

Agents of Change: A Case Study of Community Policing in La Antigua Guatemala



Judith Schols

University of Utrecht

22-8-2011

Agents of Change:

A Case Study of Community Policing in La
Antigua Guatemala

A thesis submitted to the University of Utrecht in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in the Department of Anthropology.

22-08-2011

Judith Schols

3425685

Email: j.schols@students.uu.nl

Supervisor: Marie-Louise Glebbek

Preface

This research has been a very valuable experience to me, for which I am indebted to many people. I am very grateful to all of the Plan Cuadrante policemen, to the citizens of Antigua Guatemala and all the other people I have interviewed or spoken to during the course of my research, without whom this thesis would not have been possible. I would especially like to thank *oficial* Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering, who has supported me since the very start of my research, and *comisario general* Gustavo Aldolfo Oliva Blanco, who has been very helpful and supportive since his reappointment as a consultant for Plan Cuadrante during the last month of my research. I would like to thank my supervisor, Marie-Louise Glebbeek, for her guidance, comments and ideas, and articles and books that she has suggested. Above all I want to thank her, as well as Manon Derks, for facilitating access to the Guatemalan police. Finally, I am very grateful to my family and friends for their support and encouragement during the process of preparation, research and writing, especially my parents Anke Jorritsma and Tijne Schols and my friend Michèle Josemans.

Abstract

As crime and violence in Latin America are rising, insecurity is one of the major concerns of citizens. The authorities responsible for law enforcement are ineffective in dealing with the situation. In Guatemala, perceptions of insecurity are even worse than during the 36-year brutal civil war. In an attempt to improve the alarming security situation and poor police-community relations, the Guatemalan authorities have turned to community policing models. This thesis examines Plan Cuadrante, a community policing strategy from Chile that has been implemented in Guatemala in 2008. Using an anthropological approach, it focuses on the functioning of Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala. It addresses the effect of the strategy on perceptions of citizen security. It then focuses on the influence on the police-community relationship. The findings of this thesis include that despite minor steps ahead there are many obstacles to implementation of Plan Cuadrante in Antigua. Obstacles include a violent history and negative reputation of the PNC, poor communication between police and citizens, a lack of civil society and institutional commitment, misapplication of already existing scant police resources, a neglect and absence of expertise to fully employ community policing principles, and unequal involvement of citizens.

Keywords

◆ Community Policing ◆ Police-Community Relations ◆ Citizen Security ◆ Latin-America
◆Guatemala

Table of Content

Table of Content.....	4
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Theorizing community policing	8
2.1. Civil Society and Citizen Security.....	8
2.2. Citizen security and the role of the police.....	9
2.3. Police – Community relations.....	10
2.4. Community Policing	11
2.5. Citizen Security in Latin America.....	13
2.6. Citizen Security and Community Policing in Latin America	14
2.7. Citizen Security and police-community relations in post-civil war countries ...	15
3. Policing in context: Guatemala	17
3.1. Police reform and policing in post-civil-war Guatemala.....	17
3.2. Police – community relations in Guatemala	18
3.3. Community policing in Guatemala.....	19
3.4. Plan Cuadrante and police – community relations in Antigua Guatemala.....	20
4. Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala	22
4.1. Origin and organization of Plan Cuadrante	22
4.3. Tasks of Plan Cuadrante police	25
4.4. Styles of patrol	27
4.5. Police education and training.....	30
4.6. Community involvement in Plan Cuadrante	31
4.7. Evaluation and monitoring.....	33
5. The influence of Plan Cuadrante on perceptions of citizen security	35
5.1. Police perception of Plan Cuadrante.....	35
5.2. Citizen’s perception of Plan Cuadrante	38
5.3. Police perception of citizen security	39
5.4. Citizen’s perception on citizen security	41
5.5. Social exclusion in providing citizen security.....	45
5.6. Media influence on perception of citizen security	47
6. The influence of Plan Cuadrante on the relationship between the police and citizens.....	49
6.1. Perceptions of the police-community relation.....	49
6.2. Cooperation and involving the citizen.....	50
6.3. Citizen participation.....	52
6.4. Police image	54
6.5. Communication and interactions between police and citizens	56

6.6. Levels of trust and distrust between the police and citizens.....	58
6.7. Influence of media writings on the police-community relationship.....	60
References	64
Appendix I – Map of Plan Cuadrante in La Antigua Guatemala.....	69

1. Introduction

During the Guatemalan civil war citizens lived in immense fear. The police had a reputation of being violent, repressive and corrupt, and instead of trusting in the police, citizens feared them. After 36 years of brutal violence, the peace accords were signed in 1996. Despite the fact that the civil war is over, insecurity is still a major concern of Guatemalan citizens. In fact, perceptions of insecurity are even worse than during the war (Glebbeek 2010:64) because of the alarming situation of rising crime and violence in the country. Law enforcement authorities are ineffective in dealing with the situation, and are even believed to be among the active protagonists (Koonings and Kruijt 2007:3). Just like in other Central American countries police reform was initiated in Guatemala after the civil war, but despite minor steps ahead, reform of the *Policía Nacional Civil* (National Civil Police) has not been successful. The Guatemalan police force seems to be too fragile to handle the situation because of deeply rooted causes such as corruption. The police-community relation has not improved significantly nor has the reputation and efficiency of the police.

In order to address the rising rates of crime, violence and insecurity the Guatemalan government has, like other Latin American governments, increasingly turned to Western models of policing such as community policing. This problem-oriented strategy of policing is based on the notion that community interaction and support can help control public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. A community policing pilot study was implemented in a deprived Guatemala City neighbourhood in 1998 - though unsuccessfully - and in 2008 a new community policing strategy from Chile called 'Plan Cuadrante' was implemented in Guatemala City, Antigua Guatemala and Quetzaltenango. The goal of this preventive policing strategy is to work more effectively and efficiently as a police force, and to improve police-community relations and the perception of safety and security.

In this thesis I will focus on how Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala works. I will focus on the police and citizens' perception of Plan Cuadrante and the effect it has on perceptions of insecurity. Furthermore I will focus on the influence Plan Cuadrante has on the relationships between the police and the community. The findings of my research draw upon the theory of community policing. Although a considerable amount of research on community policing exists, there are very few case studies that focus on this style of policing in post-conflict setting. Therefore, a case study of community policing in transitional democracies and developing countries such as Guatemala is especially interesting.

The research question I will address in my thesis is:

How can Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala be described and evaluated in relation to police-community relationships and perceptions of citizen security?

To address this question, I have carried out anthropological research in Antigua Guatemala for a period of 16 weeks from 7 February 2011 till 29 May 2011. Antigua Guatemala is a medium-sized metropolitan area of 50,000 residents that thrives on tourism (USAID 2009:6). The city has the largest number of police officers per capita of Guatemala. During the research period I have gathered data among the Plan Cuadrante police and the citizens of Antigua. I have used the following qualitative research methods: participant observation, informal conversations, interviews, questionnaires and secondary data analysis. I have interviewed 18 Plan Cuadrante policemen and 17 citizens, and held informal conversations with many more. Furthermore I have also held interviews with the regular PNC and many informal conversations with people otherwise involved in security issues, such as the mayor of Antigua and people of the Guatemalan Tourism Board (INGUAT). Additionally, I have conducted a case study within Antigua. I have carried out a survey in one the Plan Cuadrante sectors, interviewed members of the committee for safety and cleanliness of this neighborhood and been present at their meeting with the Plan Cuadrante police, and talked to citizens, business owners and employees in this neighborhood.

In this thesis I will start by discussing the theoretical concepts that are relevant for my research - *Citizen Security*, *Police-Community Relations*, and *Community Policing* - in the second chapter. I will explain the need for citizen security in civil society and the role of the police in citizen security, and address community policing as a strategy in which the police-community relationship is of major importance. Then, in the third chapter, I will focus on the specific context of Guatemala. I will discuss policing in post-conflict setting, police reform and police-community relations in Guatemala, and review community policing in Guatemala and Antigua. The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters are the empirical chapters of this thesis that provide the reader with an analysis of the relevant research findings. Consecutively the chapters focus on Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala, the influence of Plan Cuadrante on perceptions of citizen security, and the influence of Plan Cuadrante on the police-community relation. Finally, in chapter seven, the conclusion over all chapters can be found.

It goes without saying that compiling useful data on community policing is an on-going process and is never fully completed. With this case study on community policing in Antigua Guatemala I hope to contribute to improvement of policing practice and the quality of life in developing countries such as Guatemala that face inescapable challenges with regard to citizen security.

2. Theorizing community policing

In this theoretical framework I will discuss the concepts that are relevant for my research. The three major concepts are *Citizen Security*, *Police-Community Relations*, and *Community Policing*. I will explain the need for citizen security in civil society and the role of the police in citizen security. I will show that in contemporary society large numbers of people increasingly experience with feelings of insecurity and that the need for citizen security in civil society calls for the police as reproducers of order. However, their relationship with citizens is often complex. I will discuss the police-community relation and consequently turn to community policing as a strategy in which this relationship is of major importance. I will then turn to citizen security and community policing in Latin America, followed by a discussion of the police-community relation in post-conflict setting. Understanding these concepts is necessary to get a better understanding of the research findings in the specific context of my research.

2.1. Civil Society and Citizen Security

The term *security* is derived from the Latin word *securitas*, from *securus* (secure), meaning 'free from care'. Analogous, various studies on security as a concept have characterized the basic intuitive notion underlying most uses of the term security as 'the absence of threats to acquired values' (Baldwin 1997: 13). Even though different forms of security are not fundamentally different concepts (Baldwin 1997:19), Western studies on security predominantly refer to *national security*. They argue that state security and the security of its citizens is intertwined, but this might not entirely be the case in Latin America. Paradoxically, the state might even be a threat to the security of its citizens as we shall see further on in this theoretical framework. For the purpose of this research I am concerned with *citizen security*.

Koonings and Kruijt (2007) suggest that *citizen security* should be seen in the light of *human security* as 'the freedom of individuals and communities from threats posed by conflict and violence to their physical, social or cultural integrity or survival' (Koonings and Kruijt 2007:13). Citizen security narrows down this notion by saying that freedom from violence should be seen as part of the citizenship status of individuals and communities (Koonings and Kruijt 2007:13). Duce and Pérez Perdomo (in Frühling *et. al* 2003:79) state that citizen security is not only determined by the number of incidents of violent crime, but also by the manner in which crime is experienced. Non-criminal factors or perceptions of insecurity thus need to be included as well (Cools *et. al.* 2010). Therefore, perception of insecurity is about the way people understand, interpret and value security. This perception of insecurity is constructed by the media and society itself.

As 'reproducers of order' (Ericson in Newburn 2005), the police play an important role in citizen security. According to Silver (in Newburn 2005) the situation of pervasive insecurity

in nineteenth century England can be seen as an explanation for the fact that the police were called into existence. Bittner (1990:102) also states that 'the police (...) is a creature of English society in the (...) nineteenth century'. The army, designed to protect the country from external threats, could not handle the problems of riots and the 'dangerous classes' (Silver in Newburn 2005) – the lower class in society as seen by the elite population - in civilian society. Therefore the police were called into existence as an internal force. The police were first seen as a threat to civil liberties, but eventually accepted. Although with slight modifications, the 'police idea' was then adopted everywhere.

2.2. Citizen security and the role of the police

The police are the civil force of the state, and are responsible for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of criminals, and the maintenance of public order. They have a legal monopoly of violence (Manning in Newburn 2005:192). Criminal law enforcement is generally recognized as 'the core of the police mandate and the principal justification for the exercise of the police establishment' (Bittner 1990:20). The general assumption that real police work is fighting crime is fuelled by the police themselves, the media, some academics, and other reproducers of order (Ericson in Newburn 2005:217). In practice however, only a small part of police work consists of crime fighting. Therefore, some scholars primarily refer to the police as *peace-keepers* - that is, order-maintenance – as opposed to the police as *law enforcers* (Manning 1978:199). According to Bittner (1990:23), the main task of policemen is indeed peacekeeping, and even though they have the legal monopoly of violence, the quest for peace is ideally pursued by pacific means (Bittner 1990:120).

The police have an impossible task, because the police mandate, as well as their image, is largely defined by their public. First, expectations of the public about the police as criminal law enforcers cannot be confirmed as the police can never fully resolve crime. Second, the police are expected to ensure both public order and individual rights (Manning in Newburn 2005). Because of these mutually contradictory ends their mandate entails, the police rely heavily on the public's confidence. As such, 'the symbolism of the police officer as a crime fighter' (Bittner 1990:21) serves to show the public that they are 'doing their job'.

The police use strategies and tactics as a means to manage their appearance before the public and in controlling the behavior of their audience (Manning in Newburn 2005:193). These are complex because the audience of the police is very diverse (Manning in Newburn 2005:193). Strategies are for example the use of technology, official statistics, and various styles of patrol to mobilize and integrate the public, and secrecy and collaboration to maintain political neutrality and as protection against public complaints (Manning in Newburn 2005:205-208). More specifically, the police employ crime-fighting strategies such as 'zero

tolerance', and at the other extreme community-based policing strategies (Dammert & Malone 2008:27)

2.3. Police – Community relations

The modern police largely rely on the micro-level of everyday transactions with citizens (Ericson in Newburn 2005:215). For the public, the police are 'the most accessible organ of government and the most conspicuous presence of the state's power for both good and bad' (Bittner 1990:19). For the police, the public is seen as 'the enemy' (Manning in Newburn 2005:208). Therefore, relationships between the police and citizens are often characterized by mutual distrust.

Public trust and confidence are of vital importance to policing policy and practice (Jackson and Bradford 2010), because it makes police work easier and more effective (Skogan 2006:118). Trust and confidence in the police can encourage active citizen participation and involvement in policing, make public bodies more locally accountable and responsive, and secure public cooperation with the police and compliance with the law (Jackson and Bradford 2010:241). A trustworthy police are seen by the public 'to be effective, to be fair, and to have shared values and strong commitment to the local community' (Jackson and Bradford 2010:245). Ericson (in Newburn 2005) notes that in reality the police and citizens might hold different perceptions of what constitutes serious crimes and offenses. Additionally, people expect the police to 'do something' about the problems in a neighborhood, but there are many cases in which the police are helpless and citizens will believe that the police 'do nothing' (Wilson and Kelling in Newburn 2005). This creates hostility between the police and the public (Ericson in Newburn 2005:200), and fosters an 'us against them' situation (Jackson and Bradford 2010:246).

The 'us against them' situation is further complicated by a lack of communication between the police and the public. Schneider (1999:348) states that communication is an integral component of policing. However, most patrol officers' time is spent without direct contact with the public (Ericson in Newburn 2005:217). The encounters citizens do have, often leave an unfavorable image of the police (Bittner 1990:23). A study by Skogan (2006:99;100) shows that 'the impact of having a bad experience is four to fourteen times as great as that of having a positive experience'. The impact of encounters is thus strongly asymmetrical (Skogan 2006:112). In many instances, this is because of the aggressive approach, especially in encounters with the lower classes in society. When the citizens complain or express resentment, they are often ignored and merely provoke further abuse (Bittner 1990:28). As such, the protection of individual rights is often at stake (Manning in Newburn 2005:200). Bittner (1990:26) notes that police officers immediately seek to establish a superior position possible in their encounters with citizens. If, in the eyes of the public, the

police are seen as unable or unwilling to assume an equal role in the partnership, they feel betrayed by the police (Souryal in Bourdeaux and Cumps 2002: 148). This creates asymmetrical power relations between the two. Asymmetrical power relations in turn could create a one-way dialogue between police and community, further affecting mutual distrust. According to Wilson and Kelling (in Newburn 2005:465) power relations between the police and citizens are altered by motorized-patrol. Police on foot are more easily approached by citizens, while a car serves as a barrier between the police and the citizen and thus excludes the latter. The official rules police deal with can also place them in a position of power *vice-à-vis* the population. A policing strategy in which the relationship between the police and the community is of vital importance is community policing.

2.4. Community Policing

Community policing can be defined as 'a collaborative effort between the police and the community that identifies problems of crime and disorder and involves all elements of the community in the search for solutions to these problems' (COPS in Fridell 2004:3). It is a law enforcement theory based on the notion that community interaction and support can help control public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. The three essential aspects of community policing are community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving (USDOJ 2009; Fridell 2004). The existing organizational structure and management of law enforcement is transformed into organization aimed at supporting community partnerships and proactive problem solving (USDOJ 2009:3). Problem solving is essential to active prevention as the police are then addressing the underlying problems of crime rather than merely responding to the same situations over and over again (Fridell 2004:6). Community policing recognizes that police can rarely solve public safety alone (USDOJ 2009:5). Partnerships between the police, individuals and organizations can create solutions to problems as well as trust in the police as a law enforcement agency (USDOJ 2009:5). As such, the public's involvement in policing is viewed as a 'co-producer' of community safety and wellness (Fridell 2004:3) and therefore community policing is more open than traditional policing (USDOJ 2009:8). In a true partnership the police and the community should make important decisions together. However, the police must genuinely feel and communicate a feeling that the public has something to contribute (Klockars in Newburn 2005:449). Wilson and Kelling (in Newburn 2005:469) note two traditions of communal involvement in maintaining order: 'communal watchmen' and 'vigilante groups'. The latter differ from the former in that they take the law into their own hands, by acting as judge, jury, and often executioner as well as policeman (Wilson and Kelling in Newburn 2005:470).

