables will provide guidance to the Roundtable in its decision making and will support the community level by transferring knowledge, coordinating services and leveraging resources.

The Knowledge Transfer Table brings together academics and experts in the community development field to conduct research to guide and support the implementation of the CDF. To date, they have conducted a systematic review of good practices in place-based community development in order to inform and construct an evaluation structure for the CDF. They have also identified criteria to assist the Roundtable in prioritizing which neighbourhoods the CDF will focus on at a time. Further, they endeavour to identify and share research results and evaluation tools that may be standardized and used at the neighbourhood level.

The Municipal Services Table brings together City staff, from various municipal services, to work collaboratively on shared intervention strategies, knowledge and assets, and the identification and breakdown of organizational barriers with the goal of contributing to

neighbourhood outcomes. The overall goal is to align city services and investments and promote horizontal communication and decision making in order to maximize city resources and demonstrate coordination of city services at the neighbourhood level.

The Resource Table brings together stakeholders with specific funding mandates to work together to identify various resource leveraging opportunities to support the CDF. It focuses on maximizing stakeholder engagement, investment of resources and sustainability of initiatives across neighbourhoods. The Table also monitors applications received for funding under the Framework and considers their collective impact on sustainability of community development initiatives within the City of Ottawa.

The CDF proposes a process for community engagement and local-level assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring. It also proposes a second process to fulfill unmet needs through systems-level support. These processes encourage residents to participate and ensure consistency, commitment, success and sustainability. Most importantly, they bind phases of the process, components of the CDF and other community development initiatives together.

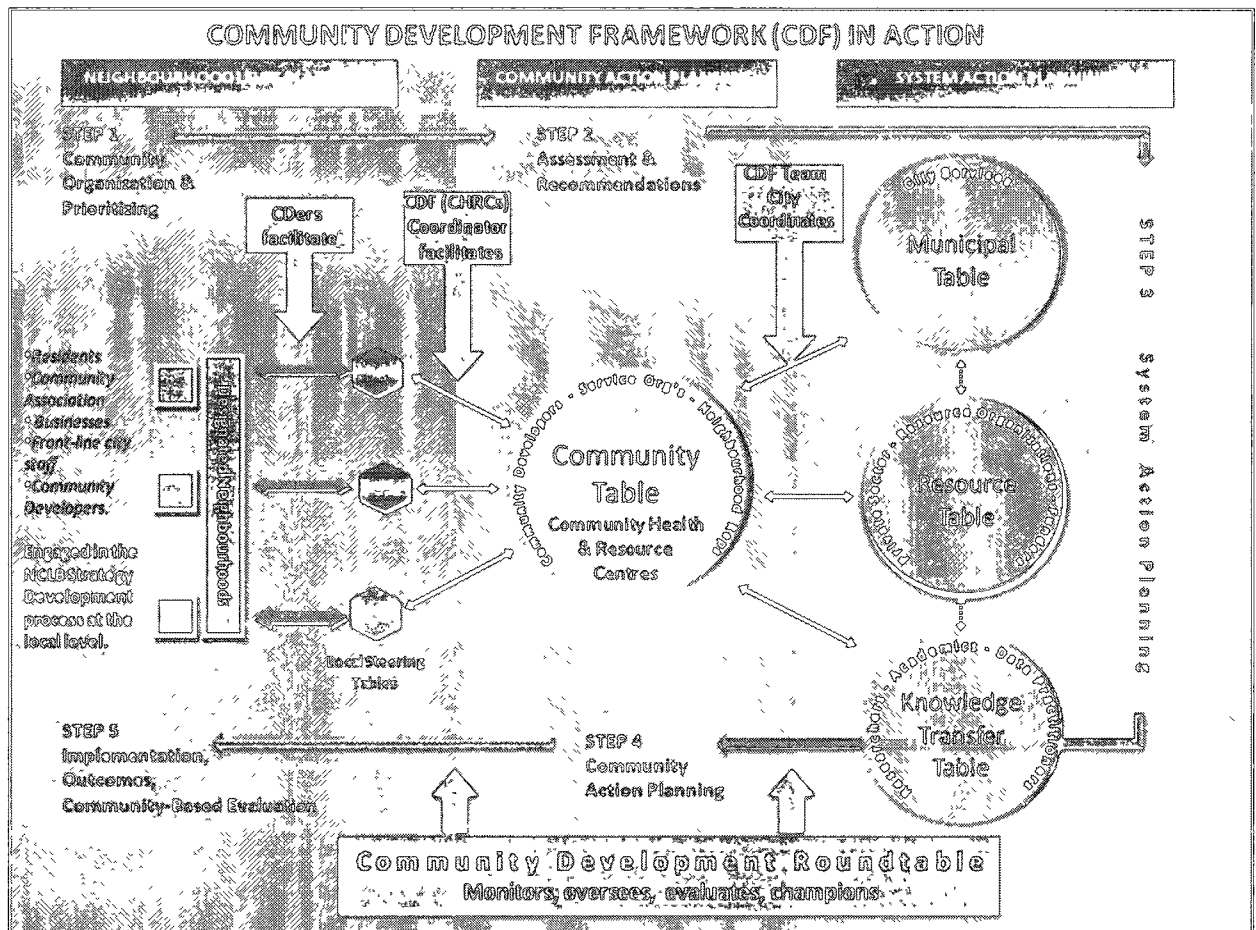
The first process, the community-level process, begins with community assessment (community consultation, surveys, focus groups, asset mapping, etc.) and moves into analyzing issues, prioritizing and planning. The product of these steps is the development of a neighbourhood action plan based on prioritized issues. The second process, the systems-level process, begins with the Steering Table moving issues forward that require systems-level support. The action planning at the neighbourhood level leads to recommendations at the systems level, which leads to implementation, monitoring, and participatory evaluation.

These processes provide practitioners and partner organizations with the freedom and opportunity to use any community development traditions and tools that best fit their

particular communities. This makes the CDF flexible and open, and adaptable by a variety of dynamic neighbourhoods. The fundamental objective behind CDF processes is to enable residents to articulate their needs and develop their own strategies to have those needs met; the idea of change from below, not intervention from the top. If the collaboration of the various stakeholders and the systems-level support made possible under the CDF helps neighbourhoods to address their needs, the CDF will have served its purpose.

The following figure summarizes the CDF structure and processes outlining how various neighbourhoods, agencies and services are brought together. The flow pattern emphasizes the interconnectedness of the phases of the processes and the importance of a holistic perspective.

Figure 1.0 Community Development Framework Model



V

ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS WITH CDF STAKEHOLDERS

At the outset of the interview, participants were asked a series of questions that prompted them to describe, in general terms, what ‘community’ and other related concepts meant to them. They were then asked to consider these concepts within the context of the Community Development Framework and from a crime and safety perspective. Respondents were then provided with the opportunity to share any additional information and/or comments. The following summary represents the views and perceptions of key informants in relation to these issues, with direct quotations from respondents in italics to support the overall findings.

5.1 The Concept of Community

5.1.1 Definition and Criteria

At the outset, interview participants were asked to describe in general terms, what they believed the concept of community meant, and what criteria they would use in order to recognize a community. They tended to describe community in terms of its physical and social aspects, or a combination of the two, citing the work of Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRCs) as an example.

Overall, respondents recognized that the concept of community can be defined in many ways – using both broad and more rigid, straightforward definitions. Further, they identified community as a concept that can mean different things to different people and is defined depending on the context within which it is used. As noted by one interviewee, if you talk to another person [in a different field or area of focus] they can give you a very different definition of what is meant by community.

When participants were asked how they defined and understood ‘community’, most described either a physical place, a community of interest or a combination of the two constructs. Physical communities were characterized as identifiable geographic areas composed of a group of people living in close proximity to one another, while communities of interest were characterized as a group of people who come together or are united around a common interest, a shared problem, or a common goal. Several respondents suggested that people tend to be more engaged with communities of interest than they are with physical communities. As noted by one interviewee,

A community is a group of people who are united by something that’s more defining of who they are than just physical space. It’s about understanding people and what they share.

One participant made particular reference to a community defined on the basis of a common identity suggesting that for some people (particularly recent immigrants from community-oriented cultures) community reflects a shared language, shared customs, or shared religion.

The majority of respondents defined community both as a geographic construct and a social construct. In this sense it is a combination of place and common interest or common identity. The community is often first identified as a geographic area with easily recognized physical boundaries – important for the purpose of identifying needs and providing services – which includes all the people living in the physical space as well as the infrastructure and services available to them.

The people, the buildings, the nature, the environment, the services, and all the activities going on – all this is community. It is a living thing.

However, interviewees argued that community means more than just a physical space; it means working together, being together, and sharing like interests and like views. This shared interest serves to strengthen the physical approach to community.

Some respondents noted that from a community development perspective, work focuses primarily on community as defined by geography. For example, Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRCs) are all assigned catchment areas that are separated by physical boundaries. However, one interviewee argued that the Coalition of CHRCs recognizes the need to work beyond geographic borders in order to address common, cross-boundary issues and problems in terms of advocacy and policy development. Further, one participant noted that if a geographic community is too large, for example the size of an entire catchment area, then it is difficult to engage in any meaningful action planning. In this instance, the focus needs to shift to a social community with a clearly identified need or challenge to be addressed. To work with a larger geographic community, community members must be provided with knowledge and tools, and their overall capacity to be effective members of their social communities must be increased. In this instance, the two forms of community work together in a complementary manner.

When participants were asked how they would recognize a community, they first identified criteria specific to a geographic location or a shared interest. For the geographic community, the most important criterion was the physical boundaries. A community includes everything that falls within an identified physical space, whether residential, private or commercial, and also may include groups such as non-profit organizations, schools, and social services. One interviewee stated that a geographic community is easiest to recognize because physical boundaries are clearly identifiable.

For the community of interest, participants felt that commonality was the most important criterion. There must be something in common between members of a community – whether it is a common interest, concern or challenge; a common culture, ethnicity or age;

a shared sense of purpose, vision or goal for the community; or a shared activity or initiative.

As noted by one respondent, this commonality can be formal or informal.

Often times people kind of coalesce around either a shared issue that they all focus on or some sort of initiative or activity that is coming together – so that is the more formal community. And then a lot of it just happens where people are kind of involved in the same work and feel they can call each other for support or guidance or help – so kind of the informal networks and informal communities that just emerge very organically.

In addition to criteria related to specific types of community, interview participants also identified more general criteria including a connection and interdependence between individuals, identification and sense of belonging, and action directed at achieving community goals. As described by participants, the key is having some factor that binds individuals together, whether this connection is geography-based or interest-based. In addition, there must be interdependence between these individuals (whether social or economic) where they need each other's support to achieve their common vision or goals. Further, identification with and sense of belonging to a community is needed.

People tend to naturally group with the people that reflect them back to themselves. So we want to see ourselves reflected in the world – there is something comfortable about that.

Interviewees believed these criteria to be of fundamental importance because without them, individuals are not engaged and will not actively participate on behalf of the community.

Finally, participants suggested that in order for a community to exist, there has to be some sort of action involved. As noted by one respondent, a geographical area where no one interacts cannot be called a community. There must be action directed towards achieving community goals, whatever they may be. Additionally, some felt that a community does not need to be a permanent entity. Communities can run a course, they can be put together for a

purpose, over time they can morph into something else, or they can join with or become part of another community.

5.1.2 Membership and Criteria

Interview participants were asked to briefly describe who they felt would be included as a member of a community. They believed that members were those who met the definitional criteria of the community being discussed, that specific membership criteria were dependent on the particular community under consideration, that all communities have basic entrance criteria which often emerge naturally, and that membership criteria could also serve to exclude some. Respondents also agreed that individuals could be members of more than one community.

At the outset, most suggested that community members would be those who met the definitional criteria of the above-mentioned communities. For example, in the case of geographic communities, membership would be extended to anyone who lived within the physical boundaries of a particular neighbourhood. However, in the case of communities of interest, membership was more dependent on a process of self-selection. Individuals who felt that they shared a common interest or those that participated in common activities would be seen as members of the same community.

When respondents were prompted to provide specific membership criteria, they were very clear that it was dependent on the nature of the particular community being discussed. Some suggested that membership criteria would vary depending on who is being asked – whether you are asking an individual to self-identify as a member or whether you are asking other people to determine if that individual is a member. So they believed that it is possible to have different membership criteria when discussing the same community.

Participants acknowledged that all communities have a set of basic entrance criteria to determine membership. For example in the case of a geographic community, while being a resident of the neighbourhood would satisfy the entrance criteria, some interviewees suggested that living in the neighbourhood is not necessary for membership; individuals need only have a connection or identify with the community in some way to be considered a member. As noted by one respondent, people who do not live in the designated geographic area are still able to be a part of the community through volunteer opportunities and community outreach – sharing experiences and participating in discussions and workshops. When it comes to community-related activities, all those who can make a positive difference in the community are welcome as members.