The transformation of the organizational structure includes decentralization of the police and allocation of more responsibility to local police forces (Klockars in Newburn 2005; Döller and Feltes 1993) and reorientation of foot patrol (Klockars in Newburn 2005). Both mean that there is more and more personalized contact between the police and the community. Community members can help by bringing problems to the attention of the police and by providing information. More foot patrol should prevent crime, make order maintenance possible in ways motor patrol does not, and generate goodwill among police and citizens (Klockars in Newburn 2005:455). Foot patrol makes a neighborhood 'safer' by restoring order (Wilson & Kelling in Newburn 2005:464). It can thereby reduce citizen fear of crime and positively affect people's perception of the police and vice-versa.

Community policing has received many favorable responses worldwide. The main positive aspects are 'reduction of fear of crime, increase of citizens confidence in the police, improved police community relationships, improved police officer job satisfaction and stimulations of solutions to community problems' (Döller & Feltes 1993). In the long run these changes can lead to a reduction in crime rates. The community's involvement in policing can also enhance social structures within the neighborhood or community itself, which in turn could lead to a safer environment.

However, there are also many obstacles to community policing, including 'problems of definition, interpretation, implementation, and evaluation', especially in problematic neighborhoods¹ where it is believed that community policing has most to contribute (Fielding 2005:461). For example, it is not clear what a *community* exactly is. According to Klockars (in Newburn 2005:450) it can best be described as 'neighborhood', 'district', or 'precinct'. More specific obstacles to community policing can be corruption and fragmentation within the police, inadequate police education and training, low job satisfaction of police, and private initiatives.

Klockars (in Newburn 2005:455) points out that there is no evidence that foot patrol can reduce or prevent crime. Ericson (in Newburn 2005:217) also argues that it is hard to sustain that by the police's visible presence on the street they are preventing crime. Community policing, however, is 'brought with the expectation that it will reduce crime' (Klockars in Newburn 2005:453). In the worst case scenario, community policing might even increase crime as it can create the conditions that facilitate corruption and invite new corruption to develop (Klockars in Newburn 2005:454).

The police's impossible task to resolve crime (Klockars in Newburn 2005:455) raises expectations of the police for the public and puts pressure on the police to perform. However, the preventive approach of community policing can therefore decrease job satisfaction of the

¹ Deprived neighborhoods with high crime rates and social problems (Fielding 2005).

police. The police have also not been favorable of foot patrol. In the eyes of the police chiefs, foot patrol reduced mobility of the police and it weakened headquarters control over police officers (Klockars in Newburn 2005). The police themselves disliked foot patrol because it is hard, ungratifying work. It should also be emphasized that it is not foot patrol alone, but that foot patrol should be additional to normal levels of motor patrol in order to make a difference. Furthermore, some neighborhoods are so demoralized and crime-ridden as to make foot patrol useless (Wilson and Kelling in Newburn 2005:470).

Skolnick and Bayley (Klockars, in Newburn 2005:456) link civilianization, which means that civilians do certain types of police officers' tasks, to community policing. Despite the fact that civilianization is not aimed at by community policing, Klockars (in Newburn 2005:456) questions civilianization because it basically means that people that were not trained to do police work do jobs that were formerly done by policemen.

Despite its obstacles, community policing might sound promising because of the favorable responses it has received. However, it needs to be emphasized that community policing is a Western policing model that might have a favorable outcome in stable democracies, but for Latin America it is an 'import policing model' and therefore should be viewed with more skepticism (Neild 2003:286;290-291). Community policing depends on the problems faced by the particular neighborhood. In this approach, community policing should be regarded as a kind of tailor-made policing (Ponsaers in Bordeaux and Cumps 2002:217). I will therefore turn to the security situation in Latin America.

2.5. Citizen Security in Latin America

Latin America is one of the most violent regions in the world. The legacy of state terror, violence and fear has led to the creation of '*societies of fear*' (Koonings and Kruijt 1999:16), in which a climate of insecurity, anxiety and suspense overshadows all other feelings (Koonings and Kruijt 1999:16). Because of the increase in crime, violence, and the (un)rule of law, insecurity is a permanent fact of life (Koonings and Kruijt 2007:4). Koonings and Kruijt (2004) make use of the concept '*new violence*' to describe contemporary violence in Latin America, in which the monopoly on violence of the state is conquered. This new violence is a predominantly urban phenomenon. Bergman (2006) claims that there is a linear relationship between rise in crime and the perception of insecurity. The proliferation of violence and fear has led to a pervasive sensation of insecurity among every sector of the population (Koonings and Kruijt 2007:1). In many cases, the police and the judiciary are ineffective in dealing with crime and violence, or worse, are among the active protagonists (Koonings and Kruijt 2007:3). People feel unprotected or even further victimized by the system that is meant to protect them (Neild 2003:281). Public opinion towards the police is strongly hostile, but on

the other hand the public tends to support illegal action by them (Briceño-Léon and Zubillaga 2010:33).

The situation of insecurity, violence and fear has led to new survival strategies to cope with insecurity and violence in everyday life (Kooning and Kruijt 2007:4). Citizens turn to private alternatives to protect themselves and their property (Ungar 2007:25). Although perception of insecurity affects the totality of urban social formation in Latin America (Kooning and Kruijt 2007:1), private security is a privilege the majority cannot afford. While the middle and upper classes buy their protection, the urban poor have no other option for protection than to organize their communities through various 'perverse social organizations' (Kooning and Kruijt 2007). Also, the absence of security and law-enforcing authorities especially prevails in the neglected parts of the cities (Kooning and Kruijt 2007:12). As a consequence the poor are disproportionately affected by violence. The poor are also seen as the principal actors of violence (Kooning and Kruijt 2007; Briceño-Léon and Zubillaga 2010). Society becomes more divided along class lines. Latin American cities are being redefined by fear of crime and citizen insecurity puts restrictions on the freedom to move and to act socially (Kooning and Kruijt 2007; Ungar 2007; Briceño-Léon and Zubillaga 2010). Escalating rates of public insecurity also undermine citizens' support for democracy (Neild 2003:277; Dammert and Malone 2008:27).

2.6. Citizen Security and Community Policing in Latin America

In an attempt to improve the security situation, Latin American authorities have launched several projects and reforms. Zero tolerance or *mano dura* strategies have been widely implemented in the region to address rising crime rates. This comprehensive, aggressive law enforcement strategy however quickly deteriorated into a repressive militarized system of fighting crime (Dammert and Malone 2008:37). The transition to peace and democracy in Latin America fails to address police violence and abuse of authority (Neild 2003:280).

Paradoxically, an increasing number of Latin American countries have also adopted community policing strategies since the mid-1990s. In the national and international field, this community policing effort is perceived as an important solution to problems of insecurity in contemporary urban Latin America, and for improving relationships between police and citizens (Müller 2010:21). However, Müller's (2010) findings demonstrate that the success of community policing is highly determined by the local context. Therefore, he (Müller 2010:21) claims that the contribution of community policing to 'sustainable improvement of local accountability and police legitimacy' is unlikely in Latin American cities. Schneider's (1999) research about community policing in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods in Canada also finds that the success of community policing depends on the problems faced by the particular neighborhood. He concludes by stating that traditional community policing theories and

approaches have failed to be effective in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods because of communicative problems between the police and neighborhood residents which reproduce asymmetrical relations between the two (Schneider 1999:347). The already existing poor relations between the police and citizens in Latin American countries could therefore impede the potential of community policing.

As explained above, community policing can lead to higher levels of corruption. Müller's (2010) study of community policing in Mexico City indeed finds that by 'infiltrating' in a neighborhood it is easier for the police to commit corruption. Residents testified of police extortion and admitted to giving the police money in order to achieve a 'good' relationship (Müller 2010:30). Perceptions of mistrust seem to be mutual (Müller 2010). Leeds (in Koonings and Kruijt 2007:30) points out that public safety problems and their solutions go beyond the actions of the police because the police are tied to political and administrative factors that obstruct the transition to more citizen-oriented safety policies. Ungar (2007) also shows that community policing programs (the case of Bolivia) often become more attached to private interests in their target areas. Because of the incompetency of police and neighborhood councils, community policing programs often become dominated or controlled by local businesses, cliques of powerful residents, or even criminal organizations (Ungar 2007:23).

Bergman (2006:224) states that community policing and citizen participation have thus far shown no meaningful results in terms of crime and fear reduction. A more recent study on policing strategies and fear of crime in Latin America (Brazil, Argentina and Chile), however, finds that in cities that employ community-based strategies, the fear of crime is lower (Dammert and Malone 2008:27). Müller speaks of 'symbolic policing' (Müller 2010:32), because it seems that community policing represents an intent to demonstrate a political will rather than a real effort to confront structural problems.

2.7. Citizen Security and police-community relations in post-civil war countries

Successful community policing can be extremely difficult in Latin America, especially in post-conflict context. There is little public trust and confidence in the police and other state institutions, and relations between the police and the public are extremely poor (Neild 2003:279). During the civil wars the police developed a reputation of being unprofessional, violent, repressive and corrupt (Neild 2003:279; Glebbeek 2010): instead of trusting in the police, citizens feared them. Despite the fact that the civil conflicts are over, the suspicious views of the police remain and are very much institutionalized in many countries. Citizens even feel less safe than during the civil wars (Glebbeek 2010). Police continue to use repressive security practices and injustice and impunity is still very high (Neild 2003). Therefore transitional democracies such as Guatemala are often referred to as 'uncivil

democracies' (Neild 2003; Pérez 2003). Because of the weak relationship between police and citizens in post-civil war countries such as Guatemala, community policing strategies have a feeble basis, precisely because they center on closer cooperation between the police and the community. This can be especially difficult in 'divided societies' such as Guatemala. Divided societies deal with social conflicts about religion, ethnicity, race or national origin. Besides, people living in divided societies are also often divided in terms of social, political, economic and geographical background (Glebbeek 2003:280). Neild (2003:291) points out that worryingly, there are similarities between aspects of community policing such as neighborhood watches, and the civilian patrols of counter-insurgency strategies. Therefore trust and confidence between the police and the community is necessary for community policing strategies to be successful, especially in post-civil war countries and divided societies such as Guatemala.

3. Policing in context: Guatemala

In this framework I will describe the specific context of my research. I will start by discussing police reform and policing in post-civil-war setting. Unfortunately, the changes that have been made since the civil war in Guatemala have not significantly enhanced the performance of the National Civil Police (PNC), nor have they improved the relationship with the public. Police-community relations in Guatemala are still fragile. I will discuss this relationship, followed by a description of community policing in Guatemala. This strategy was implemented to find a solution to the inability of the police to deal with crime, violence and insecurity by active participation of citizens. Recently a community policing project, Plan Cuadrante, has been implemented in amongst others my research location. Accordingly, I will end the contextual framework by discussing Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala.

3.1. Police reform and policing in post-civil-war Guatemala

After 36 years of civil war in Guatemala, the Peace Accords were signed in December 1996. During the conflict, policing in Guatemala had been often violent, repressive, and militarized (Glebbeek 2001:431). Over the years, a system of repression developed (Glebbeek 2010:66). After peace was restored, the Guatemalan police underwent massive reforms geared towards the construction of democracy (Pérez 2003:627). A new police force was created: *La Policía Nacional Civil* (PNC). Institutional changes had to be made, as well as changes in the practice of policing (Glebbeek 2001:432). An important aspect of the reforms was the separation of public security and military functions (Pérez 2003:627). Besides demilitarization, the expansion of the PNC was to reflect the multiethnic and multicultural Guatemalan society in its personnel, and all members would receive professional training (Pérez 2003:631). Furthermore, police salaries and the public security budget would be increased (Glebbeek 2001:438).

The Guatemalan police had played a significant role in the repression and human rights violations during the armed conflict (Glebbeek 2001:433). However, the use of violence, police involvement in crime and corruption also continued after the conflict. Pressure to respond to the increasing crime problems caused the Arzú administration (1996-2000) to decide that former PNC members could join the new force (Pérez 2003:632; Glebbeek 2010:66). Furthermore, the military continued to be involved in internal security (Pérez 2003:632). To swiftly solve the problems of crime, violence and insecurity, the Guatemalan government turned to military support and established joint police and military patrols (Glebbeek 2007:29). This undermined the efforts that had been made to separate army and police. Ex-soldiers that had been discharged after the peace accords were patrolling again and the hierarchical structure of command remained (Glebbeek 2007:31).

Glebbeek (2001:452) argues that 'the Guatemalan government appears to have approached police reform more as a short-term political challenge rather than as a long term, institution-building effort crucial to the consolidation of democracy in Guatemala'. According to a recent report that analyzes the state of police reform in Central America the reforms that were laid out in Guatemala were poorly implemented (WOLA 2009:4). Furthermore, repressive security strategies such as *mano dura* have undermined the previously initiated police reforms and feed the culture of violence, and private security and popular justice are unregulated and exacerbate social inequalities (Neild 2003:283; Glebbeek 2010).

There have been attempts to combine *mano dura* strategies with more proactive strategies in Guatemala in order to build trust between the police and citizens, but the combination of enforcement and prevention strategies have been difficult to establish (Glebbeek 2010:72).

3.2. Police – community relations in Guatemala

As a consequence of the reputation the police built up during the civil war in Guatemala, citizens distrust the police and relationships between police and citizens remain unequal. Levels of crime and violence are even worse than during the civil wars, as are perceptions of insecurity (Glebbeek 2010:68). Pérez (2003:629) argues that 'public attitudes towards the police and the effects of crime on democratic values are closely tied to the successes and failures of the efforts to demilitarize internal security'. Police reform meant that the police had to establish a completely new relationship with the public (Glebbeek 2007:2). In 1999 almost all municipalities in Guatemala got their own local police office in order to increase contact with the neighborhood residents (Glebbeek 2003:265). Initially interactions increased, but due to the emergence of new forms of violence by various armed actors the relationship between the police and citizens eventually saw little improvement (Glebbeek 2007:3). Despite improvements toward decentralization of the police, the PNC remained a highly centralized institution, which undermined police practices and the relationship between the police and the community at the local level (Glebbeek 2003:265).

The police reforms thus have not been able to significantly enhance relationships between police and citizens. On the contrary, the rising crime, violence and insecurity has even weakened the reformed police institution (Glebbeek 2010:64). Citizens consider the police force as 'incapable of providing security' (Glebbeek 2010:64). As a consequence of frustration and disappointment in police performance citizens increasingly attack the police and take justice into their own hands (Glebbeek 2007:2). The police respond to incidents of lynchings and attacks on the police by increased repression or inactivity which further damages the already weak position of the PNC and makes it almost impossible to gain the population's trust and cooperation (Glebbeek 2007:35;46).

However, there are various initiatives to encourage participation of citizens in local security issues such as local security councils or *juntas locales de seguridad* (hereafter referred to as JLS or *juntas*) and neighborhood watches (Glebbeek 2003:265). The *juntas* were called into existence by the Arzú government to engage the community into the discussion on security problems and to reduce the distance between the community and the police. The *juntas* have the task to analyze the public security situation in the municipality, and to formulate and evaluate plans on local security (Glebbeek 2003:270). The *juntas*, generally composed by the mayor, the local police chief and representatives of the community, in 2007 represented the community in 231 of the 331 municipalities in Guatemala, although they were subordinate to influences of politics and the local elites (PNUD 2009:193). The *juntas* have been criticized for resembling the former civil patrols systems, but this was based on the misconception that they are more than purely a discussion board (Glebbeek 2003:273). Police are generally positive about the *juntas* because their meetings give them the opportunity to gather information and build a relationship with the citizens (Glebbeek 2003:270).

Neighborhood watches on the other hand, have not been established with the encouragement of the state as is the case in many other countries. In Guatemala several neighborhood watches have been initiated by citizens themselves and are not supported by the government and police (Glebbeek 2003:274). Contrary to the *juntas*, they do focus on surveillance. Experiences with neighborhood watch groups vary widely among communities. In some cases they have had relatively positive results, whereas evidence that neighborhood watch groups increase the feeling of insecurity among the population has also been found (Glebbeek 2003:279). Therefore the adoption of neighborhood watch programs in Guatemala remains questionable (Glebbeek 2003:279).

3.3. Community policing in Guatemala

Glebbeek (unpublished paper 2007) discusses the future possibilities of introducing a model of community policing and its success in Guatemala. She argues that the characteristics of Latin-American policing pose problems for the adoption of such an approach and that communities that distrust the police do not inconsiderately accept community policies (Glebbeek, unpublished paper 2007:10). Furthermore, it is doubtful that the Guatemalan government and its police force are willing and able to replace its repressive and reactive strategies (Glebbeek, unpublished paper 2007:48). Because of the underlying problems of increasing crime, violence and insecurity, such as social exclusion, inequality and poverty (Koonings & Kruijt 2007; Glebbeek, unpublished paper 2007), community policing efforts can easily be misused (Glebbeek, unpublished paper 2007:11). Therefore community policing programs should be closely monitored.