Similarly, participants believed that individuals do not automatically belong to communities of interest or communities of identity; they also need to have an interest in or connection to that community. As noted by one respondent, even people who appear as though they should be members of a particular cultural community may not identify with that community. For example, there are more than twenty-five Arabic-speaking nations represented in the Bayshore neighbourhood and while they may look to an outsider like a cohesive identity community, they have very different political backgrounds and religious affiliations. Membership is dependent on an individual having a meaningful engagement with the community; sharing the values and concerns of the community to which they belong and it is important to be cognizant of the diversity within identity communities.

Overall, interview participants felt that entrance criteria did not have to be explicitly defined and could emerge naturally.

A lot of the time a community ends up coming together almost without any membership criteria. It's not like people are thinking that certain membership

criteria need to be explicitly met in order to have a community – people tend to gravitate to where they are comfortable.

In general, interviewees felt that membership criteria were often implicitly defined by members of a particular community. In fact, an individual's self-identification as a community member appeared to be the most important criterion identified by participants. They believed that people naturally claim membership in a community where they feel belonged as individuals and want to see their interests, beliefs or values reflected in the people around them.

From my experience, it is rare to have someone who does self-identify with a community but isn't really a part of the community – people generally understand what communities they belong to.

While interview participants felt that membership criteria were usually inclusive – an individual can become a member of any community provided that they have an interest in or connection to that community – some respondents did acknowledge that membership criteria can be excluding. Some individuals are excluded by not being provided with the opportunity to actively participate in the community. Some interviewees specified barriers to community membership including language and cultural issues that certain individuals, particularly recent immigrants, might feel that they cannot overcome and which lead to exclusion.

It was also acknowledged that membership criteria can be used intentionally to exclude certain individuals. Some communities can be very active in deciding who is welcome. There are certain members in any community that have more of a voice than others and they are often the ones to dictate what is required of individuals to participate in the community.

One of the challenges of working with a community is that often we don't recognize the power struggles within – there are sometimes very clear demarcation lines and lines that people are not allowed to cross and as an

outsider you don't see that. We can get wrapped up in the romance and cuddliness of community when in fact it can be quite a nasty thing as well.

Finally, interview participants were asked whether they believed that it was possible to be a member of more than one community. All respondents believed that individuals can be members of many intersecting, cross-cutting communities, some of which have conflicting interests. Human beings are complex and as such cannot be defined by one identity or confined to one community. People have multiple identities at any one time and these can shift over the life course; they move in and out of communities as their identities or life circumstances change. Further, these identities can be mutually exclusive or they can be in conflict. However, as acknowledged by several and stated explicitly by one participant:

We manage to be members of communities which are, or could be seen to be, in conflict with each other but somehow we are able to balance that. For example, say a Catholic woman who is gay, she is in two communities that don't necessarily overlap well.

Individuals can have multiple identifications with multiple communities at any given time and a sense of community can be built into all those different identities. For example,

Women can feel connected to a particular neighbourhood and have an identification with that neighbourhood and their identity is wrapped up there but then they're also coming together with women from across the city and then feel part of the community of women that don't live together but share that common experience as women in the city.

5.1.3 Responsibility for Definition and Membership

Interview participants were asked to briefly describe who they felt was responsible for determining communities and their membership. Similar to answers given to previous questions; they were clear that the responsibility for defining community was context specific, dependant on the type of community and the purpose of the community. However, the majority of interviewees agreed that in most cases it was characterized as a top-down process. Communities were largely defined at the 'political level' by governments and policy

makers and at the 'service provider' level by organizations and funders (such as CHRCs and police services). As such, the community is often defined in a way that makes sense to these groups and their mandates. One interview participant outlined an example of this process:

The South East Ottawa Community Health Centre has a mandate to serve the most vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities – so they would conduct research and go into neighbourhoods where the majority of people are low-income, new immigrants, or Ottawa Community Housing residents. So those are key criteria they used in order to define and categorize communities.

Participants explained that communities can be defined at the systems level or self-defined. However it is the former type that tend to be recognized as communities and that subsequently receive support from the political structure and service providers, while the latter are less likely to receive these same supports and often have very little political clout. Respondents agreed that without identification at the systems level, it tends to take longer for a group to become recognized as a communal entity.

Interviewees were then asked to consider who they felt should be responsible for defining communities and designating membership. Some argued that it should not be done by systems-level groups and service providers. As noted by one participant, when outside groups and organizations designate the community, it is often defined too broadly and there is a tendency to group together several smaller communities. As a result, the smaller communities often lose control of their own issues and find it difficult to get their individual needs met.

Overwhelmingly the interview participants recognized that when it comes to defining a community, it is strongest when those who share an interest or purpose are engaged and responsible for the decision-making process. People need to define their own sense of community and what resonates most for them and where they feel they belong.

I think communities really do have their own way of defining themselves and it is much more important to try and be cognizant of that, be aware of that, and work with those communities that already exist as opposed to trying to create your own, or create ones that make your work easier.

However, respondents were mindful that while there should be a certain amount of freedom of association and self-determination, communities that are excluding and destructive, and which pose a risk to the greater good, should be managed or disbanded if necessary.

They acknowledged that in an ideal world, definition, leadership and decision-making would come from inside the community. But in a world where systemic barriers to community participation such as poverty, education, language and culture are widespread, people often do not have the means to make that happen. This is when service providers and funders take over responsibility for defining and designating communities so that they can supply resources and provide supports where they are most needed.

5.1.4 Consensus in Definition

Finally, interview participants were asked if they believed that a consensus on the definition of community was necessary or if there could be several interpretations of the concept. The benefits and consequences of a consensus were discussed. However, most acknowledged that while total agreement on all issues is unlikely, agreement on some key issues is needed to move forward with program implementation.

Some believed that a consensus would be beneficial and that standardizing the definition of community would be useful, especially in the case of geographical communities. But while a common understanding of community might help, any definition would be controversial.

I think the most difficult part of community, and being able to think about it, is actually coming up with a definition that all people agree to and having a definition that is simple enough that people actually can fully understand it and that actually captures the complexity of what community actually means.

Several interviewees also acknowledged a downside to having a consensus on what the concept of community means, and one participant elaborated on this point in the context of defining membership in an Aboriginal community:

Trying to define who is really an Aboriginal only helps the people who actually make it over the line and penalizes the people who can no longer be considered as part of that community if they fall below it.

While there could be more efficacy if a common definition could be agreed upon, it would not necessarily serve the interests of all. Moreover, it would be very difficult to have a fixed definition of community and several interpretations would be necessary.

I think that there has to be several interpretations, and again one of the challenges that we will always face in doing community work is being sensitive to different cultures and different ways of thinking, and because different groups will define community differently.

Overall, respondents believed that the definition of community must be fluid and flexible because it is a very personal thing, it is about an individual's sense of belonging and where they feel most comfortable. An individual's identification with a community depends on various factors including age, culture, religion, profession and those things can change over time.

Most interview participants did acknowledge that depending on the situation, a common definition of community is needed to move forward with a specific community development project or initiative. Additionally, for the purpose of data collection, analysis and evaluation there must be a clear understanding of what and who are considered a community.

I think what's important with the definition of community is that everyone engaged in any particular given endeavour is working with the same idea of community. If the City of Ottawa wants to work with communities within the city, then the City of Ottawa needs to reach consensus with its own communities but it doesn't need to have a consensus on community with the City of Toronto.

Some sort of compromise has to be made in order for policies to be developed and implemented. If the definition does not match with the implementation of programming then it will not work.

Finally, one participant noted that serious tensions or differences in definitions can lead to conflict between members of the same community. However, if individuals naturally gravitate to similar characterizations of their community then there is less conflict and it becomes an easier process.

I think that a lot of people are really caught up in that identity process, they tend to be really strict about identity because they are trying to resolve something in themselves and that's what leads to tensions. Because when people are really, truly comfortable with their identity, they are more likely to be more open and flexible with other people's version of that identity because it is no longer a threat to their sense of self.

The conceptualization of 'community' is a huge challenge and as one participant noted, nothing in this process is 'black and white'. There is no one 'right' way to establish community identity.

5.2 The CDF and the Concept of Community

5.2.1 How Individual Definitions of Community Fit within the CDF

In this section of the interview, participants were asked to describe how they felt that their personal notions of 'community' fit with that of the CDF and whether they believed any discrepancies existed between the two conceptualizations. At the outset, one interviewee stated that there was a deliberate attempt to avoid using the term community in the CDF because of the difficulty in agreeing on a common definition; this was perceived as one of the reasons why in this case 'community' refers to a geographically-defined neighbourhood.

Several respondents noted the advantages of defining the community as a geographic entity for the purposes of the CDF. First, some felt that using a place-based approach was valid because physical space is where things happen.

Crime happens within space, poor housing conditions happen in space, lack of services happen in space – so a space-based approach is legitimate.

Further, using a place-based approach to community can help people to feel more connected to the physical area in which they live and it provides the opportunity for residents to get to know their neighbours. This benefit may be particularly salient for recent immigrants or for those coming to Canada from cultures where people tend to relate more to others in their neighbourhoods.

When they come here to this very individualistic society, where we are all closed away and don't connect with our neighbours, maybe there is a reclaiming of something that they left behind when they came to Canada. So potentially working at the neighbourhood level may be a starting place for some people, who haven't branched out of their own ethnic communities, to connect across ethnicity at the neighbourhood level.

Another advantage of the place-based approach described by participants is that it can simplify the community engagement and evaluation processes. In developing and implementing the CDF, the City of Ottawa was looking for impact, results and return on investment. Interviewees believed that that relying on geographic communities with clearly delineated physical boundaries made it easier to identify stakeholders, provide resources, and measure the progress of the CDF.

The main discrepancy between conceptualizations of the community that interview participants identified was over the question of where communities of interest and identity fit into the CDF. Currently, the Framework is focusing on four vulnerable neighbourhoods in the City of Ottawa. However as noted by one interviewee, once you get into those geographic neighbourhoods, there are actually several smaller communities that are not

being addressed. Several noted that if the CDF is really interested in community development, then it needs to look at where and how it can incorporate these communities of interest or identity because they are important to neighbourhood-based communities. For example, in addition to connecting with their neighbours, individuals may want to connect with religious communities or cultural communities where people speak the same language and share the same traditions; however currently there are not mechanisms in place in the CDF to allow for that identification.

The Community Development Framework is focused on issues like housing and safety and those sorts of things and they are not really focused on the other kinds of ways that people identify with community.

Respondents' perceptions were that if individuals reside in a CDF neighbourhood, then they are part of the process and if individuals either do not live in that community or they do not identify with that geographic area, then they are not part of the process. However, one participant did suggest that using a place-based approach does not mean that those communities of interest are restricted from tapping into some of the resources and the partners at the various systems-level tables. And further it is important to remember that the CDF is currently working in four neighbourhoods, but eventually it will cover the full geography of the City of Ottawa. At that point, it will be easier to see the connections.

Finally, interviewees acknowledged that the CDF is an ongoing, changing and progressive approach to community development. They believed the CDF was developed because the City of Ottawa wanted to move to a more coordinated approach to address community needs in neighbourhoods. It is an ongoing process and was not intended to be the be all and end all of community development. Many participants believed that the CDF is becoming more flexible in its definition and characterization of community.

The best thing that the City of Ottawa has done is to say that we are going to start by focusing on the places that are highest need, but I think that there is an openness and understanding there as well, whether it is spoken or not, that within those geographic spaces, there are a lot of different communities.

Most believed that the CDF has also been flexible in terms of allowing the CHRCs to tailor their approaches to address the needs and interests of their particular communities. As noted by one respondent, while the CHRCs work within geographic boundaries, there is a lot of fluidity in their community development processes that allow for people to identify with a community on the basis of how they feel belonging. There is an overall consciousness that people's lives cross boundaries and that there needs to be flexibility in how geographic borders are used.

Other interview participants felt that the CDF's focus on geographic neighbourhoods did not have a significant impact on their work. Some felt that their role in the community development process was to determine how to work effectively within this Framework in order to better serve the community, however it is defined. Others felt that the definition of community was not a problem because there is a lot of freedom at the neighbourhood level to tailor the approach to fit individual community needs and interests. As noted by one respondent, the bigger challenge is how community is engaged in the community development process.