In January 1998 a community policing pilot program was installed in *Villa Nueva* Guatemala City, a densely populated municipality with high rates of fear of crime (Frühling and Cancina 2005:18). The project had some positive effects, such as lowering the most serious and worrying types of crime and rates of victimization, and a reduction in the feeling of insecurity, but nevertheless trust in the police declined and citizens increasingly considered police service inadequate (Frühling and Cancina 2005:26-29). The project in *Villa Nueva* dealt with countless other difficulties in the political and social environment such as the presence of uncontrolled armed groups that tend to solve problems in their own way and the little initiatives coming from civil society, as well as with difficulties in the police organization such as the scant resources for the police and frequent rotation of police officers allocated to the sub-stations (Frühling and Cancina 2005:30-31). Glebbeek (2007:29) also states that the project was not successful because of the lack of institutional and civil society commitment. Therefore the introduction of community policing models in countries such as Guatemala requires recognition of the shortcomings of the police and the community (Frühling and Cancina 2005:33). Furthermore steps need to be taken to ensure continuity when assistance of international organizations comes to an end (Frühling and Cancina 2005:34).

In February 2006 another community-based program was implemented in *Villa Nueva*. In June 2008 the program, with redefined objectives and a new scope of work, was implemented in four geographic areas among which *Antigua* (USAID 2009:2). In all areas the program made progress towards its objectives: implementation and practices that improve basic service delivery; increasing analytical capacity in key precincts; and strengthening critical relationships between police and community (USAID 2009:3-4;14).

3.4. *Plan Cuadrante* and police – community relations in *Antigua Guatemala*

In 2008, the Guatemalan police have introduced a new policy: *Plan Cuadrante*, which has been implemented in Guatemala City, Quetzaltenango and *Antigua Guatemala*. The goal of this preventive *Plan Cuadrante* is to work more effectively and efficiently as a police force and to improve the (perception of) safety and security. The cities are organized into *cuadrantes*, or zones, to which policemen have been appointed. An important objective of this system is establishing more direct contact between the police and the citizens. There are few official documents available about *Plan Cuadrante*, but some important information can be drawn from an USAID report of the first quarter of 2009.

Antigua is Guatemala's most important tourist destination and has the largest number of police officers per capita of Guatemala. However, the response to the rising crime rate has generally been one of sending more personnel rather than evaluating police respond (USAID 2009:6). The *Antiguan* police delegations all reported to different commanders in the capital. During the reporting period, the overall command for *Antigua* was however placed in the

hands of one person to whom all delegations had to report (USAID 2009:7). A preventive patrol plan for Antigua was developed, and training on strategic planning for patrol organization was provided as well as technical support (USAID 2009:7). Antigua was divided into four sectors, and two police officers that had to be available to the residents around the clock, all year long, were assigned to each sector (USAID 2009:7). Their responsibilities included visits to each home in the sector, participation in trainings, receiving criminal complaints, gathering information about local criminal activity, providing support to local community-based organizations, proposing and executing plans related to controlling the sector, planning and implementing activities with youth-at-risk, and identifying suspicious persons in the area (USAID 2009:9).

In Antigua, cooperation between the police and public include partnerships with hotel and restaurant owners, staff and tourist agencies, and local churches (USAID 2009:10). The intensive and long-term presence of the police officers combined with their relationship with the residents, local churches, school, shops and businesses has to better the amount and quality of information available to improve the security situation (USAID 2009:10).

Since Plan Cuadrante was implemented less than two years ago during the writing of this research proposals, little is known about the results of Plan Cuadrante and its effect on perception of citizen security and the police-community relations. I will therefore conduct research on this subject following a research plan which is based on the theory discussed above and contextual information.

4. Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala

In this first empirical chapter I will analyze how Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala works. By using the relevant theory on community policing discussed in chapter two I will make an analysis of Plan Cuadrante. I will do this by discussing the origin and organization of the strategy, how Plan Cuadrante functions in practice and the way it is controlled and monitored. Furthermore I will discuss the ways in which the community is involved as this is an important aspect of community policing. For my analysis I will use secondary data, factual information and personal accounts, predominantly of Plan Cuadrante policemen and citizens.

4.1. Origin and organization of Plan Cuadrante

As discussed in chapters two and three, crime and violence in Latin America are rising and insecurity is a major concern of citizens. Glebbeek (2010:64) has pointed out that in Guatemala, perceptions of insecurity are even worse than during the civil war because of the alarming situation of rising crime and violence in the country. The authorities responsible for law enforcement are ineffective in dealing with the situation. The citizens feel like the police are incapable of providing the security they need². In order to address the rising rates of crime, violence and insecurity the Guatemalan government has turned to a community policing model that originates from Chile: 'Plan Cuadrante'.

Plan Cuadrante in Guatemala is a surveillance system of the national Civil Police (*Policía Nacional Civil*, PNC) which was called into existence as an operational strategy since 2008. The plan was implemented in Zone 1 and 2 of Guatemala City on 30 January 2008, in La Antigua Guatemala on 3 June 2008 and in Quetzaltenango on 8 December 2008. Originally the idea was to further extend Plan Cuadrante by implementing the strategy in other zones of the capital and in Petén, and later on in the rest of the departmental and municipal capitals³. However, until now Plan Cuadrante has only been implemented in the three cities mentioned above.

For Plan Cuadrante a special unit of the PNC has been created: DCSP (*División Cuadrante para la Seguridad Preventiva*), that employs a community policing strategy. The cities are divided into different sectors (*cuadrantes*), to which policemen have been appointed. Each police unit of the Plan Cuadrante police is responsible for one of the sectors. The main objective of Plan Cuadrante is to work more effectively and efficiently as a police force and to establish a more direct and effective relationship between the *Policía Nacional Civil* and the inhabitants of each sector, so the police and citizens know each other

² Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

³ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

and work coordinately⁴. What is striking is that the mission of Plan Cuadrante is differently described in each of the three cities in which the strategy has been implemented (see box below).

Plan Cuadrante mission Antigua:

Provide better service of Citizen Security on a professional level, by means of an excellent relationship and cooperation between the citizen, the National Civil Police, and other state- and civil society agencies.

Plan Cuadrante mission Guatemala City:

Provide better service of Citizen Security on a professional level, by means of an excellent relationship and cooperation between the citizen, the National Civil Police, and other state agencies, civil society, public and private organizations.

Plan Cuadrante mission Quetzaltenango:

Monitor, identify risk factors, and establish relationships, trust, knowledge, communication and interaction with the community and public and private institutions, to improve the perception of objective and subjective security through prevention, detection and prosecution of crime.

Table 1: mission of Plan Cuadrante in Antigua, Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango.

The plan should not only increase surveillance but also enhance cooperation between police and citizens. As discussed by Fridell (2004:3) the public should be ‘co-producer’ of community safety and wellness. Communication between police agents and residents should be more immediate, reliable and safe, so that the request for assistance from the police as well as police response will be as quick and efficient as possible. The plan requires police agents to have comprehensive knowledge of the sector they have been assigned to, so police can better and more easily detect abnormal situations that affect public order and act accordingly. As stated by Fridell (2004:5) problem solving and community partnerships are thus indeed seen as essential to active prevention. A better police-community relation will enable the police to obtain information on criminal acts and to increase the feeling of security citizens. Apart from police and citizens, public and private organizations, authorities and groups that represent the community should also participate⁵.

This definition of Plan Cuadrante presents the plan as an ideal strategy in which the three essential aspects of community policing –community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving- as discussed by USDOJ (2009) and Fridell (2004) are all addressed. However, Plan Cuadrante is also a very new strategy in Guatemala which seems to be difficult to implement because of the negative reputation of the police and poor police-community relations.

⁴ Operational document Plan Cuadrante, year unknown.

⁵ Operational document Plan Cuadrante, year unknown.

4.2. Organization of Plan Cuadrante in La Antigua Guatemala

On June 3, 2008, Plan Cuadrante (*El Plan Cuadrante de Seguridad Preventiva de la Antigua Guatemala*) was implemented in Antigua, a medium-sized urban area of approximately 50,000 residents (USAID 2009:6). Plan Cuadrante works with four superiors and 71 *Agentes*⁶. These numbers include policemen that are on leave, have time off or might be suspended for whatever reason. During the first two years of Plan Cuadrante, *comisario general* (general commissioner) Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco was in charge. However, he retired temporarily from his post on 29 March 2010 because his contract was not renewed⁷. On 27 April 2011, during the time of this research, he was reassigned as consultant and coordinator of Plan Cuadrante in Antigua because the municipality and the citizens made an appeal to this effect, according to the mayor and Oliva Blanco himself⁸. During his absence *Oficial I* Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering, *Jefe de la División Cuadrante De Seguridad Preventiva Antigua Guatemala*, had been the highest command.

The DCSP unit in Antigua is part of '*Comisaria 74*', the PNC headquarters of the department of Sacatepéquez in which Antigua is situated. Their office is, like that of the *Comisaria*, situated just outside of Antigua in San Pedro Panorama. Plan Cuadrante has to report to the chief of *Comisaria 74*, *sub-comisario* Manuel Salguero Godoy. Normally speaking the *sub-comisario* would be in charge only in absence of the *comisario*, but the PNC has insufficient high trained staff to occupy all higher positions⁹, even though Antigua Guatemala has the highest number of police officers per capita of Guatemala, as pointed out by USAID (2009:6). As mentioned before, Plan Cuadrante currently works with 71 policemen. However, when Plan Cuadrante was implemented in 2008 there was more staff¹⁰. In the time-period that Plan Cuadrante has been functioning, various policemen have been allocated to different *Comisaria*'s. Plan Cuadrante has never received any new staff in return. Additionally, material needs are not supplemented.

Almost all policemen of DCSP started working for Plan Cuadrante after graduating from the Police Academy (*Academia de la Policía Nacional Civil*). They are of the 20th promotion and graduated May 31th, 2008. There are a few exceptions such as *oficial* Perez Duering who is of the 1st promotion and had earlier worked for the *Policía Nacional* before the PNC was called into existence. Five other Plan Cuadrante policemen in higher ranks or working in the office are also from earlier promotions.

⁶ Two *oficiales*/officials (*Oficial I*), one *Inspector*, and one *Sub inspector*.

⁷ Interview *comisario general* Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁸ Interview *comisario general* Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011; Informal conversation major Adolfo Vivar Marroquín 23-05-2011.

⁹ Normally every PNC unit would be hierarchically composed as follows; *comisario general*, *comisario*, *sub-comisario*, *oficial I*, *oficial II*, *oficial III*, *inspector*, *sub-inspector*, and *agentes*.

¹⁰ There were 100 policemen, 14 cars, 12 motorcycles, 10 bicycles and 15 pairs that carried out foot patrol (interview *comisario general* Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011).

In the set-up of Plan Cuadrante, the urban center of La Antigua Guatemala is divided into different sectors in which the Plan Cuadrante police operate (see map in Appendix I). Contrary to what the USAID document (2009) shows, Antigua is divided into ten different sectors instead of four. The smallest cuadrantes are situated around the central park and consist of nine or twelve blocks¹¹. The cuadrantes further away from the center are bigger in size, but there is less commercial activity and movement of people and are therefore quieter. The outskirts of Antigua are not part of Plan Cuadrante.

Six police officers have been assigned to each of the sectors and always operate in the same sector. They all work in teams of two police officers during every shift: a driver (*pilote* or *commandante*) and a co-pilot (*co-pilote*). They work with a rotating schedule¹². This way each sector is covered 24 hours a day, all year round. Also, there is always one supervising unit driving around the whole urban center of Antigua. The supervising patrol-unit offers support for all cuadrantes. All patrols, except for the supervising/supporting patrol car, stay in their own cuadrante in order to be present immediately if something happens. However, there is constant radio communication between the different policemen and when one cuadrante needs backup they call the adjacent cuadrante or the supervising unit. When one of the police units have a lunch or dinner break, their cuadrante is covered by the adjacent cuadrante unit. Ideally this should be done by an extra supporting unit, but because of the lack of staff this is not possible.

Currently only nine out of ten cuadrantes are covered. There are no policemen assigned to cuadrante eight, but this sector is being covered by adjacent cuadrantes two, four, and ten. The reason that cuadrante eight is unstaffed is that this is the quietest sector together with cuadrante six. Furthermore there is a strategic reason; cuadrante eight borders three other cuadrante and therefore it is logistically easier for other policemen to cover cuadrante eight. However, the policemen do not always pay a lot of attention to cuadrante eight so the cuadrante basically remains unsupervised frequently.

4.3. Tasks of Plan Cuadrante police

The main task of the Plan Cuadrante police agents is patrolling the streets in order to prevent crime. There is a general operational plan for the DCSP staff with the function, mission and objectives of Plan Cuadrante. In addition, there are various instruction manuals especially created for the Plan Cuadrante police that apply to different situations. For example, there is an instruction manual that applies to car theft and an instruction manual on hotel security. Furthermore there are specific plans that apply to different occasions and events such as

¹¹ One of the smallest cuadrantes is cuadrante four. Every block is 10.000 m², which makes the total size of cuadrante four 90.000m² (Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011; Participant Observation).

¹² Two *agentes* work from midnight to 8:00 a.m. and are then interchanged by the next pairs of officers that work from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Another pair of policemen works from 4:00 p.m. to midnight.

Semana Santa or Christmas, and instruction manuals that have been created for all police units. The Plan Cuadrante policemen do not carry these manuals with them, nor are there any printed versions available at the precinct.

The Plan Cuadrante policemen tell me that during their shifts they have to identify people, vehicles and motors in order to prevent delinquency. Corresponding to the responsibilities of Plan Cuadrante police officers as mentioned by USAID (2009:9), almost all of them also say that they have to visit the businesses and people in the sector to inform them about Plan Cuadrante and give them the telephone numbers of the Plan Cuadrante units. Therefore, they all carried leaflets with information about Plan Cuadrante. However, there are policemen that do not mention the assigned community visits when talking about the tasks of the Plan Cuadrante police. The owners of businesses I have visited testify to community visits not always being complied with. Some store employees are familiar with Plan Cuadrante and say that the Plan Cuadrante police have visited their business and informed them about the plan, but others claim that they have never heard of Plan Cuadrante. Some even start to laugh when I ask them whether the police have informed them about Plan Cuadrante because this seems very unlikely to them. Others state that the Plan Cuadrante police have only visited their business when the strategy had just been implemented. Regular citizens also deny that the PC police have visited them with the purpose of either informing them or trying to find out what the daily occupations and problems of citizens are.

According to *comisario* Oliva Blanco, Plan Cuadrante police activity and motivation has gone down and there are fewer visits and less contact between the policemen and the community than when Plan Cuadrante had just been implemented¹³. Contrary to what the *agentes* say, one policeman with an administrative function also informs me that currently the policemen do not visit as many businesses and houses as in the beginning of Plan Cuadrante. He says, however, that this is because the information from the residents is now obtained through JLS. Also, he explains that the problem with the visits is that many people are not at home mainly because they are working. During patrols I never saw the Plan Cuadrante police visit a single business to inform the people about Plan Cuadrante or ask them about what kind of problems they might have. During my observations I did see the Plan Cuadrante police going into stores many times to buy something for example, but they always go to the same stores. They claim that they visit these stores because they are cheaper than other ones.

¹³ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

4.4. Styles of patrol

Manning (in Newburn 2005:193) has argued that various strategies and tactics are employed by the police to manage their appearance before the public and control the behavior of their audience, such as various styles of patrol to mobilize and integrate the public. Klockars (in Newburn 2005) has pointed out that in community-based policing strategies there is a reorientation of foot patrol. However, foot patrol is not perceived as an important part of the Plan Cuadrante strategy by the policemen.

When Plan Cuadrante had just been implemented in 2008, the Plan Cuadrante police carried out foot patrol because as they stated, there were not enough patrol cars yet. The policemen say that at present they patrol by car. Only in Semana Santa are they on foot patrol because it is impossible to get into the center of Antigua by car during this week. During Semana Santa only the outskirts of Antigua are patrolled by cars, while foot patrol is carried out in the center.

The patrol cars are marked 'DCSP' to distinguish them from the Comisaria's patrol cars marked 'SAC' (Sacatepéquez). However, there are not enough DCSP patrol cars. Therefore Plan Cuadrante is frequently patrolling in SAC-cars, making it hard for citizens to distinguish between the Plan Cuadrante police and the regular PNC. Currently, the Plan Cuadrante police only go on foot when they run out of gasoline or when a patrol car breaks down. I have never seen this happening, but there is one car parked at the Plan Cuadrante precinct in San Pedro de Panorama that has been there since the beginning of my research period and has not been fixed since. Other cars parked in front of the precinct are also in poor condition (figure 1).



Figure 1: *Patrol car parked outside the Plan Cuadrante precinct and inside of the patrol car.*

In San Gaspar Vivar, a neighboring village of Antigua where the policemen live in barracks, there are more broken-down cars. There is no money to fix the cars and the government

does not provide money to buy new patrol cars. During a meeting the minister of Internal Affairs had promised new patrol cars for Comisaria 74 and Plan Cuadrante before the end of March¹⁴. However, the new patrol cars arrived in May and only for the Comisaria, who loaned two of the new 'SAC'-cars to Plan Cuadrante.

The only police that carry out foot patrol in Antigua are the Municipal Transit Police (*Policía Municipal de Transito*), sometimes also the Tourism Police (USETUR), and the Market Police (POLIMERC). The latter, however, only stay in their own sector which is in and around the market. The police on foot are more accessible, for example to ask for directions and information. The Plan Cuadrante police are continuously present in all cuadrantes, but is less accessible because they are almost always onboard their vehicles. According to Wilson and Kelling (in Newburn 2005:465) police on foot are more easily approached by citizens, while a car serves as a barrier between the police and the citizen and thus excludes the latter. Citizens indeed do not easily approach the Plan Cuadrante police while the latter stay onboard their vehicles. When the police station their car for a while and/or get out of their car they are more approachable and citizens greet them and ask for directions.

Some policemen tell me that in the beginning Plan Cuadrante also worked with bicycles. They are all of the opinion however, that this did not work at all because of Antigua's cobblestoned streets. They say that it was almost impossible because it hurt their backs and was very tiring, which is why they told their superiors that they preferred patrolling by car. The policemen claim that foot patrol is very tiring and that it is harder than patrolling by car because of the heat or cold. They also say that on foot they cannot respond effectively to calls by citizens or other incidents, and that it is almost impossible to chase someone on foot when a car has been stolen for example. Klockars (in Newburn 2005) has indeed pointed out that in the eyes of the police chiefs, foot patrol reduced mobility of the police and that police themselves disliked foot patrol because it is hard, ungratifying work. The policemen, including the chiefs, seem to be unaware of the fact that patrolling by car also has disadvantages as pointed out earlier.

The lack of police staff within the PNC makes foot patrol difficult, since all policemen that are on duty cover one of the cuadrantes by car and there remains no staff to carry out additional foot patrol. However, since the comeback of *comisario* Oliva Blanco changes have been made. He has dedicated himself to regaining the 'lost activity of Plan Cuadrante'¹⁵. He instructs and motivates the policemen to visit the businesses and houses again, to park the patrol units, get out of the car and talk to citizens. Ever since this initiative, I have observed the Plan Cuadrante police parking their car and carrying out foot patrol, especially in the area around the central park (figure 2).

¹⁴ Participant Observation 10-03-2011.

¹⁵ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.



Figure 2: Plan Cuadrante policemen at the central park of Antigua.

According to *comisario* Oliva Blanco the ideal situation would be to have two policemen by car, two carrying out foot patrol and two on motorcycles. Accordingly, Wilson and Kelling (in Newburn 2005:470) have also emphasized that foot patrol should be additional to normal levels of motor patrol in order to make a difference. However, in Antigua this is not possible because of the lack of staff, which is mentioned by almost all policemen. They tell me that Plan Cuadrante needs more '*apoyo*': 'There should be more staff. There is one cuadrante that does not have personnel'¹⁶. Another policeman tells me that additional to the already existing lack of staff some of the policemen study one of two days a week and therefore are not available for patrol: 'My partner studies two days a week and I remain alone. What am I supposed to do? I cannot go out to patrol alone and there is no other staff to substitute my partner'¹⁷. However, in practice policemen that remain without their colleague go on patrol with another unit, with one of the supervisors or with one of the administrative policemen.

Besides the police themselves, many citizens also recognize the lack of police staff and resources. For example, during a meeting with Guatemala authorities and representative of civil society, citizens complain about the few patrol cars of the police, which is why they believe the latter cannot effectively carry out their job¹⁸. During interviews citizens also show that they are aware of the lack of police staff and resources; however, this does however not influence their aversion against the police.

¹⁶ Interview agente Alonso Morales 01-04-2011.

¹⁷ Interview agente Christian del Valle 14-04-2011.

¹⁸ Participant Observation 10-04-2011.

4.5. Police education and training

The policemen that applied to work for or have been selected for Plan Cuadrante because of their qualities have received a general orientation on Plan Cuadrante during their time in the Police Academy¹⁹. The policemen have been instructed about Plan Cuadrante and what the strategy entails. Specific details about the education and training of the policemen, however, remain unclear.

Fielding (2005:461) has pointed out that one of the many possible obstacles to community policing is inadequate police education. Concluding from the interviews held with the *agentes* there has indeed been little specific training with regard to the strategy of community policing before they started working for Plan Cuadrante. During the interviews the policemen tell me that they were given information about Plan Cuadrante as late as the very day they started working. They were instructed about what Plan Cuadrante is and what is important in the strategy. However, I can conclude that this initiation to the strategy has not been very profound; some policemen can only tell me that Plan Cuadrante is 'to serve the citizens'. They do not seem to know a lot about what the Plan Cuadrante strategy is all about. However, some policemen can give me an exact and very specific description of Plan Cuadrante and what the strategy entails. The policemen also focus on different aspects of the strategy; the majority of the policemen stress the preventive aspect of Plan Cuadrante and the importance of 24-hour police surveillance, while others emphasize the importance of getting into contact and maintaining good relations with the citizens.

The policemen also tell me that they are given 'motivational talks' before the beginning of their shift. The motivational talks / instructions take place in a neighboring village of Antigua called San Gaspar Vivar, where the policemen live while on duty. Every day at 8:00 a.m., at 4:00 p.m. and at midnight one of the supervisors instructs the policemen before the beginning of their shift (figure 3).

¹⁹ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011; interview Perez Duering 19-02-2011.



Figure 3: Motivational talk of oficial Mis and comisario Oliva Blanco on 23-05-2011 at San Gaspar Vivar.

This is a 20 minutes talk about novelties, focus and motivation²⁰. Since the return of *comisario* Oliva Blanco extra focus is put on community interaction by visiting houses and businesses, and foot patrol. Also, I often saw *oficial* Perez Duering talk to individual policemen or couples. He uses a personal approach and is on friendly terms with his staff. He also involves them in all aspects of Plan Cuadrante, for example by taking them to meetings with the JLS, hereby encouraging the policemen and community partnerships.

4.6. Community involvement in Plan Cuadrante

As identified by the U.S. Department of Justice (2009) and Fridell (2004), one of the main aspects of community policing in general is community partnerships. The Plan Cuadrante police in Antigua cooperate with various parts of civil society. The main actors involved in Plan Cuadrante are the municipality, the public ministry (*Ministerio Publico*), the JLS, other PNC police, and the citizens. Supposedly all citizens should be in some way involved in Plan Cuadrante, however, in practice this appears to be different as will become clear in the remaining part of this thesis.

As pointed out by Glebbeek (2003:265) there are various initiatives to encourage participation of citizens in local security issues in Guatemala. Accordingly an important actor in Plan Cuadrante is the *juntas locales de seguridad*, which have been called into existence by the Arzú government (1996-2000) to engage the community into the discussion on security problems and to reduce the distance between the community and police (Glebbeek 2003:270). For every police station or sub-station in the department of Sacatepéquez there are one or two JLS. In Antigua there are four *juntas*. The objective of the *juntas* is to keep the

²⁰ Participant Observation 23-05-2011.

police informed about problems in their area. Besides public security problems, they are dedicated to a varying range of social problems such as health problems and keeping the neighborhood clean²¹.

Glebbeck (2003) stated that the *juntas* are generally composed by the mayor, the local police chief and representatives of the community. In Antigua however, *junta* La Merced consist of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and various community representatives called 'vocals'²². The official term they use is 'committee for safety and cleanliness' (*comité pro-seguridad y limpieza*), but they are sometimes, mostly by the police, also referred to as a *junta*. The committee meets once every eight days, every fifteen days or every month depending on issues in the neighborhood. They should function as the link between the police and the community, but various citizens appear to have no knowledge of the existence of the *juntas*. However, this might not be the fault of the police nor of the *juntas* themselves, because some citizens are not interested when it comes to matters like this. Also, members of the committee in La Merced claim that they invite neighborhood residents to their meetings but that they do not attend²³. *Oficial* Perez Duering is very pleased with their help though: 'Their help is indispensable; they are the right hand of the police'²⁴.

USAID (2009:10) mentioned that cooperation between the police and public in Antigua include partnerships with hotel and restaurant owners, staff of tourist agencies, and local churches. However, I have not found a significant relationship between all of these organizations and the Plan Cuadrante police. There are partnerships between the Plan Cuadrante police and the bigger and prestigious hotels in Antigua but the smaller hotels, hostels and restaurants are mostly unknown to the Plan Cuadrante police and are not mentioned in the operational documents on hotel security either. On the one hand it is logical that the bigger hotels have a larger proportion of interest in partnership with the (Plan Cuadrante) police since they have more guests who need to be protected and host police-public meetings and organize events for which they cooperate with the police. On the other hand this should not imply that a large amount of the smaller businesses is excluded. Local churches are only included in Plan Cuadrante for the purpose of hosting spiritual motivational talks for the police staff. The staff of tourist agencies works together with INGUAT's (the Guatemalan Tourism Institute) security program *Asistur (El Programa de Asistencia al Turista)*. *Asistur* provides security information and security escorts for tourist groups. They have telephone numbers for tourist assistance and emergency that can be reach 24-hours a day all year round.

²¹ Participant Observation 25-02-2011.

²² Interview committee La Merced president Alberto 21-03-2011; informal conversation JLS secretary Delia 25-02-2011.

²³ Interview committee La Merced president Alberto 21-03-2011; informal conversation JLS secretary Delia 25-02-2011.

²⁴ Informal conversation oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 07-02-2011.

4.7. Evaluation and monitoring

Glebbeck (unpublished paper 2007:11) has explained that community policing efforts can easily be misused by the police. Müller (2010) also pointed out that community policing makes it easier for the police to commit corruption because the police 'infiltrate' into a neighbourhood and extort residents for them to achieve a 'good' relationship. Therefore community policing programs should be closely monitored. In Antigua evaluation and monitoring of Plan Cuadrante is carried out above all by the highest ranked officials of Plan Cuadrante. The *comisario*, *oficiales*, *inspector* and *sub-inspector* supervise the cuadrante units daily in turns in the supervising/supporting patrol car. While supervising, they drive around the city and meet up with all Plan Cuadrante units (figure 4).



Figure 4: Two Plan Cuadrante policemen hand over the form to the supervising unit.

Each unit has to show their superior a form on which they have to fill out their names and patrol unit, the services they have rendered, and situations they have come across. The superior has to check the form and sign it. All Plan Cuadrante police units also have to visit at least nine different businesses and/or houses every weekly shift. They carry forms to fill out who they have visited, talked to or identified, when and why. These forms are processed by the office staff. During a change of shift²⁵ I got the opportunity to revise the forms of the morning-shift. Some teams had identified many different persons and vehicles, while others had not filled out anything on the form. During the motivational talks superiors instructed policemen to fill out their forms, but no sanctions or consequences followed upon failure to do so. Upon his return, *comisario* Oliva Blanco²⁶ stated his intention to involve this in his mission of regaining the lost activity of Plan Cuadrante in order to improve citizen security

²⁵ Participant Observation 23-05-2011.

²⁶ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

and the police-community relation. In the next chapter I will discuss the influence Plan Cuadrante has on perceptions of citizen security and on the police-community relation.

5. The influence of Plan Cuadrante on perceptions of citizen security²⁷

In this chapter I will analyze the influence of Plan Cuadrante on perceptions of citizen security. In order to determine what the influence of Plan Cuadrante on perceptions of citizen security is, I have tried to find out how the police and citizens perceive Plan Cuadrante. The chapter will show that there are significant differences in the way Plan Cuadrante is perceived by the Plan Cuadrante policemen and by the citizens. The Plan Cuadrante police are very positive about Plan Cuadrante whereas opinions among citizens are divided. The chapter shows that there is also a difference in the way the police and citizens perceive security. I will analyze accounts and opinions on citizen security, predominantly of the Plan Cuadrante police and citizens. Furthermore, I will include the influence of media writings on perceptions of citizen security in this chapter. I will illustrate my findings with examples and experiences of my informants.

5.1. Police perception of Plan Cuadrante

Plan Cuadrante is perceived as very positive by the Plan Cuadrante police. The main positive aspects they mention correspond to the positive aspects of community policing as mentioned by Döller and Feltes (1993), these being 'reduction of fear of crime, increase of citizens confidence in the police, improved police community relationships, improved police officer job satisfaction and stimulations of solutions to community problems'. These aspects also show in Plan Cuadrante, although only in a small degree.

Citizens' fear of crime has indeed reduced slightly because of the increased police presence in the streets. Citizens say that because of the constant police surveillance they feel safer in the streets of Antigua. The policemen claim that since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante, there has been a reduction of fear of crime. According to them the constant surveillance works preventively because criminals keep a low profile and therefore citizens feel safer. Also, confidence in the police has rather increased and there is a slight improvement in police-community relations. However, this improved perception of the police-community relation does not count for the citizens in general, but only for the citizens that have had a positive experience with the Plan Cuadrante police and have therefore slightly adjusted their opinion and begun to trust the police more. I will explore the police-community relationship in greater detail in the next chapter.

The policemen praise highly the personal approach towards citizens, which is made possible because the urban center of Antigua has been divided into different small sectors,

²⁷ This chapter has been based on data obtained from interviews and informal conversations with policemen of Plan Cuadrante and Comisaria 74 of Sacatepéquez, as well as with citizens of Antigua Guatemala. The interviews and informal conversations were held from 07-02-2011 until 01-05-2011.

always patrolled by the same team of policemen. The small sectors make it easier to get to know the people and prevent delinquency. According to Luis Hernandez²⁸, the allocation of Plan Cuadrante policemen to one and the same sector of Antigua creates distinct confidence among the population. Other *agentes* also state that Plan Cuadrante has made it possible 'to get closer to the citizens'²⁹ and 'to improve communication'³⁰. *Comisario* Oliva Blanco³¹ also thinks that the most positive aspect of the Plan Cuadrante strategy is that it has been able to break the taboo of little communication. He says that 'at present there is open communication between the police and citizens, which is indispensable in order for Plan Cuadrante to succeed'. One of the policemen working in the office illustrates this point:

Before the implementation of Plan Cuadrante, the police had very little contact with the community. (...) However, Plan Cuadrante had been able to change this because of the fact that the Plan Cuadrante police relate more to the community.³²

Improved job satisfaction is hard to measure since the Plan Cuadrante policemen all came to work for Plan Cuadrante directly after graduating from the Police Academy and thus have not had experience as a policeman otherwise. Even so, the *agentes* seem to be proud to be part of the Plan Cuadrante unit, which is exactly what the superiors want to achieve³³. In their opinion, the citizens recognize the Plan Cuadrante police because of their orange vests and look at them differently than at the regular PNC. Some *agentes* point out the differences between the Plan Cuadrante police and the regular PNC: 'The PNC is reactive, whereas DCSP is preventive'³⁴.

Döller & Feltes (1993) have also stated that one of the favorable responses of community policing is that in the long run it can lead to a reduction in crime rates. In the three years that Plan Cuadrante has been operative crime rates have gone down already, according to both police and citizens. However, how Plan Cuadrante will further affect crime rates in the future remains questionable and highly depends on the deployment of the Plan Cuadrante strategy in the coming years.

Various *agentes* and superiors of Plan Cuadrante, as well as the *agentes* from Comisaria 74, also mention as a positive aspect that the policemen working for Plan Cuadrante came to work in Antigua directly after graduating from the Police Academy. In

²⁸ Interview agente Luis Hernandez (Plan Cuadrante) 22-02-2011.

²⁹ Interview agente Anabel Monteiro (Plan Cuadrante) 21-04-2011.

³⁰ Interview agente Benjamín Santos (Plan Cuadrante) 01-04-2011.

³¹ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

³² Interview agente Alejandro Rojas (Plan Cuadrante) 22-02-2011.

³³ Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 19-02-2011; Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

³⁴ Interview agente Alonso Morales (Plan Cuadrante) 01-04-2011.

2008, the year when Plan Cuadrante was implemented, all PNC police staff in Antigua were replaced by new staff, except for the ones from the Tourist Police (USETUR) because of their multilingualism. However, even though all old police staff were replaced by new, it is still hard to change people's perception of the police based on negative encounters in the past. This is something that will become clear in the next chapter. One of the older Plan Cuadrante *agentes* sees the high percentage of recently graduated staff as a disadvantage. He says:

The Plan Cuadrante police have a lot of very young staff that do not understand that they have a commitment to the population to provide security. Sometimes they do not understand that they have to do more than just pass by for the citizens to put their trust in them. There could be more awareness among the police staff. They need to relate a little more to the citizens and to all the citizens, not only with certain people. Some are very helpful from the beginning while others are not. We are all human beings, we are all different in the way we think and act. There are some policemen that circle round a neighborhood over and over during patrol without talking to anyone. But fortunately not everybody is like that³⁵.

The former provincial governor of Antigua considers it positive that 'new' policemen have been assigned to work for Plan Cuadrante, but regrets that the *agentes* who are all non-Antiguëñas do not know the areas in which they operate.