5.2.1.1 Voices Missing from a Place-Based Conceptualization

Interviewees were then asked whether they felt that all voices were being heard. Most felt that some voices were definitely missing from the discussion. However, they noted that this was not so much a failure of the CDF model but rather a reflection of the current stage of the process. The CDF is only leaving the ground now and so far is only being implemented in four neighbourhoods in the City of Ottawa. There is a general understanding among the

respondents that the City does not have the capacity to start a project in all 89 Ottawa neighbourhoods simultaneously. One participant noted that it is expected that the City and its partners will alter the model in the future in order to reach out to different communities.

Other reasons why certain voices might be missed as a result of a place-based approach to community were also addressed including the size of the neighbourhood, limitations associated with the Neighbourhood Survey, and issues of social isolation. First, participants discussed how the actual size of the neighbourhood could be problematic. The larger the geographic area, the more difficult community engagement becomes. In a large neighbourhood, there is more work to be done and more involvement needed at the community-level to ensure that all voices are being heard. For example, in the Overbrook-Forbes neighbourhood it was perceived that community developers are making a conscious effort to ensure that the people in their housing units are also helping to reach out to the people around them. Alternatively, with a small geographic area there is concern that the voices of those outside the neighbourhood boundaries are missing. By way of example, one interviewee suggested that some people within the Carlington neighbourhood area may feel that they are unable to participate in events at a community centre in their catchment area because it is located within the boundaries of another neighbourhood; their voices may not be present at community meetings.

Several participants also felt that there were problems with the way that the Neighbourhood Survey was conducted in the four CDF neighbourhoods. In particular, interview participants noted that the Survey missed the voice of youth based on the minimum age requirement to complete the survey.

Youth face so many issues in the community and so many barriers to pursuing health and safety; however their voices are almost totally missing from the discussion.

Respondents also noted that several other voices were missing as a result of a language barrier. While the City of Ottawa had taken measures to ensure that the Neighbourhood Survey was inclusive, it was only translated into seven languages, so not all community residents could participate in the exercise. As explained by one interviewee, in the Bayshore neighbourhood there are over 70 different languages spoken by residents. It would be impossible not only to have the Survey translated into all those languages but also to have people who work in all those languages to communicate the need for it and its purpose to residents. In this instance, language challenges and cultural barriers contribute to missing voices.

Interview participants also acknowledged social isolation as a barrier to participation in the CDF process. As noted by one interviewee, because the communities that the CDF is working in are so high risk and so high need, there are a lot of people that are socially isolated. By the nature of the barriers that they face and by the way that they are isolated, these people are hard to reach out to and their voices tend to be missing from the discussion. Finally, there are also people who, for whatever reason, have become disenfranchised or marginalized and who have decided that they are not going to be involved in the CDF process.

Overall, participants acknowledged that there is always concern in community development about which voices are being heard and which voices are missing.

How do we make sure that we are tapping into as many people as we can and how do we actually make sure that we encompass as many voices as we possibly can, and particularly those voices that you don't normally hear from.

Interviewees were also cognizant that they are never going to be able to reach every group and that is a challenge inherent in the community development process.

In any community, there is only a certain percentage of people who are really interested in it, there is a certain percentage that aren't interested at all and all the rest fit mostly in between depending on the situation.

5.2.2 Criticisms and Complaints that Accompany the Conceptualization Process

Interview participants were asked if they were aware of any criticisms or complaints that accompanied the conceptualization of the community in the CDF process. Respondents' concerns addressed how the communities were identified and labelled, where the CDF chose to focus its efforts within the selected communities, and the stigmatization associated with this labelling process.

The first main criticism that respondents identified was in relation to challenges around how geographic communities were identified and labelled. The four neighbourhoods currently involved in the CDF were identified by using the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. Some acknowledged that there were concerns from residents that the neighbourhood boundaries were not reflective of their actual community. They felt that residents tended to be less concerned with the overall place-based approach taken by the CDF and more concerned with the physical boundaries that had been drawn around their neighbourhoods.

Several participants also suggested that there was a problem with the neighbourhoods being defined at the systems level. As one interviewee noted, defining the community without consulting with its members is a problem that occurred at the Knowledge Transfer Table. It was felt that this group did too much of the community development work before they got to the neighbourhood level. By way of example, one participant illustrated how the fourteen CHRCs in the City of Ottawa had been given the main coordination and implementation role for the CDF; they are the front-line organizations responsible for the community engagement work. Instead of having researchers and planners identify criteria and select communities for the CHRCs, it was felt they should have been able to identify

communities based on their own experiences. These organizations have been working in communities and it was felt they should know from indigenous knowledge which neighbourhoods and communities require their support.

Interview participants identified a second criticism concerning where the CDF chose to focus within the four selected neighbourhoods. In three of four selected neighbourhoods, the focus was on smaller sub-communities because the model required so much outreach and engagement. The plan was to start the process in smaller communities within the larger geographic area and then to move throughout the neighbourhood over a period of time. Interviewees perceived that this caused some tensions as many residents identified with the broader neighbourhood and not with the smaller sub-community in which the CDF was being implemented. Second, they believed there was disagreement among the neighbourhood residents on where the CDF's attention and energy should be focused. As discussed by some interview participants, there were arguments among residents about which communities had more needs and more problems and there was a sense of unfairness that focus was placed on one specific area when there was also need felt elsewhere in the community. One participant believed that the CDF ultimately selected communities that wanted to work with them and that were seen to have the capacity to undertake this initiative; the City went with what it felt was manageable based on the resources that were available.

Finally there was concern from respondents that by identifying and labelling smaller communities as high-risk, high-needs communities that they would be further marginalized and isolated from the broader neighbourhood. This can make it challenging to connect and foster a sense of belonging with the broader neighbourhood.

5.2.3 Alternative Ways to Approach Community

Interview participants were also asked if they believed that there might be a better way for the CDF to go about identifying and categorizing the community. They acknowledged that place was a logical starting point, that it is important to work with different forms and types of community, and that sometimes communities must be created.

Overall, most agreed that the place-based approach used by the CDF is a practical first step in community development. They saw this approach as a synthetic process which tries to encourage people living in close proximity to one another to identify common goals and to work together in order to increase a sense of community. Further, they felt that from a municipal services perspective, neighbourhoods are a logical starting point because feedback from the Neighbourhood Survey can inform how the City distributes services and resources.

Respondents also acknowledged that by starting with a place-based approach to community, it then becomes possible to discover communities of interest and identity. As noted by one interviewee, by starting where people live you can ensure that you are not excluding anyone (whether intentionally or not) because everyone has a residence – the issue of homelessness aside. From there it becomes possible to identify social communities that offer something in addition to the neighbourhood in which people live.

Several participants suggested that it is important to work both with geographic communities and social communities in a complementary process. There must be a conscious effort to integrate other forms of community into the CDF process based on an understanding that a place-based approach is only one part of community development. Further, there was an acknowledgement from interviewees that it is important to work from all possible directions such that if one approach does not work, another approach can be undertaken. As

noted by several respondents, community development is all about building relationships and having residents communicate about issues and solutions to neighbourhood problems.

Finally, the interview participants emphasized that communities must be created and not simply defined. As discussed by one participant, the concept of community is being used as a focal point for the CDF without providing the opportunity for communities to emerge; the label of community is simply being applied to people.

There must be an opportunity for community creation where boundaries and membership emerge naturally – organic processes are always sloppier and harder to define and quantify.

Another respondent explained that the problem with defining a community rather than allowing it to develop organically is that tension can arise when the label does not connect in with the way that an individual has always thought about their community. Different groups and organizations approach community from different perspectives and with different interests and so there is certainly tension between their definitions.

5.2.4 Placed-Based Approach to Community and Neighbourhood Action Plans

Interview participants were asked how they believed that the CDF's place-based approach to the conceptualization of community might influence the issues and needs that are identified at the neighbourhood level and the development of action plans to address them. Some felt that the place-based approach to community did not influence the needs identified at the neighbourhood level. If the community had been defined in a different way, the same issues would have surfaced as residents answered the Neighbourhood Survey from their own personal perspectives based on their own experiences with community.

When residents were answering the survey, they weren't answering it necessarily with their community in mind, they were answering it for themselves and how they experienced community. And so regardless if we had identified it as a place-based approach or whether we had decided on a

community of interest, they still would have answered it with all of their different visions of community in mind.

Several respondents emphasized that the CDF engaged in a consultative process with the residents, and the action plans that were created addressed the real priorities for that neighbourhood as identified by the Survey. While participants acknowledged that a survey is only as good as the people who answer it, they suggested that several residents who did not complete the survey attended community action meetings and so they were still able to participate in the action planning process and have their concerns addressed.

The interviewees also acknowledged that action planning is an ongoing process and while some needs were identified and addressed immediately, other issues will be identified and addressed over time, and ultimately all resident concerns will be addressed. One participant even suggested that some issues were solved even before the action-planning phase started.

If you have a group of service providers working at the grass-roots level then more than 90% of community issues can be addressed right there and then – there is not a need for systems-level support.

Others believed that the place-based approach to community taken by the CDF did have an effect on the needs identified at the neighbourhood level.

How you define community does impact which issues people are going to identify. For example, if we had identified community around identity we probably would have had an action plan that was significantly different depending on which group was in the lead.

This group of respondents believed that if the community was defined differently, then community developers would be working in a very different way in the neighbourhoods. The place-based approach definitely influenced the types of issues that are on the agenda.

In particular, in reference to the three Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) neighbourhoods engaged in the CDF process, interview participants outlined several

instances in which the place-based conceptualization of community influenced the issues and needs that were identified at the neighbourhood level. For the three OCH neighbourhoods, one of the predominant issues that emerged was needs relating to overall housing maintenance and the quality of common areas including play structures and yards. One participant suggested that while the condition of housing might also be an issue in other neighbourhoods, the sources of frustration and the subsequent actions to address that frustration would be different if the community was defined differently.

It was also suggested that crime and safety issues would be different based on the way that the community was conceptualized. For the OCH neighbourhoods, a main area of concern expressed by respondents was that residents felt that criminal activities taking place in their neighbourhoods were largely being committed by people from outside the community. They perceived a general sense among residents that the stigmatization of their neighbourhood as a low-income, isolated community with little collective efficacy meant that outsiders believed that no one really cared about the community and no one was paying attention; so criminal activities such as drug-dealing, public drunkenness and loitering would be more tolerated here than in other communities.

In general, interview participants believed that larger systemic issues were not being identified at the neighbourhood level. With a place-based approach to community development the focus tends to be on issues such as lighting and garbage removal, concerns that affect day-to-day life in the neighbourhood. As explained by one respondent, because the Neighbourhood Survey focused on place, residents were less likely to identify problems relating to systemic issues such as the social determinants of health.

Further, interviewees believed that the way the community was defined influenced the development of action plans to address neighbourhood needs and issues. Some suggested

that the prioritization of issues and action-planning are context specific – they depend on the situation, events and local conditions of the community. In this instance, action plans were unique to the particular sub-community that was selected within the larger CDF neighbourhood and might not necessarily be reflective of the needs and concerns of the larger neighbourhood. The participants believed that the activities outlined in the action plan, the support needed, and the budget would be different depending on the neighbourhood and the community involved. While overall milestones might be the same, the process to achieve these goals would be different.

Finally, some interview participants acknowledged that in terms of identifying community issues and developing action plans to address those needs, it will never be possible to satisfy all community members. While participants perceived most residents to be comfortable with the neighbourhood concerns identified and subsequently addressed during the action-planning phase, they were cognizant that other residents might feel that their issues were not being addressed and that the action plans only reflected the needs of the small number of people who completed the Neighbourhood Survey or participated in the community action-planning meetings. One respondent acknowledged the reality of bringing together so many different groups in order to develop a comprehensive action plan; sometimes it is more productive to work with those who are willing to participate.

5.3 Crime and Safety and the Community

5.3.1 Role of the Community in Implementing Neighbourhood Action Plans

One of the main goals of the CDF is to improve neighbourhood safety and perceptions of safety. In this section of the interview, participants were asked what role they felt that the community, as defined by the CDF, would play in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety. A range of roles for

neighbourhood residents were identified, both active and passive in nature, and interviewees believed these would vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

Some participants believed that residents should have a lead role and be heavily involved in carrying out neighbourhood action plans that address crime and safety concerns. They felt that it was important that residents feel that these neighbourhood action plans are about making their neighbourhood more secure, and outsiders should not come into the community to address these issues without their input. They perceived that the more community members feel engaged in the process, the more they feel involved and the more input they will provide. Interviewees noted that some residents will be more involved than others in the process – particularly those who regularly attend community meetings, that talk with the service providers and provide input in terms of what they would like to see happen in the neighbourhood. Alternatively, if community members are not actively engaged in the process, they will be less likely to be involved in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans. As one respondent described,

If the community is not involved, if the community is not engaged and if their action plan is kind of a shopping list and they expect others, like service providers to be addressing those issues without their responsibility or without having a role for them, then that is just setting everything up for failure right from the beginning.

Other participants believed that the main focus of residents should be information sharing in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans. Some examples were provided and included forming a Neighbourhood Watch program where residents could share information on what was happening in their neighbourhoods or having a bulletin board at the community centre where people could post information about criminal activities that occurred in the neighbourhood.

It's just about raising awareness, so you know, one of the residents – let's say someone has something stolen from their yard, if he can record that and then other people are recording it then maybe we see patterns, or maybe we can get a better handle on what's actually happening, and have other people experienced the same thing.

Several interviewees believed that, in addition to sharing information with other residents, community members should be involved in the reporting process. They believed that if residents do not report criminal activities or other safety issues to the police or other security organizations, then nothing can be done to resolve the problem. Several respondents emphasized the importance of increasing resident awareness in terms of reporting protocols and practices. Some examples provided included holding information sessions and passing out flyers in the neighbourhood to ensure that residents knew how and when to report criminal activity. They felt that if resident reporting practices increased, the police and other enforcement agencies could gain a better understanding of neighbourhood issues and how to address those concerns.

In addition, some interviewees acknowledged that in order for residents to report criminal activities, trust must be built as there is often fear associated with calling the police. Further, improving safety in a neighbourhood means that residents need to be able to work with enforcement authorities and mechanisms.

Residents living in the neighbourhoods need to take a step forward but the organizations that would be involved in assisting with some of those crime and safety issues also have to take a step and build some of that relationship with the residents living there.

Overall, perceptions of interview participants were that without a relationship between residents and enforcement agencies, it would be difficult for the neighbourhood action plans to function.

Interviewees suggested that another role for residents in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans relates to addressing perceptions of crime and safety in a neighbourhood. They felt that by focusing on a placed-based approach, there can be some misunderstanding and misinformation concerning a neighbourhood's image, and that these feelings are often based on the reputation of the neighbourhood. Respondents believed that in this case, the focus of residents should be on gathering information and raising awareness on how they believe their community has been misrepresented and promoting the positive aspects of their neighbourhood. One participant described how the neighbourhood of Bayshore is often mistakenly used to describe the larger Bay Ward and when the media reports on crime and safety concerns in Bayshore, they are rarely talking about the actual neighbourhood. The respondent suggested that Bayshore residents reported an overall feeling of safety in their neighbourhood and as part of their action plan were planning a campaign to raise awareness on negative media portrayals of their neighbourhood.

5.3.2 Who is Participating in this Process?

Interview participants were then asked who they saw as involved in the implementation of the neighbourhood action plans. Some respondents suggested that all residents would be involved while others argued that only a sub-section of the neighbourhood would participate. The decision to participate seemed to be dependent on the type and previous experience of individuals, the issue of focus, and the geographical scope of the community. Interviewees also discussed other individuals and organizations that might be involved, and identified the types of groups who might be missing.

Some indicated that all residents living in the community need to be involved in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans and that promoting safety in the community is everybody's responsibility.

We are all impacted by crimes in the community so it is very important for community members and interested partners to be able to invest in crime prevention.

They believed that all community members should have an interest in and the opportunity to participate in the process because they are the ones living in the community; they care about their community more than anyone else and have the biggest stake in making the whole thing work.

Other interviewees indicated that only a sub-section of the community would participate in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans. The first group addressed were community leaders, such as the president of a tenants association or a neighbourhood association. Some perceived that these community leaders are critical because they are well connected in the neighbourhood, are intimately aware of issues and concerns, and can relay this information to the community developers. Further, these community leaders can act as resources for other neighbourhoods in terms of sharing information and learnings related to the process.

The second sub-set likely to participate in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans would be those who are already engaged at the community level and who have had positive experiences in the past. Interviewees believed that often it is the active members of a community – who are already volunteering in the community in some capacity, who are community-minded and who believe that they can make change happen – that are participating in the process. Interviewees recognized these two sub-sets of residents as core groups that would be regularly engaged in the process; they are often referred to as the ‘go to’ community members.

Several participants indicated that a resident’s participation in the process is dependent on the issues being addressed by the neighbourhood action plans.

If it's lighting it's going to be one set of people but if it's drug dealers then we are looking at a very different set of people who need to be involved.

Further, one interview participant indicated that participation in the process was dependent on the geographical scope of the neighbourhood stating that the more you increase the size of the neighbourhood, the more generic the community action plan becomes and the less interest and participation you have from the community. By way of example, one interviewee explained that if you compare the development of neighbourhood action plans in Bayshore (2,500-2,600 units in several buildings) with Overbrook-Forbes (140 units in one building), resident participation varies greatly.

Since the CDF process started, almost 70% of the residents in Overbrook-Forbes have participated in one form or another at one stage or another and there has been a total transformation in that neighbourhood – they made a difference. In Bayshore, there was a lot of time and resources spent but there wasn't a meaningful impact made.

Overall, participants perceived that in the smaller neighbourhoods, people are engaged and want to participate in the process and in the bigger neighbourhoods it is more challenging to get people involved.

Beyond neighbourhood residents, several interviewees indicated that other individuals and organizations would also be involved in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans. They felt that community developers and CHRCs are critical to the process because they are connected to the neighbourhood and are involved in what is happening in the community. Similarly, they believed that community police officers and Ottawa Community Housing safety officials, who are in the neighbourhoods on a regular basis and have a relationship with the residents, are also important to the process.

Respondents explained that while there are community leaders who can fulfill this role, some

of them are nervous about pulling people together and taking action; these outside groups can help to support them.

Participants also discussed who they believed to be missing from this process. They felt that one group that would not be engaged in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans would be those who are disillusioned or sceptical of the process. As noted by one respondent, if you have lived in a community or have been somewhere long enough and you have never seen the changes you want to see, you stop believing that it is possible. These are the people who have seen this type of community development process before and have not seen any positive results come from it. They will wait to see how the process unfolds and then might only engage and participate if they felt like things were happening and it was a worthwhile process.

Other interview participants indicated that the CDF neighbourhoods are characterized by the presence of systemic barriers which prevent certain residents from participating in neighbourhood action plans. They believed that residents who are branded as having low socio-economic status face multiple challenges in their everyday lives; their capacity and the time they have available to participate in this process is limited.

Most residents are just trying to get by on a day-to-day basis and they are caught up in all sorts of bureaucratic processes that suck up all sorts of time. For example, just the most basic things like grocery shopping or taking their children to a doctor's appointment consumes a lot more time than it does for someone else who has access to a car.

Another barrier to participation in the development of neighbourhood action plans addressed by interviewees relates to cross-cultural differences in the community engagement process. Some participants felt that in certain communities, women's participation in the process may be limited because of cultural barriers. As noted by one respondent, in some cultures the voices of men tend to be heard over the voices of women or women may be less

likely than their partners to develop language skills because they are more likely to stay home with the children.

Interviewees also perceived trust to be an issue that prevents participation in the development of action plans. In some cultural communities, there are a lot of trust issues with the police. As noted by one participant, a big issue for Somali mothers is that they do not want to incriminate themselves and their families and so they are cautious about how much information they disclose to police. It was believed that they want to reach out to the police to ensure that their neighbourhoods are safe and yet at the same time they do not because they are afraid they will be asked to turn in their own relatives. Some participants also felt that for some cultures there is an issue of trust with systems-level organizations in terms of providing feedback. They suggested that based on experiences in their country of origin, some people may be reluctant to identify problems as this would be considered dangerous, or to suggest the need for social services as this would be considered beyond the realm of possibility.

5.3.3 What is Needed to Mobilize the Community?

Interview participants were asked what they believed was necessary in order to organize a community to implement an action plan to address issues of crime and safety. Four main requirements were identified: the engagement and commitment of community residents to the process, the availability of a safe meeting space, capacity building for community participation, and ensuring adequate resources are available.

5.3.3.1 Engagement and Commitment of Community Members

Several respondents indicated that what is most needed for mobilization is the personal commitment and engagement of community members in the process.

Community members need to personally commit themselves to do something on their own and not wait for things to change. Community development is a risk and it requires the buy-in and investment of residents.

Interviewees believed that for residents to feel engaged they must feel secure in their identities, they must believe that they are members of the community, and they must have a vested interest in the community and the process. As noted by one interview participant, the starting place for engagement and commitment needs to involve a recognition of who individual community members are, what they are about, and how they see themselves reflected in the world. Relationships between community members cannot be built without starting at a place that recognizes residents for who they are as individuals.

There has been a huge success in local community development initiatives by working with groups, fostering leadership, and fostering a sense of identity – that then gives people the ability and the confidence to actually meaningfully engage with the world.

Respondents believed that a next step in the process is to improve community cohesion. As noted by one interviewee, how this is done, how people are brought together in a positive manner, is dependent on what the people in a given community want to do. Further, there is no one answer to developing community cohesion; various different types of initiatives can be undertaken and they do not all have to be serious in nature.

If that means that what works on Donald Street is a Karaoke Night every Monday night, well then let's go sing or if that means what's going to work in Carlington is a Walking Club, then let's go walk.

Participants explained that for this process to work, it is essential to recognize and value the interests of community members; it is important to discover people's passions whether it's gardening, sports or cooking, and then to engage them based on that interest.

Respondents felt that community members must also have a certain amount of ownership over their community and the mobilization process. As one participant discussed,

the CDF relies heavily on community engagement but there is a fine line between residents feeling empowered and engaged – like they own the process – and community developers being seen as off-loading their responsibilities. As noted by another interviewee, in some instances, a community just needs to take action; if the mobilization process is too long and arduous then it is not going to be owned by the community. While having a community development plan is important, this plan needs to evolve and reflect the interests of the community and what they are interested in and willing to do.

Participants felt that residents must also be able to observe tangible results from the mobilization process so that they believe it is worthwhile. As noted by one interviewee, at the systems level it is important to demonstrate results for these neighbourhoods because there is a lot of capacity for change at the community level.

These communities need a lot of support but then we need to follow through with that in order for a lot of the community members, for the ones that are already involved to stay involved and feel a sense of accomplishment and feel motivated to continue with it and feel that it is worthwhile. But then also for all those other community members that can inspire them to also get involved and feel like it is worthwhile too.

In addition, they believed that residents also need to feel that their participation is valued and supported before they will engage in the process. As explained by one interviewee, encouraging community members to be involved in a meaningful way on an ongoing basis requires a huge commitment on their part and it is important to recognize that dedication.

We need to look at how to recognize the commitment that our community residents are making and how we really value that – we do value it and we need to be able to show it in a way that is meaningful to them.

One suggestion by participants was to provide incentives such as honorariums or to offer residents free transportation, meals, and childcare in exchange for their participation in

community meetings. Another was to offer education and other workshop opportunities that are of value and interest for community members.

Finally, interview participants suggested that a key component to ensuring resident engagement and commitment to the process is to celebrate community successes. They felt it was important that residents take pride in what they do and celebrate the successes they have achieved at the neighbourhood level to increase community safety. It is important to publically recognize all those community members who are doing what they can to address issues of crime and safety.

5.3.3.2 Availability of Safe Meeting Space

The availability of a safe meeting space for community members is a second component essential to encouraging community mobilization discussed by interview participants. As noted by one respondent, from a community development perspective, one of the basic criteria of working with a geographic community is that there is meeting space available where members can connect with each other. It was perceived that having a meeting space within walking distance from where residents live, where they feel a sense of belonging, can play a key role in community organization and mobilization.

You define a neighbourhood and that's a community for you, but how do you proceed to do some meaningful community development work – you can't do it unless you have space. So space is one of the key requirements for community engagement and community development.

Additionally, one participant recommended that more attention needs to be paid to women's involvement in the mobilization process. It was felt that in a lot of these neighbourhoods, women are afraid to go out into the community at night and so safe spaces are needed where they can meet with other community members.

5.3.3.3 Capacity Building for Community Participation

Capacity building is the third main component that interview participants identified as necessary for community mobilization. While neighbourhoods targeted by the CDF were required to demonstrate certain assets including a readiness and interest in engaging in a community development process, participants perceived that there was also an acknowledgement that it would be necessary to build on these strengths through capacity-building activities at the local level. They believed that in order to engage with and commit to their communities, residents would need to develop certain skills and acquire additional knowledge in order to make change happen at the local level.

Respondents suggested that it is important to be realistic about what community members can do and the time they can commit to this mobilization process. In terms of capacity building, they felt it is important to recognize that residents are not necessarily in a position to be able to ‘jump head first’ into the CDF process and to be able to contribute right away. Capacity building is a long process that will require training and other types of resources and support.