The Plan Cuadrante policemen note few negative aspects to the strategy itself. However, they all agree on the fact that there is a lack of staff and resources, not only within DCSP but within the whole PNC. In the three years that Plan Cuadrante has been operative, 29 *agentes* have been reassigned to other departments or have left the Plan Cuadrante unit for different reasons. The staff that has departed has not been replaced. The policemen say that they have to work very hard and long shifts, which is 'very tiring'³⁶. Besides, their rotating work schedule affects their biological clock.

Also, the policemen put forward that there should be better facilities for the police staff. *Comisario Oliva Blanco*³⁷ testifies to this: 'the circumstances in which the policemen live are poor'. The accommodations in San Gazpar, and to a lesser extent in the Plan Cuadrante precinct are poor indeed. Policemen sleep on bunk beds in dorms and have to share moldy bathrooms where running water is regularly lacking. Furthermore there are not enough patrol cars which means that the Plan Cuadrante police frequently patrol in cars loaned from Comisaria 74. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are also broken-down patrol cars

³⁵ Interview agente Luis Hernandez (Plan Cuadrante) 22-02-2011.

³⁶ Interview agente Fransisco Chávez (Plan Cuadrante) 05-04-2011.

³⁷ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

that are never repaired because of a lack of funds - according to the police. Even though the scant resources of the police in Guatemala (Frühling and Cancina 2005:30-31) are a serious problem, it is also used as an easy excuse by some policemen. For example, Benjamín Santos³⁸ tells me that 'sometimes we get a call from citizens and we cannot get to the scene because there are no patrol cars available. We have to go on foot and as a result, arrive late'. However, there is always a supporting/supervising unit that could offer assistance and even if this were not so, there are nine other Plan Cuadrante units to offer assistance.

The policemen believe that the lack of staff and resources negatively impact the effectiveness of Plan Cuadrante. The success of Plan Cuadrante and its potential to reduce delinquency largely depends on human resources. Anabel Monteiro³⁹ tells me that:

In Semana Santa there is a lot of police presence in the streets, there are two *agentes* and two *oficiales* on every street corner. It would be very good if this were not only the case during Semana Santa but also during the rest of the year because Antigua is a very touristic place.

During Semana Santa, a religious festival during which millions of national and international tourists visit Antigua, PNC police staff are brought to Antigua from other parts throughout the country, especially from Guatemala City, in order to increase security. In 2011, approximately 150 extra policemen were employed during Semana Santa⁴⁰. Worryingly, this implies that other places have even less security than they already did. Furthermore, policemen from the Police Academy are also working in Antigua without any experience in the field yet (Glebbeck 2003:227).

5.2. Citizen's perception of Plan Cuadrante

Not all citizens perceive Plan Cuadrante the same way the police do. Many are even unfamiliar with its very existence. However, when I explain citizens that the Plan Cuadrante police are 'the ones with the orange vest' they know what I am talking about; even though this does not necessarily mean that they are familiar with the strategy. It appears that all citizens, whether positive or negative about the police, notice that there is increased police presence and surveillance. However, very few 'regular' citizens seem to know exactly what the Plan Cuadrante strategy entails. This is probably because they have not been given information about Plan Cuadrante or because they are not interested. 'We do not really attach

³⁸ Interview agente Benjamín Santos (Plan Cuadrante) 01-04-2011.

³⁹ Interview agente Anabel Monteiro (Plan Cuadrante) 21-04-2011.

⁴⁰ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

a lot of value to the new policing strategies,⁴¹ says Isabella Rodriguez. A survey that I carried out in cuadrante 9 (La Merced) proves that as much as 62 percent of the respondents living in this neighborhood supposedly have not received information about Plan Cuadrante. Many neighborhood residents also claim to be unaware of Plan Cuadrante. However, some citizens do have extensive knowledge of Plan Cuadrante. This is because they are simply interested or have to deal with matters concerning citizen security for their work, such as Manuel Sanchez, who organizes events or Miguel Menendez Dasilva, a local business-owner. Another reason can be that they personally know Plan Cuadrante policemen.

Citizens that are involved in Plan Cuadrante, such as the members of committee La Merced perceive Plan Cuadrante more positively. However, having more knowledge about Plan Cuadrante, they also note various flaws, such as 'a lack of commitment and effort on the part of the Plan Cuadrante *agentes*'⁴². Citizens that are not involved in Plan Cuadrante in general do not perceive the plan as positive, either because of the lack of knowledge of the plan or because they do not distinguish between the Plan Cuadrante police and the regular PNC. After talking about Plan Cuadrante with citizens on various occasions I noticed a slight adjustment in their opinion of it, either because they see positive aspects to the strategy after gaining more knowledge or because they actually realized that they have had positive experiences with the Plan Cuadrante police. From my survey I can also conclude that most citizens would like to learn more about Plan Cuadrante and are open to steps taken by the police in order to improve citizen security: for example, they suggest that Plan Cuadrante police stop by and carry out more foot patrol. However, it remains unclear whether they are themselves willing to actively contribute to this.

Citizens consider the fact that the Plan Cuadrante police are young and came straight from the Police Academy as a positive aspect of Plan Cuadrante. However, one of my informants, who is the general manager of an important business in Antigua, thinks that Plan Cuadrante has no chance of succeeding because the chiefs are not 'new' policemen.

5.3. Police perception of citizen security

Duce and Pérez Perdomo (in Frühling *et. al* 2003:79) have explained that citizen security is not only determined by the number of incidents of violent crime, but also by the manner in which crime is experienced. The police relate citizen security predominantly to the number of incidents of violent crime, and say that citizens' security has improved significantly since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante. According to the policemen the security situation in Antigua was not very good prior to that. One *agente* explains: 'When we came to work in Antigua it was a mess, everywhere there were thieves robbing cars, stealing from shops,

⁴¹ Interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011.

⁴² Meeting JLS La Merced 12-05-2011.

robbing tourists⁴³. The policemen also tell me that there was a lot of disorder and that there were many after-parties, especially during weekend nights when many non-residents visit Antigua to go out. Many policemen also tell me that there were *maras*⁴⁴ operating in Antigua.

Oficial Perez Duering tells me that Plan Cuadrante has been put into practice in Antigua because the citizens opted for the implementation of the plan. This is confirmed by *comisario* Oliva Blanco⁴⁵ and the mayor of Antigua⁴⁶. The *Oficial* says that Plan Cuadrante was implemented in Guatemala City because of the demand for citizen security, and since the plan was 'remarkably effective for the entire population'⁴⁷, the Antiguëñas also asked for Plan Cuadrante. According to the DCSP *agentes*, Plan Cuadrante has been very effective in improving citizen security: delinquency has decreased and there is less disorder in the streets. *Comisario* Oliva Blanco even says that delinquency has gone-down by 80 percent⁴⁸, but unfortunately I have not been able to get statistical information to back this up. Newspapers note a smaller but still significant decrease of 60 percent in delinquency rates since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante, even though citizens rate this at a mere 30 percent⁴⁹. The policemen say that there is very little crime and violence and that severe incidents such as lynching and murder never occur in Antigua, contrary to anywhere else in the country. Statistical data⁵⁰ show that there was one death by firearm and one by stabbing in March 2011 in Antigua, which disproves their argument that murder never occurs. However, in comparison to murder and crime rates in the nearby capital there are indeed almost no grave incidents in Antigua. This is what their premise is probably based on. The policemen name car theft as the biggest problem in Antigua, which is confirmed by statistics⁵¹. For example in April 2011 there were 21 vehicles and seven motorcycles stolen. In comparison with these high theft statistics, remaining negative facts include one residential robbery, one stolen motorcycle by violence, and two stolen firearms. It has to be noted though, that much crime in Guatemala goes unreported as people do not give account because they feel this is useless, or out of fear for reprisal.

The Plan Cuadrante police describe Antigua as 'peaceful'. Because 'there is hardly any crime or violence, just car theft', they all say they feel safe during their work. Most are happy to be working in Antigua because there is not as much risk involved as in other parts of the country. Almost all of them start talking about Guatemala City when we talk about citizen security. They say that Guatemala City is very unsafe and some of them admit to

⁴³ Interview agente Marisol Dominguez (Plan Cuadrante) 12-03-2011.

⁴⁴ Youth gangs.

⁴⁵ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁴⁶ Informal conversation major Adolfo Vivar Marroquín 23-05-2011.

⁴⁷ Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 19-02-2011.

⁴⁸ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁴⁹ Article Prensa Libre February 2009.

⁵⁰ Statistical data of March and April 2011, Comisaria 74 of Sacatepéquez.

⁵¹ Statistical data of March and April 2011, Comisaria 74 of Sacatepéquez.

rather not wanting to go or work there. However, some policeman also say that sometimes they wished for a bit more action because working in Antigua can also be a little 'boring because nothing happens'. One of the policemen, Fabio Cifuentes⁵², says that for him the feeling of security during his work does not only depend on the fact that Antigua is quite safe. He says that he feels safe because he is always alert. 'You never know what will happen during your work as a policeman. No matter where you work, you always have to be alert. I feel safe because I always pay attention'.

The policemen of the Comisaria also have a somewhat different perception of security during their work than the Plan Cuadrante police. They mention that they are 'afraid in the streets because their lives are always on the line'⁵³, but also that they feel safe while in the city center of Antigua because of the vast police presence. They say that in the municipalities they feel less safe and more vulnerable because there is little police presence and because the police-community relation leaves much more to be desired in the villages of Sacatepéquez than in Antigua. In these areas areas the incidents of lynchings and attacks on the police mentioned earlier on regularly make it to the headlines.

5.4. Citizen's perception on citizen security

Contrary to the police, citizens do not relate security predominantly to the number of incidents of violent crime but also to the way they understand, interpret and value security. They share the opinion with the police that Antigua is a fairly quiet and safe city, especially in comparison with other parts of the country. 'In Antigua security is very well developed. This is the main reason why I decided to live in Antigua after having lived in other parts of the country,'⁵⁴ says Javier Garcia. The citizens that are familiar with Plan Cuadrante say that Antigua has become safer since the implementation of the plan because of the continuous police presence and preventive effect of the police patrols. What is especially significant is that citizens who are unfamiliar with Plan Cuadrante also claim that they feel citizen security in Antigua has improved over the past three years, which is exactly since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante. They tell me that Antigua is now much safer than before, but they do not directly relate the improved citizen security to Plan Cuadrante. They do mention the increased police surveillance as a reason for the improved citizen security. My survey shows that 41 percent of the neighborhood residents feel that citizen security has improved since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante. Whether positive or negative about the police, the increased police presence and surveillance thus improves the citizen's sense of security. However, all the citizens I have interviewed have experienced or know someone who has

⁵² Interview agente Fabio Cifuentes (Plan Cuadrante) 14-04-2011.

⁵³ Interview agente Celia Arrivillaga (Comisaria 74) 18-05-2011.

⁵⁴ Interview Javier Garcia 25-02-2011.

been subjective to attacks, assaults or robbery in Antigua. Fortunately, citizens have not experienced worse crimes, such as murder, in Antigua, but some of them have horrible stories about what has happened in the surroundings of Antigua where there are few or no police present. One informant tells me that her niece was hanged in a farmland nearby Antigua⁵⁵. Another informant⁵⁶ tells me she has been raped in one of Antigua's surrounding villages.

Citizens are still very cautious and aware of the fact that citizens' security in Guatemala as a country is 'very bad'. Just as pointed out by Neild (2003:281) citizens feel unprotected by the system that is meant to protect them. Many citizens feel like citizen security in Guatemala is simply non-existent. They are all of the opinion that Guatemala is a very unsafe country, and that Antigua is the safest place to live because of the constant police presence. Also, Antigua being a small city in which citizens are familiar with one another seems to positively affect their perception of citizen security. However, citizens feel safe because of the constant police surveillance and not because of police performance. They are not satisfied with the current police performance and mentality, whereas contrastingly they see the permanent police presence as positive.

Even though in general the perception of security in Antigua among the citizens has improved since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante, citizens feel that they cannot rely on the police to secure their safety. Isabella Rodriguez tells:

When something happens the police make a big scene: they shout, get out of the car, and register people, but afterwards nothing happens. They forget about the incident and do not attach value to what is really important. They should be more conscious, responsible, and a lot more serious in their work. They are here to keep citizens safe, no matter who it is and in what sector. They have to take any incident seriously because the life of someone could depend on it, whether it is a foreigner, a local, a child or a grown-up. You never know what is going to happen and suddenly someone could have died if the police do not take incidents seriously⁵⁷.

Ungar (2007:25) pointed out that citizens turn to private alternatives to protect themselves and their property. In Antigua, citizens also take precautions to guarantee their own security. For example, Antonio Gomez shows me a very large knife he always carries when he has to walk home alone late at night. Gabriel Ramirez also always carries a pocket knife after being

⁵⁵ Interview Elvira Dacruz 04-04-2011.

⁵⁶ Anonymous.

⁵⁷ Interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011.

robbed three times in Antigua. Other citizens, such as Christina Estevez⁵⁸ and Isabella Rodriguez⁵⁹ say that they never walk home alone late at night. Citizens feel that the fear of crime puts restrictions on their social lives. Kooning and Kruijt (2007), Ungar (2007), and Briceño-Léon and Zubillaga (2010) also stated that citizen insecurity limits one's freedom to move and to act socially. Citizens also tell me that they prefer to stay at home after dark to not put themselves in danger. 'Why would you go out at night when you do not have to?' says Monica Perez, 'at least in my home I am safe'⁶⁰.



Figure 5: Security at private business

Even though parents perceive Antigua as relatively safe, they are also extremely worried about their children. Monica Perez is very concerned when her daughter goes out at night. She says: 'it is not distrust in her, but distrust in all the people that can do her wrong. Sometimes this torments me'. Isabella Rodriguez, mother of four children under the age of sixteen, takes precautions to make sure nothing happens to her children:

I am very strict with my children when it comes to guaranteeing their safety. I always ask my children to please not leave the house in the afternoon when I am not around. I try to buy everything they need before I go to work so they do not have to get out of the house⁶¹.

⁵⁸ Interview Christina Estevez 12-04-2011.

⁵⁹ Interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011.

⁶⁰ Informal conversation Monica Perez 06-04-2011.

⁶¹ Interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011.

Business owners also take security precautions. In the popular restaurant where Isabella Rodriguez works, they installed a private security system with cameras, alarms and private police after yet another robbery about seven years ago. The staff feel like they cannot rely on the national police. Carlos Alvarez feels the same. To provide security for his business he mostly works with The Tourist Assistance Program (Asistur) and private security⁶². Small businesses and stores take their own precautions, such as barred doors and windows and many locks (figure 5), since private security is a privilege the majority cannot afford.

As mentioned before, there are neighborhood groups engaged in citizen security, such as the JLS mentioned earlier. As Glebbeek (2003:270) pointed out, they have the task to analyze the public security situation, and formulate and evaluate plans on local security, while engaging the community in the discussion on security problems. There are also 'neighborhood watches' initiated by citizens who, contrary to the JLS, focus on neighborhood surveillance (Glebbeek 2003:265). Isabella Rodriguez tells me that in her neighborhood (cuadrante 10), citizens felt forced to get organized to do something about the security situation. These '*vecinos unidos contra la violencia*' (residents organized against violence) are always alert and have an alarm system with bells they ring when something happens in the neighborhood. From the early evening until late at night a group of men carries out surveillance in the neighborhood, approximately three till four times a week⁶³. According to themselves and Isabella they have never had to use violence. Isabella, however, tells me that if they were to use violence, they would not hesitate to do so. In other cuadrantes there are also alarm systems (figure 6), but most citizens tell me that these are never used and others say that it has not been necessary to use them.



Figure 6: Say no to delinquency. Automatic alarm of the block'

According to *comisario* Oliva Blanco⁶⁴ a big problem is that citizens believe that crime and violence is merely a problem between delinquents and the police. As discussed by Klockars

⁶² Informal conversation Carlos Alvarez 24-05-2011.

⁶³ Informal conversation Isabella Rodriguez 24-05-2011; Participant Observation 25-05-2011; Participant Observation 30-05-2011.

⁶⁴ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

(in Newburn 2005:455), the police' impossible task to resolve crime raises the public's expectations of the police and puts pressure on police performance. The citizens blame the police for the situation of insecurity. As noted by Bittner (1990:19) the police are the most accessible authority for the public and therefore represent the state's power for both good and bad. The public blame the police for being ineffective in dealing with crime and disorder, whereas the police blame the higher authorities. Many policemen say that they cannot be held accountable for the high rates of impunity because they hand over criminals to the judges and this is where they are set free again, for example because of a lack of evidence or because the court is bribed. *Comisario* Oliva Blanco, as well as many policemen, believes that the public just want someone to blame for the security problems in the country. 'They do not know what is going on internally within the PNC, they do not know about the administrative and economic problems that affect police performance'⁶⁵. However, if the police do not catch criminals, citizens feel as if the police are not performing. This confirms Bittner's (1990:21) statement that 'the symbolism of the police officer as a crime fighter' serves to show the public that they are 'doing their job'.

5.5. Social exclusion in providing citizen security

Kooning and Kruijt (2007:12) have explained that the absence of security and law-enforcing authorities especially prevails in the neglected parts of the cities in Latin-America. As a consequence, the poor are disproportionately affected by violence. Plan Cuadrante has only been implemented in the urban center of Antigua. As such the outskirts of the cities are not part of the coverage of Plan Cuadrante. According to the policemen the strategy has been implemented in the center because there was, and still is, more need for citizen and tourist security since there is more activity and since most car thefts, assaults and robberies took place in the center⁶⁶. Therefore the middle and upper-class living in the center enjoy the benefits of Plan Cuadrante while the outskirts of Antigua, where the less prosperous citizens live, enjoy little police surveillance.

It is significant that the Plan Cuadrante police repetitively speak of 'tourist security'. Even though it is undoubtedly important to provide security for the large numbers of tourists that visit Antigua, it seems that the Guatemalan government puts a lot more money and dedication into security and the police in Antigua because the city, being Guatemala's most popular tourism destination, is simply too important for Guatemala's image and economy. According to many citizens and tourists⁶⁷, Plan Cuadrante has only been implemented in the

⁶⁵ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁶⁶ Interviews Plan Cuadrante police 07-02-2011 until 31-05-2011.

⁶⁷ Interviews and informal conversations citizens and tourists 07-02-2011 until 31-05-2011.

center of Antigua because they do not care as much about the outskirts and are more willing to protect the middle and upper-classes than the urban poor.

Because of the fact that Plan Cuadrante has only been implemented in the center, there are no significant differences between the different cuadrantes. Obviously, there are differences between residents in terms of economic and social circumstances as they occur in any city, but these do not correspond to specific cuadrantes. However, it seems that even within the sector of Plan Cuadrante, not all citizens enjoy the same benefits from Plan Cuadrante. Some citizens are being involved more in Plan Cuadrante than others. As discussed before, the Plan Cuadrante police basically only provide extensive security for the bigger and important hotels, whereas smaller hotels have to rely on private security - if they have security at all. Also the Plan Cuadrante *agentes* always visit the same stores, and thus exclude others from involvement in Plan Cuadrante. Once, when two Plan Cuadrante policemen took me home after going out with Isabella Rodriguez she wanted to buy something and we went to one of these 'frequently-visited-stores'. The store was still open and running at 2 a.m. even though the *Ley Seca*⁶⁸ dictates that all restaurants and entertainment facilities as well as stores have to be closed at 1 a.m. The police obviously seem to turn a blind eye to this rule. This and the fact that the police always visit the same stores give citizens the idea that these stores are 'paying the police for security'⁶⁹ or that 'the police take bribes'⁷⁰. The police deny such accusations, but do confirm corruption within the police institution. They all know corruption exists but supposedly none of the *agentes* I have talked to has ever been guilty of corruption themselves.

Some citizens, such as Christina Estevez and Javier Garcia⁷¹, emphasize that the police are either unwilling or incapable of providing security for all the citizens of Antigua. Christina thinks that the police should pay more attention to the outskirts of Antigua. She is unaware of the fact that Plan Cuadrante has not been implemented in these areas. Javier Garcia says that security problems such as robberies are mostly present in the marginal areas of Antigua because the people living in the outskirts of the city do not benefit from the security measures taken in the center. He says that 'they definitely do not have the same privileges as the part of the population living in the tourist areas have'⁷². As such, Plan Cuadrante does not seem to address the underlying problems of increasing crime, violence and insecurity mentioned by Koonings & Kruijt (2007) and Glebbeek (unpublished paper 2007), such as social exclusion, inequality and poverty. If anything, differences between rich

⁶⁸ The Ley Seca was implemented on 29 April 2008 and regulates the opening hours and operation of businesses in Antigua.

⁶⁹ Informal conversation Antonio Gomez 25-03-2011.

⁷⁰ Interview Monica Perez 29-03-2011; Interview Christina Estevez 12-04-2011; informal conversation Antonio Gomez 25-03-2011.

⁷¹ Interview Christina Estevez 12-04-2011; interview Javier Garcia 25-02-2011.

⁷² Interview Javier Garcia 25-02-2011.

and poor are emphasized and society becomes more divided along class lines. This is also reflected by the fact that Antigua seems to receive a 'favourable treatment of the authorities'⁷³ which is noticed by many citizens. It seems that Antigua being Guatemala's most important tourist destination plays a significant role in the objective of improving citizen security and tourist security in the city. In comparison with other cities in Guatemala, Antigua has substantial police presence. For example, Plan Cuadrante in Antigua has more staff and resources than Plan Cuadrante in Quetzaltenango, which is a bigger city and has more, and more serious security issues⁷⁴. The *Prensa Libre*⁷⁵ regularly report severe incidents, such as murders, or drug related violence in the Quetzaltenango areas, whereas there have not been such reports about Antigua during the research period.

5.6. Media influence on perception of citizen security

Duce and Pérez Perdomo (in Frühling et. Al 2003:13) have stated that citizen security is not only determined by the number of incidents of violent crime but also by people's perception of security. Besides society itself, the media plays an important role in feeding perceptions of insecurity. Guatemalan national and regional newspapers all report numerous crimes and violent incidents every day⁷⁶. Flicking through a newspaper, you are overwhelmed by all the reports on assassinations and murders, especially in Guatemala City. Christina Estevez⁷⁷ says that the news and newspaper articles on violence frighten her and especially scare her mother, who is so afraid something will happen to her that she would not let her study in Guatemala City. She feels safer now that her daughter attends a University in Antigua. Isabella Rodriguez also says that media writings scare her:

It frightens me because security is obviously not applicable to all people living in our country. It also frightens me because I have parents, brothers and sisters, children. I feel incapable and I am scared to know what citizen security will be like in five years, when my children are not living with me anymore and I will not be able to protect them⁷⁸.

Citizens involved in Plan Cuadrante such as the members of the *juntas*, also express their opinion about the alleged media influence on the peace of mind of fellow citizens. One of the members of committee La Merced says that 'when people get assaulted they immediately

⁷³ Interview Javier Garcia 25-02-2011.

⁷⁴ For more information on Plan Cuadrante in Quetzaltenango see Josemans, Michèle (2011). 'Bridging ideals and reality: A case study of community policing strategy 'Plan Cuadrante' in post-civil war Quetzaltenango, Guatemala'.

⁷⁵ Secondary research from 07-02- 2011 until 29-05-2011.

⁷⁶ Secondary research from 07-02-2011 until 29-05-2011.

⁷⁷ Interview Christina Estevez 12-04-2011.

⁷⁸ Interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011.

think of blood and death because of all the things that they read in the newspapers and see on the news'⁷⁹.

Even though media writings in general do have an influence on the way citizens perceive citizen security, media reports on Plan Cuadrante do not seem to significantly influence this since there are few writings on Plan Cuadrante and citizens do not read them. I have not spoken to a single citizen that recalled having read an article about Plan Cuadrante.

Since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante in 2008, there have been various newspaper articles labelling Plan Cuadrante a 'failure'⁸⁰ and 'not being able to live up to its expected results'⁸¹. The negative media reports are written off as untrue by the Plan Cuadrante police. They say that many journalists are 'liars' and 'thrill-seekers', and that 'when negative things are written about us, this only inspires to work harder so the citizens will say 'what liars''⁸². Oficial Perez Duering also says that "the press give a lot of critique, but they are always looking for the negative things. They do not write about the accomplishments of the Plan Cuadrante police and the police in general"⁸³. Newspaper articles, however, also note positive aspects such as various arrests made by the Plan Cuadrante police and a decrease in delinquency rates in Antigua. In the next chapter we will see how Plan Cuadrante, including media reports on the plan, influences the police-community relation.

⁷⁹ Participant Observation meeting committee La Merced 12-05-2011.

⁸⁰ Article by Alvarado February 2010, Prensa Libre; article by Alvarez and Valdez September 2009, Prensa Libre; Media archive DCSP 2008.

⁸¹ Media archive DCSP 2008.

⁸² Interview agente Alejandro Rojas (Plan Cuadrante) 22-02-2011.

⁸³ Informal conversation oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 07-02-2011.

6. The influence of Plan Cuadrante on the relationship between the police and citizens

In this chapter I will analyse the influence of Plan Cuadrante on the police-community relationship. In chapter two and three I have discussed the police-community relationship in general and more specifically in Latin-America and Guatemala. In these chapters it became clear that the police-community relationship in Guatemala is very fragile and leaves much to be desired. Important concepts that I have discussed, such cooperation, communication and trust and confidence will come back in this chapter. The chapter will show that although improvement in the police-community relation is initiated by implementing Plan Cuadrante in Antigua, progress is slow and difficult to achieve.

6.1. Perceptions of the police-community relation

As explained by USDOJ (2009) and Fridell (2004), community policing is based on the notion that community interaction and support can help control public safety issues. As such, the police-community relation is an integral component of Plan Cuadrante. Glebbeek (2010) and Neild (2003:279) have explained that the relationship between the police and citizens in Guatemala is a very fragile and complex one because of the history and the reputation that the police developed during the civil war - of being unprofessional, violent, repressive and corrupt. As such, community policing strategies are on weak grounds in post-civil war countries such as Guatemala, precisely because they are focused on closer cooperation between the police and the community. An important objective of Plan Cuadrante is to improve this negative image of the police and to improve the relationship between the police and the citizens. Therefore, cooperation and communication between the two is essential. However, the police and citizens perceive this relationship differently.

The police all note a significant improvement in the police-community relationship since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante. They say that there is more contact and communication with the citizens, which is possible because of the Plan Cuadrante strategy. Some policemen, including *oficial* Perez Duering, say that the contact with the citizens is very good and are exclusively positive about the police-community relation. Other policemen even speak of friendship: 'we have managed to win the friendship of every person in our sector'⁸⁴. However, other policemen feel that there is still much left to improve and are not satisfied with the relationship as it currently is, even though they do believe that the relationship has improved significantly since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante. *Agente* Luis Hernandez says that it will take a lot of time before the police-community relation is as it should be, and even questions whether this will be possible at all: 'I would like everybody to trust in the

⁸⁴ Interview agente Humberto Perez Juarez (Plan Cuadrante) 08-04-2011.

police, but one cannot get blood out of a stone⁸⁵. He thinks that both the citizens and the police are not ready for such a relationship. Besides that, Luis Hernandez, as well as some fellow policemen, says that the relationship very much depends on every individual policemen and every individual citizen. One *agente* also notes the importance of body language and facial expression of the police vis-à-vis the citizens, 'so people will not think you are harsh and difficult'⁸⁶.

Citizens that are familiar with Plan Cuadrante, such as Javier Garcia, Manuel Sanchez and Miguel Menendez Dasilva, are of the opinion that there are positive aspects to the strategy, but that it would be very hard to make a significant change in the police-community relation because of many people's negative image of the police. I have not come across any citizens that are fully positive about the police-community relationship. Most are very negative about the police and the police-community relationship. In fact, many of them say that there is no relationship at all between the police and the citizens. The personal approach of Plan Cuadrante that is so praised by the police does thus not transfer to all the citizens.

Only the citizens that are in some way involved in Plan Cuadrante feel that the relationship has improved. For example, the president of committee La Merced says that the Plan Cuadrante police visit his business and consult him about the security situation. He also carries a leaflet with telephone numbers of Plan Cuadrante. The people working in the funeral house in La Merced (cuadrante 9) are also fully positive about Plan Cuadrante and the police-community relationship. They say the Plan Cuadrante police stop by at the funeral house to use the toilet and to take a rest. Therefore the people working at the funeral house have regular contact with the Plan Cuadrante police. However, in the smaller shops in La Merced the Plan Cuadrante police have never entered or stopped by to talk to the owners or employees, nor consult them about security issues they might have. One woman tells me that she had been robbed while the Plan Cuadrante police were in the same street, but that they did not do anything.

6.2. Cooperation and involving the citizen

As stated by Fridell (2004:3), in community policing the public's involvement is viewed as a 'co-producer' of community safety and wellness. Therefore, involving the citizen in Plan Cuadrante is crucial in achieving its goals. The Plan Cuadrante police say that they involve the community by visiting the businesses and houses and asking the citizens about what kind of problems they might have. When Plan Cuadrante had just been implemented, they

⁸⁵ 'Yo quisiera que se confiará en la policía, pero yo creo que es como tapar el sol con un dedo de decir que todos confían en la policía' (interview Luis Hernandez 22-02-2011).

⁸⁶ Interview agente Alonso Morales (Plan Cuadrante) 01-04-2011.

had a program called '*Plan Puerta a Puerta*' (door-to-door), which meant they had to visit the businesses and people living in each cuadrante to inform the residents about the plan and hand out a leaflet with information about Plan Cuadrante and the direct phone numbers of the Plan Cuadrante patrol cars. The policemen that work in the streets claim to still regularly pay visit to businesses and houses, but the policemen in the office say that currently the policemen do not visit as many businesses and houses as in the beginning of Plan Cuadrante because the information from the residents is now obtained through the JLS. *Comisario* Oliva Blanco testifies to this: 'the number of visits to businesses has gone down and the visit to citizens' houses even more'⁸⁷. There is just one policeman that admits not to comply with the community visits: 'I do not see the point in doing this anymore, I already know everybody in my cuadrante'⁸⁸.

Comisario Oliva Blanco ensures that Plan Cuadrante is recovering the lost activity and the 'contact that the civilian thinks he has lost'⁸⁹, implying that this is a consequence of neglect by citizens as much as by the police. In meetings with authorities and JLS *comisario* Oliva Blanco affirms that the Plan Cuadrante policemen will resume visits to residents' houses, station the patrol cars for a while and talk to citizens. He also stresses the importance of the police-community relationship in the motivational talks during the change of shifts⁹⁰. According to *agente* Luis Hernandez however, the young Plan Cuadrante staff do not understand that they have a commitment to the population. He thinks that the policemen do not involve the citizens enough and that this complicates changing the police-community relations.

Journalist Jorge Pop⁹¹, who is specialized in subjects related to citizen security and has been following Plan Cuadrante, believes that the Plan Cuadrante police and the police in general should be more participatory. Citizens also feel that the Plan Cuadrante police are not putting their utmost effort into involving them. They feel that the police should take the first step into getting citizens involved and that they cannot expect the citizens to simply participate without informing them better and making a greater effort. During a meeting⁹² the members of committee La Merced asked the Plan Cuadrante police to involve the citizens in the neighbourhood by talking to them so as to get familiar with the neighbourhood residents and to break the barrier between them. Citizens in this neighborhood also indicate that they want to be more involved. In my survey they put forward suggestions such as having a presentation about Plan Cuadrante in their neighborhood. Other citizens asked the Plan

⁸⁷ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁸⁸ Informal conversation Christian del Valle 20-03-2011.

⁸⁹ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁹⁰ Participant Observation 23-05-2011.

⁹¹ Interview journalist Jorge Pop 27-05-2011.

⁹² Participant Observation 12-05-2011.

Cuadrante police 'to please visit our businesses'⁹³ and 'to have periodical meetings in which we can receive safety tips and see the progress of Plan Cuadrante so we can feel more secure'⁹⁴. *Comisario* Oliva Blanco very much regrets the negative remarks of citizens. However, he thinks that the citizens should put more effort into involvement in Plan Cuadrante themselves as well. He says that

...if the Plan Cuadrante policemen do not start the dialogue with the citizens, the citizens have to start the dialogue with the police. They [the citizens] should call them [the police] to tell them what is going on in the neighborhood or when they have a problem and the Plan Cuadrante police will come⁹⁵.

Newspapers also write that 'the population refuses to collaborate'⁹⁶. Also according to the president of committee La Merced, Alberto, 'citizens do not want to make a real effort; they expect all-out commitment from the police without having to do anything in return'⁹⁷. Most citizens however say that they do not want to collaborate with the police because this is useless if the police themselves do not take their tasks seriously. However, for a project such as Plan Cuadrante to be successful it is essential that both citizens and police make an effort to collaborate.

6.3. Citizen participation

USDOJ (2009) and Fridell (2004) have discussed the main elements of community policing. One of these is community partnerships. USDOJ (2009) has also stated that in a true partnership, the police and the community should make important decisions together. Therefore active citizen participation is very important for Plan Cuadrante to succeed. Glebbeek (2003:265) pointed out that there are various initiatives to encourage citizen participation in local security issues, such as the JLS. However, the JLS which should function as the link between the police and the community do not succeed in achieving active citizen participation of all the residents in their neighborhood. Unfortunately, there is just a small group of citizens that is actively involved in local security issues.

The Plan Cuadrante policemen all acknowledge the importance of citizen participation. For example one policeman says: 'alone the police cannot really do anything; we need the help of the people living in the area'⁹⁸. According to the police it is impossible to

⁹³ Survey carried out in cuadrante 9 (La Merced) in March-April 2011.

⁹⁴ Survey carried out in cuadrante 9 (La Merced) in March-April 2011.

⁹⁵ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

⁹⁶ Article by Hernandez, PNC archive November 2008.

⁹⁷ Interview committee La Merced president Alberto 21-03-2011.