People can say ‘oh yeah it’s all about the resident engagement and getting them empowered’ but that is a lot easier said than done. You know, we can’t just go into a community tomorrow and say ‘okay, here we go everyone is going to get involved’ and expect them all to kind of step up to the plate and be ready for that. It’s not that simple and it’s much more complicated than that and more complex because of the particular community we are working in – these are people that face a lot of challenges in their daily lives and so if we’re expecting them to really invest a lot in this, then there needs to be some give and take there.

Participants argued that there needs to be recognition that some community members will be less able than others to mobilize and there needs to be more sensitivity to the limitations of vulnerable groups, including low-income residents, young people, seniors, people with disabilities, and single mothers. As suggested previously, these groups tend to

face so many challenges in their daily lives and are only able to commit a finite amount of time to the process, making engagement difficult. They believed that there is a tendency to expect a lot from these community members because they are the ones facing the challenges that the CDF is trying to address. Overall, interviewees felt that in order for these residents to mobilize to implement neighbourhood action plans, they must be accorded the capacity – knowledge, skills and resources – to do so in a way that will work for them, where they are not feeling burned out and where they are not being asked to do more than members of other communities.

Interview participants also suggested that when it comes to mobilization for the implementation of neighbourhood action plans, community members cannot be expected to do everything on their own, particularly in the case of complex problems and addressing systemic issues. They require support and guidance from the community developers. In particular, they believed that vulnerable groups need defenders and champions to represent their needs, interests and concerns. As noted by one interviewee, until capacity is increased, community leaders are not at a place where they understand community development enough themselves to drive the process and if the community developers were to walk away today the process would fail.

Respondents also raised concern over the ability of community developers to empower the community to mobilize to implement plans to address issues of crime and safety. As some explained, the four neighbourhoods being addressed by the CDF are among several communities in a community developer's catchment area and there is a perception that community developers do not have the time and resources to empower and engage the community leaders in the CDF neighbourhoods. Interviewees believed that to build that kind of capacity, to prepare and plan and nurture, is a difficult and time consuming process. As

one participant acknowledged, it is difficult to imagine how to continue this CDF process in additional neighbourhoods, with current staffing and resources, unless the neighbourhoods can do it all on their own.

5.3.3.4 Ensuring the Availability of Adequate Resources

The last component identified by interview participants, tying into issues of capacity building, is the need for additional financial and human resources to support the mobilization process. There was a clear acknowledgement by respondents that sustainable funding is needed.

There need to be sustainable solutions implemented. We don't need three-month or six-month projects and short-term funding arrangements; we need long lasting solutions which will require the injection of funds into the process.

They believed that there needs to be a focus on funding long-term solutions that address the root causes of crime as opposed to applying short-term solutions that simply serve to displace it.

Further, several participants suggested that systems-level stakeholders need to acknowledge how funding affects how community developers spend their time in the community. They believed that short-term and program-based funding allows CHRCs to hire staff to run a project; however staff members end up spending the majority of their time building relationships and trust with residents and then have to leave when their contracts expire. New staff members are hired for new projects and the process starts all over again. As noted by one interviewee, community development is about building trust and strengthening relationships with community members and this is difficult to achieve without permanent positions and a core group of staff. Respondents suggested that more staff

members are needed at the neighbourhood level since relationship-building with community members is a time-consuming process.

Consider the amount of time that it takes to build a relationship with one community member and then multiply that by the number of residents in a community. It is going to take years: it is not going to happen in months, it's certainly not going to happen in days or weeks.

Participants felt that when there are permanent front-line staff who are engaged in the community development process over the long-term, it becomes easier to encourage participation and involvement from community members in the mobilization process.

5.3.4 Responsibility for Mobilization

When interview participants were asked who they believed was responsible for implementing an action plan to address crime and safety issues, most agreed that it should involve a partnership between community members and community developers. They believed that while residents are ultimately responsible for their own mobilization and their own actions, community developers are responsible for building trust and relationships with community leaders and ensuring that barriers to participation are minimized.

It's both but the community developer, the front-line staff, they're the catalyst – if they don't approach the community members, if they don't encourage them, if they don't show them positive results and show them the difference between before and after, then they won't do anything by themselves. So you need that facilitation role.

As explained by one interviewee, early on in the process there is certainly a place for the community developers to take the lead role in organizing and bringing people together. They are responsible for supporting the residents so that they feel engaged and involved in the mobilization process. And then, over time, as the capacity of community residents increases, their level of participation also increases.

We definitely all have a role in this process and it's sort of understanding when it's your turn to step-up and when it's someone else's responsibility.

From there, respondents believed that a core group of leaders at the neighbourhood level would be needed to rally other members of the neighbourhood. As noted by one participant, it is essential to have community leaders who can encourage and influence other residents to become involved in the mobilization process, and sometimes all it takes is one person.

Several interviewees believed that the most important part of the mobilization process is fostering and supporting local leadership so that community leaders and residents can take responsibility for the implementation of their neighbourhood action plans. One participant explained that the ultimate goal is to have the community become self-sufficient, and in an ideal world, community developers would not be leaders they would be facilitators who bring people together and then step back and fade into the background.

5.4 Final Comments from Interview Participants

At the end of the interview, participants were invited to share any last comments they had in terms of their understanding of the conceptualization of community, the CDF process and how it influenced their work or experiences, and/or issues of crime and safety in the City of Ottawa.

5.4.1 Overall Strengths and Limitations of the CDF

In their final comments, interview participants tended to recognize some of the important successes of the CDF model to date and also several limitations. They particularly recognized the observed benefits of collaboration and coordination, but also acknowledged several criticisms of the model including challenges impeding resident participation, the increased level of accountability for community developers, and the lack of communication and integration of neighbourhood-level and systems-level processes. Respondents also addressed the overall sustainability of the CDF process.

Overall, participants believed that the City of Ottawa truly wants to improve the lives of its residents and that the overarching goal of better neighbourhood integration of municipal services is valuable. Additionally, they felt that the CDF process provides the opportunity for various community stakeholders to come together around the same table and connect with each other, to mutually benefit from each other's knowledge and expertise, and to work together to find solutions to community problems. Several interviewees indicated that a number of community partners have realized the importance of working together, and more residents, agencies and CHRCs want to be part of the process in the future.

The respondents also identified several criticisms. First and foremost, they acknowledged some challenges that impeded resident participation in the CDF process. Several respondents felt that the CDF model (see Chapter IV – Figure 1.0) is presented in a format that is both complicated and confusing and can be perceived by residents as a bureaucratic, top-down approach to community development. Several participants believed that there must be a better way to visually depict the CDF process so that it can easily be explained to community members.

Other interviewees argued that the Neighbourhood Survey also served to discourage resident participation, stating that it was lengthy, complicated and cumbersome to complete. While interview participants did agree that employing a survey was one way to learn about a community's problems, it tended to be promoted as a comprehensive research tool for neighbourhood assessment and viewed as a 'catchall'. As noted by some, the Neighbourhood Survey should have been followed-up with interviews, focus groups and other techniques and tools that delve deeper into community issues and really get at the details specific to a particular neighbourhood. Further, some felt that this Survey was not what community developers really needed.

What we need is something that is a basic needs assessment and a community development tool; a community development instrument that gets people thinking about their community or their neighbourhood, thinking about the challenges they face – it is a jumping off point.

Further, some participants felt that these problems were compounded by an overall lack of consultation with community members and community developers in the development of the model and tools. In particular, one respondent noted that the development of the CDF model should have involved more consultation with community members.

We are developing the CDF without asking the community – and the community can be the community of practitioners, or the community of tenants associations or the community of residents associations. But you can't dictate community development, which unfortunately, at least initially, was sort of the impression.

Several interviewees argued that community developers, who are key to the implementation of the CDF model, were also not consulted from the beginning. Some felt that the community developers were never asked whether they believed that this was an effective approach to community development and what other approaches had been successful in the past. They also believed that it might have been helpful to consult with both groups in the development of the Neighbourhood Survey. As noted by one participant, the general view was that a group of academics generated the survey based on an outcome framework that had already been developed without consultation with the community to identify priorities.

Finally, several interview participants suggested that neighbourhoods and community developers should have been consulted and provided with the choice to participate, or not, in the CDF process. Some perceived that if neighbourhoods had the opportunity to self-select then they would have more ownership, they would be more interested, and they would play a more meaningful role in the process.

Two other main critiques of the CDF model discussed were the increased accountability placed on community developers and the overall lack of communication and integration between systems-level and neighbourhood-level processes. Some respondents believed that in addition to having to take on the CDF approach without being consulted about their views on the model as a whole, community developers became responsible for ensuring transparency and accountability in their community work in order to demonstrate consistency in the neighbourhood-level process. By way of example, one respondent explained that by requiring that all work being done at the neighbourhood level be reported to a Steering Table of service providers and stakeholders, community developers would have to account for all of their activities, actions and results, and justify where and how funds were being spent. Further, as perceived by one interviewee, one of the key concerns of these front-line staff is that community development work is largely intangible, and it is not always possible to objectively evaluate progress.

Some participants also acknowledged that there were concerns from both the systems level and the neighbourhood level that the 'other' level was not properly integrated in their processes. One interviewee explained that at the neighbourhood level there was concern that the systems-level stakeholders, the ones driving the CDF process, are not involved in the neighbourhoods and are not attending community meetings.

What is powerful in community development is when people rub shoulders and people are in the same room. The systems-level people are rarely in the same room with the community-level people.

Another respondent argued that it is important for the systems-level stakeholders to be involved at the neighbourhood level in order for them to become aware of the challenges that cause the overall process to move slowly, and not to see this as a failure.

It's been a year and all that we have done is the surveys and we've had some group discussions and now we are starting to action plan. If we have done this in a way that has engaged some residents in a really meaningful way to be involved in the process, then that is a huge success.

Further, participants agreed that there needs to be a discussion about how success is defined for this process as a whole and an acknowledgment that there may be several definitions of success.

At the same time, some interviewees believed that the neighbourhood level needs to be more open to what is happening at the systems level. There are a lot of challenges and pressures that systems-level stakeholders face as well. At the systems level there is an overall feeling that the service providers and researchers are being kept at arm's length distance from the communities. For example, members of the Knowledge Transfer Table have not been involved in the development of community action plans. They were not able to talk with communities about what priorities they intended to address to ensure that their actions are evidence-based and that they were not rushing to implement short-term programs without looking at longer-term solutions to underlying problems.

There was an overall acknowledgement by interview participants that the CDF is currently working as two distinct processes; the neighbourhood-level and the systems-level process are moving at different speeds depending on the activity/stage of the model under consideration. So for instance, one respondent noted that the community engagement process took more time at the neighbourhood level so the systems-level tables were left waiting around and then the compilation of Neighbourhood Survey results took time at the systems level so then momentum and interest decreased at the community level.

The last concern raised by the interview participants was the overall sustainability of the CDF process. The goal of the CDF is to move from the four current neighbourhoods to

include all geographic communities in the City of Ottawa. Respondents believed that the success of this goal is dependent on capacity, the types of solutions implemented, and the funding to support both. As one participant explained, as more neighbourhoods become involved in the CDF, there will need to be more community developers and CHRCs involved in the process as well as increased engagement, recruitment and training of community leaders. Several respondents agreed that with more neighbourhoods involved, it will become important to identify recurring themes – concerns, challenges, issues and systemic barriers – that exist across the city and to develop evidence-based solutions to address them.

Several interviewees acknowledged that in order to sustain the CDF, funds must be dedicated to the process. As one respondent argued, as the CDF moves from one neighbourhood to another, engagement and capacity need to be maintained in previous neighbourhoods.

When you move on, if you can't keep the area you left going, there will be a negative impact on future CDF neighbourhoods.

Further, participants believed that the success of the future of the CDF will rest on the sustainability of the actions that are implemented at the neighbourhood level. The implementation of these action plans cannot be the sole responsibility of community members and volunteers, additional resources and supports need to be allocated. Some interviewees suggested that the CDF has acknowledged the importance of funding. The City is aware that it must be flexible in order to accommodate different communities at different stages of the process and provide services that better support the community. There was an overall acknowledgement that this will take time; the CDF is only in its infancy and the feeling is that the process will evolve.

5.4.2 The CDF is One Way of Working

Several interview participants acknowledged that the CDF only represents one way of doing community development. They believed that while it is worthwhile to engage in place-based community development because people living in geographic communities may face similar challenges that they can address together, it is also important to be mindful that these community residents are also grappling with systemic issues that cannot necessarily be addressed at the neighbourhood level, such as social determinants of health. Participants also perceived that there was some significant fear among community developers that a risk of the CDF is that the advocacy piece of community development would be ignored – how to change policy; how to make sure that the experiences of residents are being translated to the systems level and that those systems are responsive to community needs.