⁹⁸ Interview agente Christan del Valle (Plan Cuadrante) 14-04-2011.

carry out their work without the help of the citizens, because the latter are the ones that live in the sector and therefore have an integral knowledge of the neighborhood and things that are going on. The police on the other hand just work there and are not always present. As such, 'the police-community relation is of major importance for the performance of the Plan Cuadrante police and the security of the citizens in Antigua'⁹⁹. Besides, many policemen also think that the citizens are more likely to know about problems and criminality in the neighborhood because criminals obviously stay away from the police as far as they can. However, the police are of the opinion that that out of neglect or fear for reprisal, many citizens do not share important information they might have. *Agente* Anabel Monteiro says that 'citizens almost only call when a vehicle gets stolen, but for the rest they hardly call the police'¹⁰⁰. According to the police, people's unwillingness to report incidents that have happened is a very big problem and obstructs the police-community relationship. The police cannot act when they do not have information to act upon, because as many policemen repeatedly say: 'the police are not divine'¹⁰¹. They expect more encouragement from the citizens in order to be able to comply with their tasks, but they feel as if the citizens' willingness to participate is lacking.

Citizens on the other hand either feel that the police do not involve them or that participation would not make any difference either way, because 'the police practically do not do anything anyway'¹⁰². They know that the police are present and also feel that the police are accessible in that one can reach them on the phone, but citizens say that you can never count on the police. They repeatedly say that the police always arrive late and that they are not there when you really need them. Monica Perez says: 'The police are wimps. Their work only consists of going around the streets and doing nothing'¹⁰³. However, some citizens do not report crimes to the police because they have to go to the Plan Cuadrante office in San Pedro Panorama in order to report things. They do not have the time to go there or choose not to do so, which is why crimes indeed go unreported. For citizens this means that the police are not doing their job properly. Also, many citizens do not want to deal with the police because they hold a negative image of the police. They have had negative experience with policemen, such as the latter arriving hours after something has happened, or have been treated disrespectfully by policemen in the past. I will come back to the experiences with the police later on in this chapter.

⁹⁹ Interview comisario general Gustavo Adolfo Oliva Blanco (Plan Cuadrante) 09-05-2011.

¹⁰⁰ Interview agente Anabel Monteiro (agente) 21-04-2011.

¹⁰¹ Interviews and informal conversation Plan Cuadrante police from 07-02-2011 until 01-05-2011.

¹⁰² Interview Monica Perez 29-03-2011.

¹⁰³ '*De puros peluches estan. Su trabajo sólo es de andar en las calles*'. Interview Monica Perez 29-03-2011.

Even though citizens feel that it is better to not expect anything from the police and not come into a relationship of any kind with them, my survey¹⁰⁴ shows that as much as 88 percent of the citizens think that it is good to have police presence in the neighbourhood. They do want the police to visit their businesses and approach the citizens more, but many citizens feel that it is wasted time to be expecting this from the police.

6.4. Police image

According to the policemen, most citizens have positive comments about the Plan Cuadrante police. However, they are aware of the fact that there are also citizens that have a negative attitude vis-à-vis the police. One policeman tells me that these are mostly the older citizens, who remember the police as they used to be. However, he is of the opinion that a lot has changed and that “the police of today are not bad, everything is fine¹⁰⁵”. Other policemen also say that citizens do not like to talk to the police and would rather not have them around; this is out of fear for retaliation for reporting other people or maybe for even just talking to the police. *Oficial* Perez Duering also tells me that many Guatemalans call the work of the police into question. ‘They say that the police do not do their job, are corrupt and let criminals run free¹⁰⁶’. However, according to him the police are just trying to do their job and impunity in Guatemala is the fault of the legal system and judges. He says that when judges let criminals run free, citizens blame the police. ‘It is very hard to be a policeman¹⁰⁷’, he says.

The politicians do not care about the police. During Semana Santa for example, all police staff have to work overtime and their days off are taken away from them without compensation, while the politicians go on holiday and receive a bonus¹⁰⁸.

While citizens blame problems on the police, other policemen in turn also hold the government or the legal system responsible for this.

According to the police their image has changed since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante because there is more contact with the citizens. One of the policemen working in the office tells me that before the implementation of Plan Cuadrante ‘they [the citizens] looked at us [the police] like we were monsters and people were afraid¹⁰⁹’. According to the policemen, Plan Cuadrante has been able to break with this negative image. They note that the Plan Cuadrante police are perceived differently by citizens than the regular PNC. They

¹⁰⁴ Suvery carried out in cuadrante 9 (La Merced) in March-April 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Interview agente Humberto Perez Juarez (Plan Cuadrante) 08-04-2011.

¹⁰⁶ Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 14-04-2011.

¹⁰⁷ Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 14-04-2011.

¹⁰⁸ Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 14-04-2011.

¹⁰⁹ Interview agente Alejandro Rojas (Plan Cuadrante) 22-02-2011.

claim to have received positive comments specifically on the Plan Cuadrante police, such as that they serve the people better and are more friendly. The Plan Cuadrante policemen are happy to work for DCSP and wear the orange vests that distinguish their unit with pride. One policeman explains that ‘the orange vest is our image and this image is better than that of other PNC units. People have more trust in the Plan Cuadrante police¹¹⁰’. Another policemen also notes a difference in favor of the Plan Cuadrante police: ‘We came directly from the Police Academy. We are not here to harm people but to help them¹¹¹’. However, she says that sadly some citizens judge all police according to the wrongdoings of some of them. The young policemen thus are aware of the fact that they have a difficult task to complete in changing the reputation the police built up during the civil war in Guatemala - of being violent, repressive, corrupt and untrustworthy; as discussed by Glebbeek (2010) and Neild (2003:279). However, they also understand that changing this negative image of the police is crucial in order for Plan Cuadrante to be successful.

Contrary to what many policemen believe, most citizens do not distinguish between the Plan Cuadrante police and the regular police. Elvira Dacruz and Monica Perez say that ‘the police are the police¹¹²’ and they are all ‘corrupt’ and ‘abusive’. Antonio Gomez also feels that the police are ‘dangerous and capable of many bad deeds¹¹³’, even though – or perhaps precisely because - his own father was a policeman. He warns me every time I have an appointment with the police and tells me that I should not trust them, because as he says; ‘if the police are capable of murder, they certainly will not hesitate to harm you¹¹⁴’. However, Carlos Alvarez, who is predominantly negative about the police, says that ‘the young Plan Cuadrante *agentes* are polite and respectful¹¹⁵’.

A member of committee La Merced gives an example of the bad image of the police that the citizens hold:

One day Oficial Perez Duering stopped by my house to chat and I invited him in for a drink. One of the residents called to ask me what was going on because the police were in my house. They automatically think that there is something bad going on when there is police. The idea that citizens and police can be friends and just talk to each other simply does not occur to them. We have to break the bad image of the

¹¹⁰ Interview agente Benjamín Santos (Plan Cuadrante) 01-04-2011.

¹¹¹ Interview agente Marisol Dominguez (Plan Cuadrante) 12-03-2011.

¹¹² Interview Elvira Dacruz 04-04-2011; interview Monica Perez 29-03-2011.

¹¹³ Interview Antonio Gomez 25-03-2011.

¹¹⁴ Interview Antonio Gomez 25-03-2011

¹¹⁵ Informal conversation Carlos Alvarez 24-05-2011.

police. We are happy with the help of Plan Cuadrante, but I think that there is a lack of training of the policemen, and maybe a lack of information they get¹¹⁶.

This shows that communication and interactions between the police and citizens are not even seen as normal.

6.5. Communication and interactions between police and citizens

As stated by Schneider (1999:348), communication is an integral part of policing. Especially in community policing projects such as Plan Cuadrante, communication between the police and citizens is indispensable. Every single Plan Cuadrante policeman claims to understand the importance of relating to the community. However, Ericson (in Newburn 2005:217) has noted that most patrol officers' time is spent without direct contact with the public. This also counts for Antigua. Police and citizens greet each other, but the contact and communication between the two remains superficial, especially with the average citizens, and interactions mostly take place only when necessary. During patrol with the Plan Cuadrante police I have noticed that citizens know them and vice-versa, for example because they greet each other by name, but regularly it turns out that this person is somebody important or related to someone important. I have never seen the Plan Cuadrante police paying visits to businesses or houses to inform residents or ask them about their problems and daily preoccupations.

Klockars (in Newburn 2005) and Döller and Feltes (1993) have noted various aspects in the transformation of the organizational structure of the police when community policing is introduced. These include decentralization of the police and allocation of more responsibility to local police forces, and reorientation of foot patrol. Both mean that there is more and more personalized contact between the police and the community. However, the principles of community policing are not employed all the time or by some policemen not at all. Unfortunately this is an institution wide problem. Communication with the average citizen is therefore sluggish. A citizen present at a JLS meeting explains this:

The policemen are encapsulated; there is a big distance between the Plan Cuadrante police and the neighborhood residents. The Community Police¹¹⁷ on the other hand I do not even see as 'police' anymore, but as friends. They [the Community Police] talk to us to see how we are doing, the Plan Cuadrante police do not. The latter drive

¹¹⁶ Participant Observation meeting JLS La Merced 12-05-2011.

¹¹⁷ In Guatemala the La Oficina de la Policía Comunitaria was created, dedicated to the prevention and solution of problems with the community (PNUD 2009:193).

around the neighborhood without slowing down, stationing their vehicle or talking to residents¹¹⁸.

One policeman says that 'the police and citizens are both not ready for a real relationship'¹¹⁹. However, during JLS meetings the members of the junta address their negative comments directly to the Plan Cuadrante police, in particular to comisario Oliva Blanco. They talk respectfully to each other and try to look for solutions together, which means that - even though communication is far from perfect - the dialogue between the police and citizens is gaining momentum. My survey¹²⁰ shows that 24 percent of the neighborhood residents feel that the relationship with the police has improved since the implementation of Plan Cuadrante.

However, during a meeting¹²¹ police and citizens also conclude that there is a lack of communication on both sides. As discussed by Jackson and Bradford (2010:246), the lack of communication between the police and the public fosters the 'us against them situation', further alienating citizens from the police. Therefore progress in communication is essential in making a step in the direction of improving the police-community relation. Unfortunately, this progress is complicated by the fact that the citizens hold the police largely responsible for not communicating, and the other way around.

According to the police there are also other difficulties in communicating with the citizens. For example, Oficial Perez Duering explains:

Because Antigua is a very touristic destination, it is permanently visited by international as well as national tourists. Their culture is different from the Antiguëñan culture and therefore misunderstandings repeatedly arise because of actions they take such as travelling or roaming the streets late at night and often under the influence of whatever substance. Criminals take advantage of this to commit acts against the law¹²².

Since none of the Plan Cuadrante policemen are Antiguëñans themselves to begin with his explanation should be questioned, but apart from that this does not strike me as typical for Antigua. However, there is a truth in the fact that misunderstandings arise because of the language-barrier between the police and tourists or non-Guatemalan residents that do not

¹¹⁸ Participant Observation meeting JLS La Merced 12-05-2011.

¹¹⁹ Interview agente Luis Hernandez (Plan Cuadrante) 22-02-2011.

¹²⁰ Suvery carried out in cuadrante 9 (La Merced) in March-April 2011.

¹²¹ Participant Observation committee meeting La Merced (cuadrante 9) 12-05-2011.

¹²² Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 19-02-2011.

always speak Spanish. Sadly this also indicates that the emphasis the Plan Cuadrante police put on tourist security weakens their focus on citizen security.

6.6. Levels of trust and distrust between the police and citizens

As mentioned by Jackson and Bradford (2010), public trust and confidence are of vital importance to policing policy and practice. This especially counts for community policing strategies such as Plan Cuadrante, in which community engagement is one of the main characteristics. The success of Plan Cuadrante therefore depends a great deal on the development of trust-based partnerships between the police and citizens. If mutual trust and confidence are lacking, problems of crime and disorder will not be addressed according to the principles of community policing. Trust between the police and citizens is necessary in order for them to work together to reach the goal of reducing crime and perception of insecurity, which in turn will improve the quality of life of citizens.

However, as Neild (2003:279) has pointed out, there is little public trust and confidence in the police and other state institutions in post-conflict countries such as Guatemala, and relations between the police and the public are extremely poor. Therefore successful community policing can be extremely difficult. Glebbeek (2007:25;46) also talked about major obstructions to trust and cooperation between the police and citizens in Guatemala, such as incidents of lynching and attacks on the police. Fortunately there have not been situations like this in Antigua, which should mean that there are fewer obstacles to improvement in the police-community relation. However, in Antigua there is little trust and confidence in the police. Jackson and Bradford (2010:241) have stated that trust and confidence in the police can encourage active citizen participation and involvement in policing, make public bodies more locally accountable and responsible, and secure public cooperation with the police and compliance with the law. Since levels of trust and confidence in the police – whether Plan Cuadrante or regular PNC – are low, the active participation and cooperation of citizen is not being achieved.

Even though Plan Cuadrante tries to improve public trust in the police and according to the policemen a significant progress regarding this matter has been made, citizens seem to disagree with this. They feel that the police are unable or unwilling to assume an equal role. Therefore asymmetrical power relations between the two, which already exist because the police act in the name of the law and have the legal monopoly of violence, are aggravated. Wilson and Kelling (in Newburn 2005:465) have pointed out that power relations between the police and community are altered by motorized-patrol. It can indeed be concluded that the police car serves as a barrier between the police and citizens and excludes the latter. Citizens often do not even get the chance to approach a policeman

because they drive down the streets too fast and remain inside their vehicles. The police blame the lack or absence of foot patrol on staff shortages.

The asymmetrical power relations between the police and community affect mutual trust. Negative experiences citizens have had with the police seem to do so even more. Citizens I have interviewed have all had such experiences with the police or know of people that have had negative encounters with the police. Most citizens are not able to tell me whether these were experiences with the Plan Cuadrante police or the 'regular' police, but some citizens tell me about negative experiences with the former. For example, Christina Estevez tells me about an encounter with the Plan Cuadrante police in which 'they did not show any respect, were aggressive and insulted my friend'¹²³. She admits that she and her friends were causing nuisance because they were hanging around in a park with a group of minors late at night, but she felt that the police overreacted and that they should not have treated her and her friends the way they did.

However, citizens also tell me about positive experiences with the Plan Cuadrante police. Isabella Rodriguez¹²⁴ tells me that the Plan Cuadrante police had taken her to her house when she was walking home late after work. She says that she was a bit afraid because things like this did not happen in the past, but that this experience has given her more confidence in the police. However, the female *agente* that offered her the ride urged Isabella several times to never get into a patrol car at night with two male *agentes*. Isabella, as well as other female citizens, considers it positive that there are currently more female officers in Antigua than before. Apart from the female staff of Comisaria 74, DCSP has six female *agentes*. Before the old police staff in Antigua was replaced by the 21st promotion in 2008, none of the PNC *agentes* were female according to Isabella.

Despite citizens' positive experiences with the police, the impact of positive and negative encounters is strongly asymmetrical. A study by Skogan (2006:99;100) shows that 'the impact of having a bad experience is four to fourteen times as great as that of having a positive experience'. For example, Monica Perez goes on and on about negative experiences with the police and does not realize she recently has also had a positive encounter with the Plan Cuadrante police until I remind her. Isabella Rodriguez also thinks that the negative experiences outweigh the positive ones: 'their wrongdoings [of the police] completely cancel out their good qualities, and then there is no progress whatsoever'¹²⁵. Oficial Perez Duering also says that 'given the past of the PNC even (disrespectful) action of

¹²³ Interview Christina Estevez 12-04-2011.

¹²⁴ Interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011.

¹²⁵ 'Lo malo que ellos (the police) hacen tapa todo lo bueno, y entonces no hay avanza en ninguna forma para ningun lugar' (interview Isabella Rodriguez 12-04-2011).

the police is laid under a microscope and more value is attached to wrongdoings of the police than to those of citizens'¹²⁶.

The lack of trust and confidence in the police stands in the way of active citizens' participation and involvement, which in turn makes it hard for levels of trust to develop. Both citizens and police feel that the other party does not make enough effort, which impedes improving levels of trust and improving police-community relation. However, contrary to a decline in levels of trust in the police during a community policing pilot program in Villa Nueva Guatemala City (Frühling and Cancina 2005:26-29), citizens such as Isabella Rodriguez and Monica Perez have gained more trust in the police because of positive experiences with the latter. This is important because if Plan Cuadrante cannot retrieve the population's confidence in the police, the project will never function as it should.

6.7. Influence of media writings on the police-community relationship

As discussed, citizens predominantly feel that the police are incapable of providing citizen security, which for them is confirmed by the negative media reports. The numerous media writings on crime and violence negatively impact on police-community relations in the sense that citizens lose trust in the police's ability and willingness to maintain order. Journalist Jorge Pop¹²⁷ also believes that media writings influence citizens' mind-sets and negatively influence their willingness to enter into a beneficial relationship with the police. With regard to media writings on crime and violence in general, the Plan Cuadrante police seem to agree with this view. They think that because of the numerous reports on murders and other crimes in the country, people lose even more faith in the police institution than they already do.