I can connect with the Community Development Framework and I think that it absolutely makes sense, but I think that we need to look at it as one form of community development that needs to be implemented along with a whole series of initiatives and actions to focus more on systemic change and making sure that we are able to connect the neighbourhood level with the systems level.

Overall, respondents felt that there needs to be more of a consciousness around the broader goals of community and an awareness that this is one approach to community development that needs to be done in complement with other approaches. As an example, one participant suggested that the No Community Left Behind initiative in South-East Ottawa was so successful because it involved complementary approaches to community development.

5.4.3 The Community Development Process

Finally, several interview participants suggested that the realities of the community development process need to be acknowledged in order to fully understand the CDF.

Community development has a high risk of failure, a high risk of things going wrong or in a direction that you haven't anticipated because you have empowered people to do things and they will either do things that you don't like or they will do things really badly.

Respondents' perceptions were that community development is a very 'messy' process and that it is sometimes difficult for systems-level stakeholders, such as funders and policy makers, to accept. By way of example, one participant explained that there is a dichotomy between community developers on the one hand, who see community development as raw and a bit uncontrollable and who have a positive view of human nature but also recognize that people are flawed and they sometimes fail, and the CDF on the other hand, which is more rigid, assumes that people move through life in a series of logical steps, and which does not necessarily allow for the fact that people are human.

Interview participants suggested that what is most needed is a realistic approach that understands that community development is a cyclical process. As explained by one interviewee, in any community development initiative, the community will fluctuate – it can spike and be very organized for a period of time and then it can dip and lose momentum. It is important to recognize that each community has its own unique cycle and that it is still possible to have success within the normal spikes and dips of this process.

VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Conceptualizing Community and the CDF

This paper proposed a social constructionist analysis to examine how the concept of community is operationalized in practice. As social constructionism is focused on what happens ‘on the ground’ (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and is concerned with the processes by which people negotiate outcomes within social interaction, the conceptualization of the community in the context of the Community Development Framework represents an example of just such ‘work’. This case study focused on the early stages of the social constructionism process, especially the challenges of coming to a common agreement about what concepts mean, particularly the definition of community and membership, and how to proceed from there in terms of the development and implementation of action plans to address issues of crime and safety at the local level.

Reflective of a social constructionist approach and supported by responses provided by interview participants, it is clear that the conceptualization of ‘community’ is context-specific and highly dependent on the people, organizations, and agendas involved in the process. However, regardless of whether an understanding of community is based on place, common interest, or common identity, respondents felt that the most important criteria for recognition include a connection and interdependence between individuals, feelings of identification and sense of belonging, and action directed towards achieving community goals. While the CDF conceptual materials promote the importance of identity, belonging, obligation and close interaction in recognizing community, the operationalization of community as a geographically-based form of social organization can in some instances serve to undermine the development of these desired outcomes.

6.1.1 Ascribed versus Achieved Identities

From the perspective of the interview participants, community membership is best characterized as a self-identification process, based on an individual's interest in or connection with a given community. It was suggested that people claim membership in a community where they feel belonged as individuals and they can be part of many intersecting, cross-cutting communities based on identities that they hold simultaneously and that shift over the life course. From this perspective, community identity is something that is achieved, where individuals are responsible for the decision-making process, defining their own sense of community and what resonates most for them.

However, too often responsibility for defining community and membership is seen to be appropriated by the 'political level' (governments and policy makers) and 'service providers' (organizations and funders). In this case, the community is often defined in a way that makes sense to their mandates; outreach tends to be focused and time and energy dedicated based on those criteria. This amounts to ascribing community identity, a process that is apparent in the CDF. In this context, communities were identified and labelled by the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. As discussed in CDF materials, the actual neighbourhood boundaries were drawn based on existing physical barriers, demographic similarities, real-estate maps and research team member knowledge. Based on participants' perceptions, for community members the physical boundaries were sometimes seen as arbitrary boundary lines imposed on them (Crawford, 1995; Suttles, 1972) by the CDF process to fulfill its purposes. Further, underlying this process is an assumption of homogeneity where it is believed that individuals who belong to a geographic neighbourhood or who share similar demographic characteristics (age, socio-economic status, education and/or cultural

background) trust each other and are willing to intervene to protect the well-being of their fellow residents and the community as a whole (Schneider, 2007).

The problem with labelling communities, promoting ascribed identities, and not allowing them to develop naturally, where identity is achieved, is that tension can arise when the label does not connect in with the way that an individual understands their community. These geographic boundaries can create problems when the community covers a large geographic area and encompasses a diverse population; community identity becomes much more difficult to establish in this instance (Brint, 2001). This can undermine the development of collective efficacy: the important bonds, the sense of belonging, and the interest in action directed towards achieving community goals, which is important to successful community mobilization.

The implications of ascribing identity were particularly evident in Bayshore, the largest neighbourhood currently participating in the CDF process. As noted by respondents, Bayshore is culturally diverse, with more than twenty-five Arabic-speaking nations represented in the neighbourhood. With the different political backgrounds and religious affiliations characteristic of these groups, it becomes more difficult to establish the shared values and concerns of the larger geographic community, which are important to generating meaningful engagement. As argued by the interview participants, the effects were clear in the low level of resident participation in the CDF process to date in comparison to other smaller neighbourhoods such as Overbrook-Forbes.

This distinction between achieved and ascribed identities in the conceptualization process may have implications for the implementation of crime prevention programs and activities. One of the criticisms of community crime prevention programs is that they have been seen as unable to foster the social and behavioural preconditions necessary to reach

their ultimate crime control and community safety objectives (Schneider, 2010). As was demonstrated in the case of the CDF, ascribing community identity by imposing geographic boundaries on neighbourhoods can undermine the development of the social interaction, social cohesion and collective efficacy necessary for the successful implementation and sustainability of community crime prevention in practice.

6.1.2 Top-Down versus Bottom-Up Approach to Conceptualization

Despite good intentions to bring systems and community supports together in an organized and focused manner through promises of collaboration, and building from the ground-up to create healthy and safe environments and provide integrated services to communities in need, the CDF engaged in a top-down approach when it came to defining and identifying community and deciding where to focus efforts.

As outlined in the CDF materials, the data from the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study was used as the starting point from which to develop objective, empirical criteria for neighbourhood selection. Considerations included neighbourhood health and socio-economic status, crime rankings, neighbourhood readiness and the self-reported capacity of CHRCs to initiate the approach in their catchment areas. The main concern identified by research participants was that this process was done at the systems level without consultation with and input of CHRCs and community members, undermining the guiding principle of collaboration.

Several interview participants suggested that instead of having researchers and city-planners identify criteria and select communities, the CHRCs should have been able to identify communities based on their own experiences; to use indigenous knowledge to determine what communities needed support. With respect to the area of focus, in three of four neighbourhoods, the CDF chose to focus on smaller sub-communities because the

model required so much outreach and engagement; the City of Ottawa went with what was manageable based on their current resources. According to respondents, this caused tensions at the neighbourhood level in terms of disagreement on where attention should be focused, and perceptions of stigmatization and marginalization in neighbourhoods identified as high-risk, high-needs communities. According to the perceptions of respondents, there was no consultation with residents in terms of where they believed the CDF's attention and energy should be focused, and more importantly whether they actually wanted to participate in this community development process.

This top-down approach to community identification can weaken resident buy-in to the CDF by overlooking the importance of a shared identity and ownership over the process. For residents to participate in the initiative, a sense of local belonging, integration and attachment to the neighbourhood are needed (Miller, 2001; Schneider, 2007). Those who have little attachment to the neighbourhood, as a result of a top-down approach, are less likely to be motivated to participate (Schneider, 2007) in collective solutions to address issues of crime and safety. Further, through consultation with those who would be directly impacted by the implementation of the CDF, allowing residents and CHRCs to voice their needs and concerns, ownership over the conceptualization process could be generated which would serve to promote a vested interest in the community and increase participation (Crawford, 1998).

Additionally, a top-down approach to the operationalization of the community does not necessarily serve the interests of the community, but instead could be seen to serve the interests of systems-level organizations. In identifying the advantages of a place-based approach to community, interview participants suggested that physical space is where things happen; this approach develops resident connection to physical space; and it simplifies the

community engagement and evaluation processes. These advantages are a benefit to the administration of systems-level supports and services and are not necessarily beneficial to the community. The CDF materials state that the community is more than a group established for administrative convenience, but it is sometimes hard to see that this is the case.

The rhetoric of the bottom-up approach employed by the CDF in its conceptual materials emphasizes the collective action aspect of community where the latter is seen as having the right to exercise a greater degree of control over the decision-making process. However, by employing a top-down approach to neighbourhood identification and selection in practice, the systems level has avoided devolving any substantial responsibility to the community in the decision-making process (Crawford, 1998). This reflects the neo-liberal practice of government decentralization where the responsibility for decision making is partially transferred from the state to the citizenry. However, without relinquishing any substantial power or control, the state is essentially using the institution of community to make minor calibrations in protocol appear as fundamental changes (S. Cohen, 1985).

6.1.3 Implications of a Place-Based Approach to Community

Overall, interview participants suggested that the place-based approach used by the CDF is a logical first step in community development, and provides a means to ensure that everyone is included in the process. However, since it is tied to physical space, it creates problems for the inclusion of communities of interest and identity, and influences how CHRCs operate.

While the CDF is promoted as an ongoing, changing and progressive approach to community development and is becoming more flexible in terms of its definition and characterization of the community, a key concern still remains in terms of how to incorporate

communities of interest and identity. While the CDF materials recognize the importance of social communities and work with partner agencies to leverage their potential through complementary capacity-building and civic engagement activities, it is done to nurture and establish a more viable structure for geographical communities. Despite the perception of flexibility and an acknowledgement that people's lives cross boundaries, by using the physical community as a basis for identifying other social communities the Framework is effectively limited by geography. This focus makes it difficult to access and work with communities of interest or identity that are dispersed across the City of Ottawa, or beyond. Also, while the CDF materials suggest that CHRCs are free to develop their own approaches and use community development traditions according to the realities and existing structures in their communities, they are still required to operate in their catchment areas, again limiting their work based on geographical borders.

While the CDF materials suggest that subjective experiences of community members be linked to an analysis of the broader social, economic and political structures that are the causes of local disadvantage, this is not readily apparent in a place-based approach to the development of neighbourhood action plans, and in general interview participants believed that larger systemic issues were not being identified at the neighbourhood level. The prioritization of issues and action-planning are dependent on the situation, events and local conditions of the community. Action plans were largely based on the priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Survey. Place-based needs were commonly identified: housing and needs relating to overall housing maintenance and the quality of common areas, and issues of crime and safety relating to stigmatization of the physical neighbourhood. Relying on a place-based approach in this instance may have served to restrict the issues and concerns identified at the

community level. In terms of overall community development, the CDF is effectively only addressing a part of the whole.

6.2 Crime and Safety and the Role of the Community in the CDF

One of the main goals of the CDF is to improve neighbourhood safety and perceptions of safety. Based on the guiding principle of community participation, the CDF materials suggest that being a community member should not be a passive experience, but should involve some level of active participation, enabling individuals to use their abilities to benefit others and the community as a whole. This is reflective of a main tenet of community crime prevention theory which argues that all residents should become actively involved in interventions aimed at reducing or precluding criminal activity from occurring in their neighbourhoods (Schneider, 2007; 2010).

6.2.1 Active versus Passive Role in Implementing Neighbourhood Action Plans

Despite the ideal of active participation, interview participants offered a polarized discussion of resident roles in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety. Some believed that residents should take a leadership role and be heavily engaged in the process relying on the rhetoric of ‘safety is everyone’s responsibility’. They believed that the more community members feel engaged in the process, the more they feel involved and the more input they will provide. However, using concrete examples of the types of things that residents are doing, others suggested that the main focus should be information sharing and reporting with respect to the implementation of neighbourhood action plans and raising awareness to address perceptions of crime and safety in the neighbourhood.

This amounts to tension between words and actions, how one thing is articulated and yet what is done is something which appears to be radically different (S. Cohen, 1985). This

discrepancy can be attributed to the neo-liberal discourse of community responsabilization in the implementation of crime prevention solutions. Under neo-liberalism, communities are supposedly provided with a greater role to play in preventing crime, where the systems level becomes subordinate in the planning and implementation of interventions. However in practice, the systems level has avoided devolving any substantial responsibilities and powers to the community (Crawford, 1998; Schneider, 2010) and the latter is often left as a passive information resource in the generation of community solutions to address issues of crime and safety that are beyond its control. In this instance, the community is relegated to the role of agent or instrument of delivery by more powerful social institutions.

6.2.2 Participation and the 'Go To' Community Members

The CDF materials suggest that the Framework seeks to incorporate and reflect contemporary approaches to community development that promote high levels of participation by locals in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans. Some interview participants, relying on ideal notions of community participation, suggested that all community members should have an interest in and the opportunity to participate in the process because they are the ones living in the community; they care about their community more than anyone else and they have the biggest stake in making the whole thing work. Others were more realistic, believing that only certain segments of the community would participate in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans – particularly community leaders and those who are already engaged at the community level and who have had positive experiences (individuals that regularly attend community meetings, that talk with service providers and that provide input in terms of what they would like to see happen in the neighbourhood). These groups are often seen as the 'go to' community members.

Interview participants also discussed who they believed to be missing from this process: particularly those facing various obstacles to participation including poverty and cross-cultural differences. As noted by respondents, and discussed in detail by Torjman and Leviten-Reid (2003), including residents who face systemic barriers as full participants in community-based initiatives involves numerous other obstacles. Faced with more immediate personal concerns, these residents may not have the time or energy to engage in a broader community initiative. Even if they do wish to contribute, the hardships and stresses of their lives may make it impossible for them to participate on a consistent basis.

The realities of community participation, as outlined in this case study of the CDF, reflect the established view that community participants in crime prevention programs are often drawn from a narrow group of residents who have a strong attachment to their neighbourhood and who are highly involved in local volunteer groups and activities (Schneider, 2000). These strategies are guided by the dominant interests of a narrow demographic group and may be less relevant to the needs, values or cultural backgrounds of many community members (Skogan, 1989), who in turn will be less likely to participate in the implementation of community crime prevention programs. Several interviewees perceived that residents' participation in the process was dependent on the issues being addressed by the neighbourhood action plans. A failure to address the complex issues of representation and participation at the community level may lead to the prioritization of certain forms of intervention against certain types of crime (Crawford, 1998; Stephens, 2007) in the development of community crime prevention initiatives.

6.2.3 Disconnect between Community Mobilization and Resident Capacity

The fundamental objective behind the CDF processes is to enable residents to articulate their needs and develop their own strategies to have those needs met. The CDF

materials suggest that there is an expectation that residents will contribute to the 'life of the community' by actively participating in some of its activities and helping to maintain its structure. This reflects a conceptualization of the community as 'an agent of delivery' (Hastings & Jamieson, 2002), recruited by the systems level to assist in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety. However, interview participants acknowledged disconnect between the ideals of community mobilization and the actual capacity (knowledge, skills and resources) of residents to effectively implement crime prevention programs at the local level in the CDF process.

One of the main goals of the CDF is to increase neighbourhood capacity to enact positive change; however what is missing is a realistic discussion about what the community is able to accomplish. While it is expected that residents will be provided with the opportunity to develop certain skills and attain additional knowledge in order to make change happen at the local level, it is important to be cognizant about what residents can do and the time they can commit to the process. As discussed, residents who are characterized as facing systemic barriers have multiple challenges in their everyday lives, and the capacity and the time they have available to participate in this process is limited. As noted by interview participants, more sensitivity to the limitations of vulnerable groups, including low-income residents, young people, seniors, people with disabilities and single mothers, is needed. In order for these residents to mobilize and implement neighbourhood action plans, they must be accorded the capacity to do so in a way that will work for them, where they are not feeling burned out and where they are not being asked to do more than members of other communities.

While community members are ultimately responsible for their own mobilization and their own actions, community developers are responsible for building trust and relationships

with community leaders and ensuring that barriers to participation are minimized. What also needs to be taken into account is the capacity of community developers to empower residents to mobilize to implement plans to address issues of crime and safety. In order to build that kind of capacity in individuals, to prepare and plan and nurture, is an ongoing, difficult and time-consuming process, and as suggested by respondents, there are very few resources and supports provided to front-line staff to help improve the situation.

Further, implementation cannot be the sole responsibility of the community; additional resources and supports need to be allocated to the mobilization process. In addition to financial resources for programming – sustainable funding that focus on long-term solutions to issues of crime and disorder – other supports are also needed. In particular, more emphasis on funding to support capacity-building activities is needed. As suggested by interview participants, more permanent staff members are needed at the neighbourhood level to encourage relationship building with community members, a process that is time and resource intensive. Also, providing funds for a safe meeting space for residents is needed, which can play a key role in community organization and mobilization.

These types of activities are not traditionally funded by the systems-level organizations whose resources tend to flow primarily to projects rather than to community infrastructure that supports problem-solving capacity (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). Many funders are more interested in investing in the direct delivery of programs and services than the seemingly less tangible work of community organizing (Traynor, 2002). This may provide insight into why community crime prevention programs sometimes fail; they are not afforded funding for capacity-building activities which are needed to encourage community mobilization.

6.3 The CDF and the Community Development Process

As a comprehensive community initiative, the CDF seeks to change the nature of the relationship between neighbourhood and systems-level processes by providing opportunities for integrated and holistic community development work at the grassroots level, ensuring that change is locally grounded, and also by providing community-oriented systems-level support at the macro level drawing upon external sources of knowledge and resources (Jan, 2009).

6.3.1 Tensions between Neighbourhood-Level and Systems-Level Processes

With the best of intentions, the CDF is progressing toward this goal; however tensions between organic community development at the neighbourhood level and institutional expectations at the systems level have led to criticisms of the process. At the grass-roots level, community development represents a variety of intentional efforts to organize and strengthen social connections and build common values that promote collective goals (Briggs, 2003). As noted by several interview participants, it is a process that is sometimes raw and uncontrollable. It generally has a positive view of human nature but also recognizes that people are flawed and sometimes fail. It is a 'messy' process that is sometimes difficult for systems-level stakeholders to accept. As noted by one respondent, systems-level organizations tend to have a more rigid view of the process based on the assumption that people move through life in a series of logical steps, which does not necessarily allow for the fact that people are human.

Despite an emphasis on the interconnected phases of the CDF process and the importance of a holistic perspective, the model can be perceived as a top-down, bureaucratic approach to community development. While the CDF materials suggests that practitioners and partner organizations are provided with the freedom and opportunity to use any

community development traditions and tools that best fit their particular communities, in practice this flexibility is not evident. By way of example, the Neighbourhood Survey developed at the systems level was promoted as a comprehensive research tool, which according to respondents, was not the most effective method to delve into community issues and really get at the details specific to a particular neighbourhood.

In addition, in order to demonstrate consistency and transparency in the community-level processes, respondents argued that all work done in the neighbourhoods must be reported to a Steering Table of service providers and stakeholders, requiring community developers to itemize all of their activities, actions and results and justify where and how funds are being allocated. A key tension is that most community development work is process-oriented and largely intangible while systems-level organizations, and funders in particular, tend to work from a results-based perspective and have expectations for almost immediate, quantifiable outcomes (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). As discussed by several interview participants, a lack of communication and integration between the neighbourhood level and systems level, where one does not understand the underlying rationale and principles of operation of the other (concerns, challenges, how success is defined) may serve to perpetuate strain in the implementation of the CDF. Both neighbourhood-level and systems-level processes are critical to the success of the CDF; each has something different to offer, and one without the other will not achieve the desired impact. However, as demonstrated by this case study, attempting to balance the two to achieve overall goals is not an easy task.

This insight suggests that the limited success of community crime prevention programs may not only be related to assumptions made in relation to the conceptualization of community, but might also be reflective of the tensions apparent in the dual processes of

comprehensive community initiatives to address issues of crime and safety. From a crime prevention perspective, the goal is to turn a neighbourhood into a healthy, well-functioning community, complete with strong informal social control. In addition to seeking improvement in the lives of individuals and in neighbourhoods to take on this role, it is important to also place value upon the process of change and, in particular, on ensuring that capacity building occurs at the same time as program activities (Aspen Institute, 1997).

6.3.2 The Limits of 'Community'

Another inherent tension in the CDF is the focus on bringing community and systems supports together to improve the well-being of individual residents and their neighbourhoods, while many of the determinants of well-being (poverty, unemployment, social exclusion) are beyond the control of neighbourhoods and municipal services. Both community practitioners and policy-makers can fall prey to thinking that a mobilized community can tackle the problems it faces entirely on its own. While communities have tools at their disposal for countering serious challenges, there are also structural dimensions to these problems that communities cannot resolve (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). In particular, the multi-faceted nature of crime, both in its causes and effects, suggests that crime prevention and community safety cannot be left exclusively to the competency and responsibility of the local community (Schneider, 2007).

This acknowledgement of the limits of 'community' is reflective of an understanding of the macro dimensions of crime causation explanations. However, much of the community crime prevention literature (Hope, 1995), the theoretical explanations for the prominent role of the community presented in the literature review (see Chapter II), and the responses from CDF stakeholders have concentrated on the micro dimensions. The focus tends to be on community responsabilization and mobilization; what is needed in order to organize a

community to engage in action plans to address local crime and safety issues. More emphasis is needed on the macro dimensions; the relationships that connect local communities to sources of power and resources in the wider civil society of which they are acknowledged to be a part (Hope, 1995). A better understanding of the macro dimensions and how they interact with and impact on the micro dimensions (Hope, 1995) would be helpful in the development of effective community-based crime prevention solutions (Crawford, 1998).

The multiple and interrelated problems of communities require multiple and interrelated solutions (Schorr, 1997). Beyond collaboration and coordination between communities and the institutions that serve them, additional agencies with different areas of expertise should be brought in to consider the links between determinants of community well-being and crime, and to ‘plan accordingly’. Notably federal and provincial/territorial governments and the private sector need to understand the strengths and limitations of the local process, and take appropriate measures to complement these processes (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). For meaningful change to occur, all collaborators must understand this and work towards a ‘system reform’ (Pitcoff, 1997) focusing on a holistic approach to crime prevention.

6.4 Conclusion

6.4.1 The Multiple Meanings of Community

This case study of the Community Development Framework confirms the ‘messy’ actualities hypothesis of community-based crime prevention in practice. Based on the responses and perceptions of key CDF stakeholders, the reality of community is a great deal more complicated than the abstract and idealized version promoted by theorists and policy makers and emphasized at the conceptual level in CDF materials. Comprehensive community initiatives, such as the CDF underway in the City of Ottawa, reflect the changing

role of government and the place that communities have in promoting economic and social well-being (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003) through the development of action plans to address issues of crime and safety.

Interviews with key CDF stakeholders confirm that there is no single 'vision' to the notion of community. Based on the different forms of community presented, an understanding of the changing nature of identity over the life course and simultaneously, and the different perspectives from which individuals perceive community personally and consider it generally, it is almost impossible to have a fixed definition of community and several interpretations of the term will always be necessary. This understanding reflects the social constructionist approach which suggests that once community is understood to be 'essentially contested', or as the focus of struggle rather than simple uniformity, then attention can be turned to the ways in which it is defined and used by individuals themselves (Day, 2006).

In practice, it is best not to take a top-down approach to conceptualization where community is defined by systems-level organizations, but to let it be defined on the ground by the groups involved in a particular initiative, based on what the term means in their context. However, the reality is that in world characterized by systemic barriers to community participation, where service providers and funders must provide resources and supports where they are most needed, a common understanding of community at the systems level and neighbourhood level is needed to move forward. In this case, the definition and identification of community should be conducted in partnership through negotiations with key stakeholders, and most importantly should be accomplished with the input of community members.

6.4.2 Implications for Community Crime Prevention

Overall, this research study demonstrates that when we are investigating the community as a focal point for intervention in issues relating to crime control and community safety, we should recognize that the notion of community has multiple meanings and acknowledge that this is to be expected and most importantly included in our understandings. This is a reflection of the social construction of the concept of community, where there are multiple levels and possibilities for operationalization and rather than searching for concrete definitions, community must be continually interrogated at every step in the development and implementation of community crime prevention interventions (Day, 2006). Further, the way in which the community is conceptualized in practice can have an impact on its capacity to mobilize to implement action plans to address issues of crime and safety. These insights should help to inform the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and initiatives in the local context in the future.

In the past, much of crime prevention practice was underscored by the ‘implant hypothesis’, whereby pre-packaged programs were implanted into local social environments with little sensitivity to the specific local context in the implementation process (Rosenbaum, 1988; Waller, 2006). In response to the fall-out of this practice – an overall failure of transported initiatives – recent scholarship in the field and current practice in Canada has focused on the belief that crime prevention solutions should not be imposed, but rather that they should emerge out of the environment within which they will have to survive (Crawford, 1998). In response, an increasing emphasis has been placed on strategic planning processes at the local level where crime analyses are conducted, identifying community strengths and limitations, and priorities are established before community crime prevention solutions are implemented (Hastings, 2009). Based on observations of the limited success of

community crime prevention programs as of late, this research project suggests that emphasis should not only be placed on determining the crime problem and the capacity to mobilize to implement a solution, but also on understanding the underlying nature of the community where efforts are focused.

6.5 Recommendations for the CDF

As acknowledged by interview participants, the Community Development Framework is an ongoing, changing and progressive approach to community development; however it is still in its infancy and over time its processes will evolve. Based on the views and opinions expressed by the small number of CDF stakeholders interviewed for this case study, and informed by research on successful community crime prevention programs and effective community development practices, several recommendations can be made to help inform the future development of the CDF processes as it relates to overall goal achievement.

The first goal of the CDF is to increase neighbourhood capacity to enact positive change. In order to do so, first and foremost, resident buy-in to the CDF approach is needed. Currently, the top-down approach to community identification and selection employed can serve to weaken resident buy-in by overlooking the importance of a shared identity and ownership over the process. In the future, it would be best to define additional neighbourhoods at the grass-roots level through a self-identification process in order to promote social interaction, social cohesion and collective efficacy among residents. Further, the CDF should strive to incorporate communities of interest and identity, which may cross geographic boundaries, into the process. When an individual feels that they are a meaningful part of a larger collectivity, with which they share common interest and attachment, they are more likely to become involved and engaged in capacity-building activities to enact positive change.

The second goal is to improve planning and service delivery to achieve neighbourhood defined goals by increasing coordination and collaboration between all stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal, more collaboration and coordination between the systems level and the neighbourhood level is needed, particularly as it relates to meaningful consultation with those residents who are directly impacted by the CDF process. More emphasis needs to be placed on listening to the community – allowing both residents and the CHRCs that serve them to voice their needs and concerns – through multiple consultative mechanisms (focus groups, working committees, workshops and outreach campaigns). It is also important that the CDF work with existing communities where possible, as their structure, credibility and knowledge of the community is invaluable. Finally, the CDF should make a concerted effort to reach out to minority communities and other hard to reach populations (youth, older adults, new immigrants, single mothers) whose voices tend to be missing from this process.

The third goal identified by the CDF is to improve the health of individual residents and their neighbourhoods. It is important to note that this goal is beyond the scope of neighbourhood action plans. Many of the determinants of health and neighbourhood well-being are beyond the control of communities and municipal services. In order to achieve this goal, the CDF needs to identify the multiple and interrelated problems of neighbourhoods across the City of Ottawa and then engage other collaborators (federal government, provincial/territorial governments, private sector agencies) in order to help address these systemic issues through comprehensive solutions.

The fourth goal is to increase neighbourhood safety and perceptions of safety. In order to achieve this goal, the disconnect between community mobilization and resident capacity needs to be acknowledged and addressed. There must be a realistic discussion at the

systems level about what the community is able to accomplish on its own. It is important to be particularly cognizant of the time that residents can commit to the process; necessitating an acknowledgement of systemic barriers restricting participation and sensitivity to the limitations of vulnerable groups. The CDF should allocate additional resources and supports to the mobilization process.

Further, in order to increase neighbourhood safety, the direct causes of crime and victimization need to be addressed, and identifying the systemic issues that affect crime in a particular neighbourhood should be a priority of the CDF. Additionally, more sustainable funding from the Resource Table that focuses on long-term solutions to crime and disorder is needed.

The last overall goal of the CDF is to promote sustainability of positive change at the neighbourhood and systems levels. As it currently stands, the perception is that if the CDF were to move beyond the current neighbourhoods, progress would slow and the overall process would collapse. There needs to be a shift at the systems level from funding the direct delivery of programs to funding the development of community infrastructure that supports the growth of problem-solving capacity. Most importantly, resources need to be allocated to hiring more permanent staff members to support the neighbourhood level processes and resources are needed for resident capacity-building activities and exercises.

Finally in moving forward with the CDF, the perceived tensions between organic community development practices at the neighbourhood level and institutional expectations at the systems level need to be acknowledged. A continued lack of communication and integration between these two levels may serve to perpetuate strain in the implementation of the CDF if these issues are not properly addressed. Both these processes are critical to the overall success of the CDF and more emphasis on finding ways to effectively balance them

is needed so that they may work together in an organized and focused manner to provide accessible, integrated and holistic services to communities in need.

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Because this study only examined the Community Development Framework, a comprehensive community initiative unique to the City of Ottawa, there are limits on the extent that the findings on the conceptualization of community can be generalized. In future studies, it would be important to directly incorporate the perspectives of various other stakeholders involved in the conceptualization process, including policy makers, community members and hard to reach populations, such as resisters and out-groups, which was not possible in the current project.

While not the focus of the current study, which relied on the review of conceptual documents and perceptions of key stakeholders on certain issues, it would be beneficial to conduct a process and outcome evaluation on the CDF to determine the extent to which it is being implemented according to its conceptual framework and whether it is in fact achieving its goals. The purpose of the program evaluation would be to examine the extent to which a place-based conceptualization of community influences the implementation and impact of the CDF, and to identify the main challenges and successes of the initiative to date. This would be an important contribution to understanding the governance and workings of comprehensive community initiatives on the ground, as comprehensive evaluation is often lacking from these projects (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). Findings from the evaluation would make an important contribution to practice in comprehensive community initiatives.

In future research, it would also be beneficial to conduct additional comparative case studies on other comprehensive community initiatives to examine similarities and differences in local problem-solving processes and examine success in engaging and sustaining

community participation – for example examining other Ottawa-based comprehensive community initiatives such as Together for Vanier and additional iterations of the No Community Left Behind project on which the CDF principles are based. Through a comparison of multiple case studies, it would then be possible to identify any commonalities in the conceptualization process that could assist in the development of community crime prevention strategies and initiatives in the local context in the future.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview will be semi-structured. While I will ask several key questions to introduce themes, I am most interested in hearing about your thoughts, views and overall understanding of the concept of ‘community’ and how this conceptualization relates to associated concepts and issues.

Section 1: The Concept of Community

1. In very general terms: what does the concept of ‘community’ mean to you?
(How do you define and understand community?)
 - a. What are some of the criteria that you would use in order to recognize ‘community’?
2. When you consider your definition of community, who is included as a member of this community? (Who is always present in the discussion of community? / Who would you like to reach out to?)
 - a. Do you feel that there are particular membership criteria that must be met in order for someone to be considered as a part of the community?
 - i. IF YES, what are some of the criteria necessary for membership?
 - b. Do you believe that it is possible to be a member of more than one community?
 - i. IF YES, how so (provide examples)?
3. Who do you believe IS responsible for determining the definition of ‘community’ and subsequently designating communities and their membership?
4. Who do you believe SHOULD BE responsible for determining the definition of ‘community’ and subsequently designating communities and their membership?
5. Do you believe that a consensus is necessary or can there be several interpretations of the definition of community and its designation?

Section 2: The CDF and the Concept of Community

The Community Development Framework (CDF) is a neighbourhood-based problem-solving, capacity-building effort in the City of Ottawa (It uses a place-based approach to the understanding of community).

The Ottawa Neighbourhood Study divided the city of Ottawa into 89 neighbourhoods based on their demographic profiles and an assessment of social determinants of health and neighbourhood well being. The communities were selected for inclusion in the CDF based

on indicators of socio-economic status as well as health and school readiness. Other considerations included crime data, demography, neighbourhood readiness and the capacity of local Community Health and Resource Centres to undertake community development.

6. How (and where) do you see your notion of ‘community’ fitting / not fitting within the Community Development Framework (CDF)? (Is there a discrepancy between your notion of “community” and what it means for the CDF?)
 - a. Based on the way that the CDF is approaching the concept of community, do you feel that all voices being heard / are any voices missing from the discussion?
 - b. Do you believe that there might be a better way to identify and categorize the ‘community’?
 - i. IF YES how would you approach it / how would you categorize the community?

7. Do you believe that there are criticisms or complaints that accompany this conceptualization of the ‘community’?
 - a. IF YES, why do you think that this is the case?
 - b. IF YES, who do you believe is initiating these criticisms or complaints? (What individuals/groups? At what level of the CDF Process?)

The CDF process starts at the neighbourhood level where residents, together with community partners, identify the strengths and gaps in their neighbourhoods and create action plans to address those gaps. Community Health and Resource Centres then connect what is occurring in the neighbourhood to the systems level where municipal, resource and knowledge transfer supports are available. These three tables operate collaboratively to build a system of supports for the grassroots neighbourhood initiatives.

8. How do you believe the CDF’s place-based approach to the conceptualization of ‘community’ might influence the needs and/or issues that are identified at the neighbourhood level and the neighbourhood action plans that are chosen to address these concerns?
 - a. Do you believe that there are criticisms or complaints about this process that might affect how the selected neighbourhood action plans are implemented?

Section 3: Crime and Safety and the Community

One of the goals of the Community Development Framework is to improve neighbourhood safety and perceptions of safety in an inclusive manner.

9. What role do you see the community (as defined by the CDF) playing in the implementation of neighbourhood action plans to address issues of crime and safety?

- a. Who do you see participating in this process / who is missing from this process?
- b. What is necessary in order to organize a community to implement an action plan to address crime and safety issues?
- c. Who do you feel is responsible for mobilizing the community to act? (Is it a member of the community or an individual external to the community?)

Section 4: Final Comments from Interview Participants

10. From your perspective, how do you feel the conceptualization of the community and of community membership used by the CDF fared in relation to your work and/or experiences?
 - a. If you could go back through the Community Development Framework process and do something differently, what would you change?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to share with respect to your understanding of community, the Community Development Framework or crime and safety in the City of Ottawa?

APPENDIX B
ETHICAL CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Crime Prevention in Practice – Operationalizing the Concept of Community

Dr. Ross Hastings
Laura Dunbar
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Laura Dunbar and Dr. Ross Hastings. I understand that this research project is part of the research requirements of a MA thesis in Criminology at the University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: This research study explores how the idea of community is conceptualized in practice, and also how it relates to community-based crime prevention strategies and initiatives at the local level. Specifically, this study will examine the City of Ottawa's Community Development Framework (CDF) in order to study how the community is discussed in policy and program documents and how it is viewed and treated by practitioners.

Participation: My role in this project will consist of participating in one interview, lasting no more than one hour, during which I will be asked to reflect on my perceptions and understandings of the community and its role in the Community Development Framework process. The interviews will be scheduled at a location and time convenient to participants between November 1st, 2009 and January 31st, 2010. I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded.

Benefits: My participation in this study will contribute to increasing knowledge concerning the operationalization of the concept of community and to encourage a greater appreciation of communities and their particular capabilities. In relation to the CDF, this knowledge will help to improve planning and service delivery in order to achieve neighbourhood-defined goals. More generally, it will help to inform the identification, development and implementation of community-based crime prevention strategies and initiatives in the future.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share in this interview will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the content of my interview will only be used for the purposes of completing a Master's thesis in Criminology and related publishing, and that my confidentiality will be protected.

I understand that the institution/organization to which I belong (if applicable) will appear in a list of participating Community Development Framework partners. This list will appear in an appendix to this research study in order to demonstrate the scope/representativeness of the sample of Community Development Framework stakeholders and to add to the legitimacy of the findings. However, my name will be omitted from this list and in this way my anonymity will be protected. In addition, my anonymity will be protected in the actual study, as all information gathered from the interviews will be consolidated and not attributed to the individual contributors.

Conservation of Data: The data collected from this interview (tape recording and written notes) will be kept in a locked cabinet in the supervisor's office. All data will be conserved in this manner for a period of five years after the publication of this research study. At the end of this storage period, the audio recordings will be deleted and the written notes will be shredded.

Voluntary Participation: I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this research study and if I do choose to participate, I can withdraw at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw from this research study, all data collected up to the time of withdrawal will be destroyed and not considered in the final research project.

Acceptance:

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Laura Dunbar of the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Ross Hastings.

If I have any questions about this research study, I may contact the researcher by e-mail at _____ or her supervisor by e-mail at _____.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this research study, I may contact:

Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, Research Grants and Ethics Services, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, Room 159, 550 Cumberland Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of this consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS¹⁰**Neighbourhood Level Planning**Local / CHRCs Level Steering Tables

- Carlington Community Health Centre, Community Developer
- Ottawa Police Service, Community Police Officer
- Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre, Community Developer
- Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre, Health Promoter
- Somerset West Community Health Centre, Community Developer

Community Action PlanningCommunity Table

- City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
- South East Ottawa Community Health Centre

System Action PlanningMunicipal Services Table

- City of Ottawa, Organizational Development and Performance Department

Resource Table

- Crime Prevention Ottawa

Knowledge Transfer Table

- University of Ottawa, Professor

Community Development Roundtable

- Ottawa Community Housing

¹⁰ The views, opinions and comments expressed in this research study are those of the individual interview participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the institution/organization to which they belong.