Even though negative media writings on Plan Cuadrante are discarded as untrue by the Plan Cuadrante police, they also have an influence on the police-community relation. Newspaper articles report that already within the first year of Plan Cuadrante being operational the population did not trust in the citizen security project anymore and refused to collaborate with the police because Plan Cuadrante had not been lived up to the expected results. It is remarkable that secondary research shows that media reports on Plan Cuadrante have gone down in number every year since the implementation of the project¹²⁸. As described by Klockars (in Newburn 2005:453) community policing is brought with the expectation that it will reduce crime which puts pressure on the police to perform. However, the police's impossible task to resolve crime (Klockars in Newburn 2005:455) caused a rapid loss of citizens' faith in the new strategy since the feeling of insecurity persists. This impedes improving police-community relations.

¹²⁶ Interview oficial Jorge Rodolfo Perez Duering (Plan Cuadrante) 14-04-2011.

¹²⁷ Interview journalist Jorge Pop 27-05-2011.

¹²⁸ Media archive DCSP.

7. Conclusion

In Latin America crime and violence are rising and insecurity is a major concern of citizens. In Guatemala, perceptions of insecurity are even worse than during the civil war. Law enforcement is incapable of dealing with the alarming situation and trust in the police is very low. The Guatemalan government has turned to community policing models to address the security issues the country is facing. In 2008 'Plan Cuadrante', a community policing project from Chile, was implemented in Guatemala City, Quetzaltenango and Antigua.

This thesis has focused on Plan Cuadrante in one of these locations; Antigua Guatemala. It has attempted to find an answer to the central research question, 'How can Plan Cuadrante in Antigua Guatemala be described and evaluated in relation to police-community relationships and perceptions of citizen security?'. The purpose is to demonstrate from an anthropological perspective how Plan Cuadrante actually works in practice and what influence it has on perceptions of security and on police-community relations. The arguments presented in this thesis are based on data obtained during a sixteen-week case study in Antigua Guatemala.

Plan Cuadrante is a surveillance strategy that should improve citizen security because of its preventive approach. In addition, the focus on citizen participation and involvement in local security issues should improve the fragile police-community relation and encourage police and citizen to work together in the struggle against crime and violence. However, there appear to be many obstacles to the implementation of Plan Cuadrante.

First, the fact that Guatemala is a post-civil war country especially complicates the implementation of a community policing project such as Plan Cuadrante. During the civil conflict the police established a reputation of being violent, repressive and corrupt. Despite the war being over, citizens do not trust in the police and police-community relations are still very poor. Because community policing is centered on closer cooperation between police and citizens, a good police-community relation is essential in order for the strategy to function well. However, citizens' negative view of the police is so institutionalized that changing this is a very difficult and lengthy process.

Second, and along the same lines, there are many impediments in the police-community relationship: poor communication; a lack of trust and confidence in the police; corruption; social exclusion of citizens; and a lack of commitment and effort on the part of both Plan Cuadrante policemen and citizens. The Plan Cuadrante police claim the police-community relation has greatly improved, whereas unfortunately few citizens seem to agree.

Third, implementation of Plan Cuadrante is difficult because the PNC is poorly staffed and equipped: not all *cuadrantes* can be staffed at all times; policemen have to work many hours; there are not enough 'DCSP' patrol cars; damaged patrol cars are not repaired or

replaced; Plan Cuadrante staff that has been allocated to other departments have not been replaced; and the circumstances the policemen live in are poor. The lack of staff and resources is a major weakness in the project: the Plan Cuadrante division is insufficiently staffed to meet citizens' demands and does not have the resources to comply with their tasks. Above that, the already existing scant resources are used inexpertly and the police keep employing the same working method. The tactics that are currently employed should be tailored to the number of policemen and resources available in order for Plan Cuadrante to work most effectively and efficiently. For example, the lack of staff is now used as an excuse not to carry out (additional) foot patrol. However, foot patrol would be possible if another *cuadrante* covered the *cuadrante* carrying out foot patrol, even for just one hour.

Fourth, the principles of community policing are not fully employed: foot patrol is hardly carried out and is not seen as an important part of Plan Cuadrante, only as a last resource such as when a patrol car breaks down. The scheduled community visits are also poorly complied with: many citizens say that they have never been informed about Plan Cuadrante let alone that the police visit their homes. The citizens are not involved by the police in crime-solution and handling disorder, which devaluates the preventive approach of Plan Cuadrante. The police seem to still focus more on crime detection and law enforcement than on crime prevention.

Fifth, the quality of police training should be questioned since there seems to have been little specific training with regard to community policing for the policemen that have been assigned to work for Plan Cuadrante. The motivational talks that take place before the start of each shift are currently the most extensive police training.

However, despite the many obstacles outlined above, modest progress is made. Citizens' perception of security has somewhat improved because of the increased and constant police presence and surveillance. However, this does not positively affect the perception of police performance and mentality. Despite the improved perception of security, citizens feel they cannot rely on the police and as a result, take precautions to protect themselves and their property. Also the constant police surveillance is a privilege that is solely enjoyed by the citizens living in the urban center of Antigua, as Plan Cuadrante does not cover the outskirts of the city. Even within the coverage of Plan Cuadrante, not all citizens are equally involved.

Another positive aspect is that citizens who have had positive encounters with the Plan Cuadrante police have gained more confidence in the police. The fact that the Plan Cuadrante policemen are 'new' policemen that have been assigned to Plan Cuadrante directly after graduating from the Police Academy is also perceived as beneficiary: they have not been part of the violent past. Yet, the positive experiences are overridden by negative experience.

Another achievement of Plan Cuadrante is that despite the fragile and complex police-community relations, the dialogue between the police and citizens is gaining momentum. Meetings between the police and citizens are organized and citizens do not seem to be afraid to express their feelings about police performance directly to the police. Unfortunately, not all citizens get the opportunity to do so as they are not involved in security issues or because they do not want to be involved.

It can be concluded then, that in theory Plan Cuadrante is a strategy with high potential: it aims to address crime and violence by prevention and the creation of a more balanced environment in which police and citizens cooperate in reaching the goal of reducing crime and perception of insecurity, which in turn will improve the quality of life. In practice however, there appear to be many problems of implementation that obstruct change. A fragile police-community relation characterized by mutual distrust impedes community policing efforts in Guatemala such as Plan Cuadrante to succeed. Cooperation and communication, which are essential in building trust and confidence, are lacking on the part of the police as well as citizens in Antigua. Besides, there are problems within the PNC, such as a lack of staff and resources and inadequate police training, which is why the PNC does not function well enough to be able to effectuate a change to community policing. The future and success of Plan Cuadrante very much depends on the police-community relationship. Confidence in the police and citizen participation in local security issues, as well as dedication from both the police and citizens are essential in improving this relation in order to make a change.

References

Bayley, D.

1985. *Patterns of Policing. A Comparative International Analysis.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Baldwin, David A.

1997. The Concept of Security. *Review of International Studies.* Vol. 23 Issue 1, pp. 5-26. Oxford University Press.

Bergman, Marcelo S.

2006. Crime and Citizen Security in Latin America: The Challenges for New Scholarship. *Latin American Research Review.* Vol. 41 Issue. 2, pp. 213-227. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bittner, E.

1990. *Aspects of Police Work.* Boston: Northeastern U.P.

Bordeaux, Giles L. and Guy Cumps eds.

2002. *Policing, Ethics and Corruption.* Brussel: Politeia.

Contreras-Chavez, Angela

2005. Corruption and Police Reforms in Post-war Guatemala: Lessons Learned Over the Past 9 Years. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Royal York, Toronto

Cools, Marc *et. al.* ed.

2010. Safety, Societal Problems and Citizens' Perceptions. *New Empirical Data, theories and Analysis.* Governance of Security: Maklu Publishers

Dammert, Lucia and Mary Fran T. Malone

2008. Does It Take a Village? Policing Strategies and Fear of Crime in Latin America. *Latin American Politics and Society.* Vol. 48 Issue 4, pp. 27-51. University of Miami.

Dölling, Dieter and Thomas Feltes eds.

1993. *Community Policing: Comparative aspects of community oriented police work.* Holzkirchen/Obb.: Felix.

Ericson, Richard V.

2005. The police as reproducers of order. In: Newburn, Tim, ed. *Policing key readings*. Oxford: Willan Publishing.

Fielding, Nigel G.

2005. Concepts and Theory in Community Policing. *The Howard Journal*. Vol. 44 Issue 5, pp. 460-472.

Flaming, K. *et. al.*

2005. Discovering the Impact of Community Policing: The Broken Windows Thesis, Collective Efficacy, and Citizens' Judgment. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*. Vol. 42 Issue 2, pp. 147-186

Fridell, Lorie

2004. The Defining Characteristics of Community Policing. In: Fridell, Lorie, and Mary Ann Wycoff, eds. *Community Policing: The Past, Present, and Future*. pp. 3-12. Accessed online on 21 June 2011, <http://www.policeforum.org/library/community-policing/CommunityPolicingReduced.pdf>

Frühling, Hugo and Azún Cancina

2005. *Community and Problem Solving Policing*. Washington: The World Bank.

Frühling, Hugo, with Tulchin S. and Golding A.

2003. *Crime and Violence in Latin America: Citizen Security, Democracy, and the State*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Glebbeek, Marie-Louise

2001. Police Reform and the Peace Process in Guatemala: the Fifth Promotion of the National Civilian Police. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. Vol. 20 Issue 4, pp. 431-453

Glebbeek, Marie-Louise

2003. *In the crossfire of democracy: Police reform and police practice in post-civil war Guatemala*. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers.

Glebbeek, Marie-Louise

2010. *Mano Dura: Fighting Crime, Violence, and Insecurity With an Iron Fist in Central America*. In: J.B. Kuhns and J. Knutsson eds. *Police Use of Force: A Global Perspective*. Praeger Security International, pp. 63-73

Glebbeek, Marie-Louise

2007, unpublished paper. *Policing the public: Police – society Relations in Postwar Guatemala*.

Huggings, Martha K.

1998. *Political Policing: The United States and Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

PNUD: United Nations Development Program

2009. *Abrir espacios para la seguridad ciudadana y el desarrollo humano: Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano para América Central. (IDHAC) 2009-2010*. Colombia

Jackson, Jonathan and Ben Bradford

2010. *What is Trust and Confidence in the Police?.* *Oxford Journals*. Vol. 4 Issue 3, pp. 241-248. Oxford University Press.

Klockars, Carl B.

2005. *The rhetoric of community policing*. In: Newburn, Tim, ed. *Policing key readings*. Oxford: Willan Publishing.

Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt eds.

1999. *Societies of fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*. New York: Zed Books.

Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt eds.

2004. *Armed Actors: Organized Violence and State Failure in Latin America*. London: Zed Books.

Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt eds.

2007. *Fractures Cities: Social exclusion, urban violence and contested spaces in Latin America*. London: Zed Books.

Manning, Peter K.

2005. The police: mandate, strategies, and appearances. In: Newburn, Tim, ed. *Policing key readings*. Oxford: Willan Publishing.

Mack, Natasha, with Cynthia Woodson, Kathleen MacQueen, Greg Guest and Emily Namey

2005. Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide. U.S. Agency for International Development: Family Health International. Accessed online on 9 January 2010, http://www.fhi.org/en/rh/pubs/booksreports/qrm_datacoll.htm.

Müller, Markus-Michael

2010. Community Policing in Latin America: Lessons from Mexico City. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*. Vol. 88 Issue ?, pp. 21-37. Amsterdam: CEDLA

Neild, Rachel

2003. Human rights NGOs, police and citizen security in transitional democracies. *Journal of Human Rights*. Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 277-296. Carfax Publishing.

Orlando, Perez.

2003/2004. Democratic Legitimacy and Public Insecurity: Crime and Democracy in El Salvador and Guatemala. *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 118 Issue 4, pp. 627-644.

Schneider, Stephen R.

1999. Overcoming barriers to communication between police and socially disadvantaged neighborhoods: a critical theory of community policing. *Crime, Law & Social Change*. Vol. 30 Issue 4, pp. 347-377. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Silver, Allan

2005. The demand for order in civil society: a review of some themes in the history of urban crime, police, and riot. In: Newburn, Tim, ed. *Policing key readings*. Oxford: Willan Publishing.

Ungar, Mark

2007. The privatization of citizen security in Latin America: from elite guards to neighborhood vigilantes. *Social Justice*. September 2007.

Wilson, James Q. and George L. Kelling.

2005. Broken windows: the police and neighborhood safety. In: Newburn, Tim, ed. *Policing key readings*. Oxford: Willan Publishing.

WOLA Washington Office on Latin America

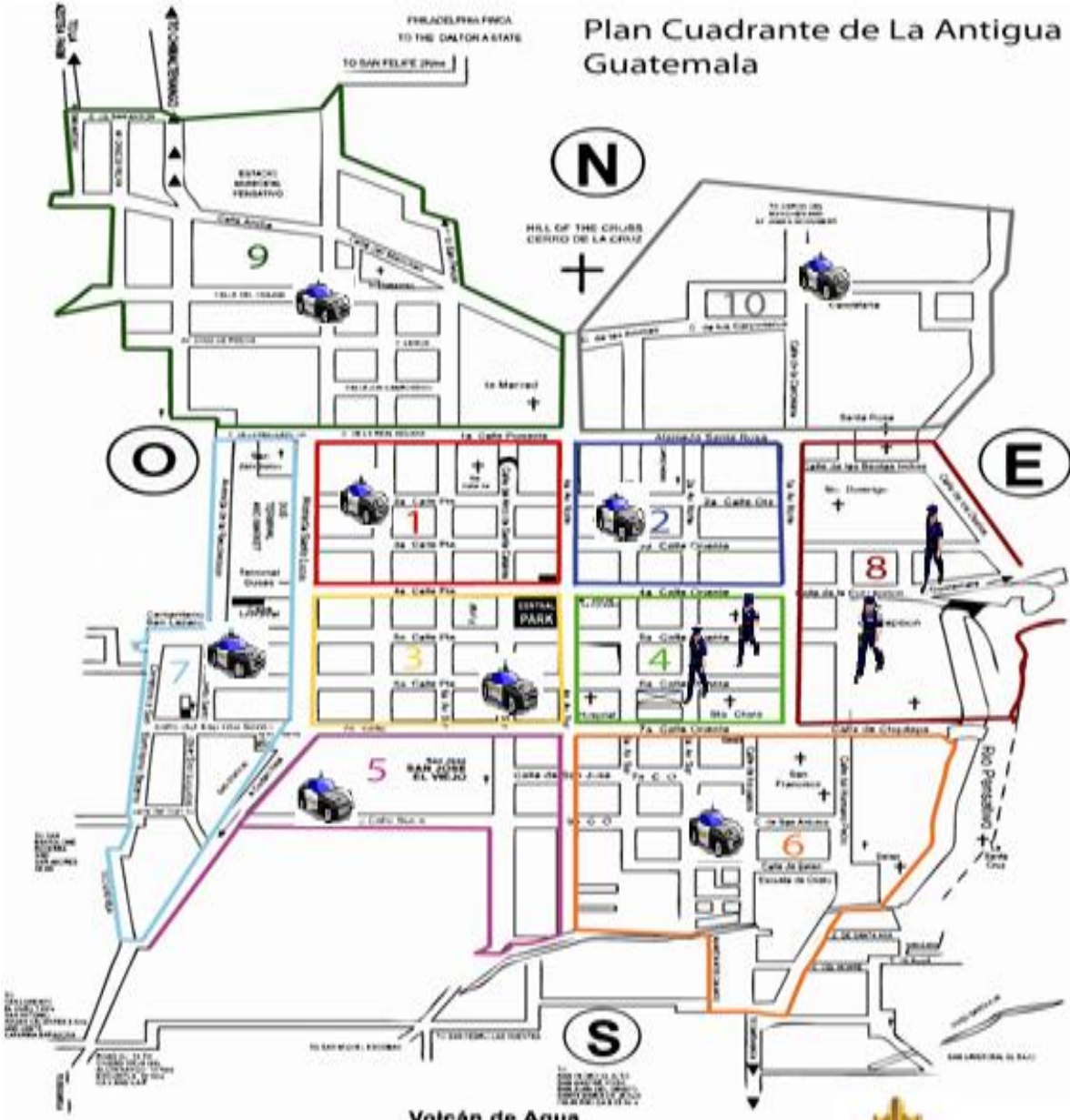
2009. Protect and Server? The status of police reform in Latin America. June 2009 report.

Websites

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services COPS (2009). 'Community-policing Defined'. Accessed 16 November 2010, <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=36>

USAID (2009). Community-Based policing-Guatemala. 'Rule of Law Indefinite Quantity Contract'. Accessed 16 November 2010, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACO419.pdf

Appendix I – Map of Plan Cuadrante in La Antigua Guatemala



Numeros Telefonicos que corresponden a cada cuadrante

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. 5208-0155 | 6. 5709-8105 |
| 2. 5709-8975 | 7. 5206-2724 |
| 3. 5206-9381 | 8. 5208-1458 |
| 4. 5703-4618 | 9. 5704-4751 |
| 5. 5208-1440 | 10. 5206-7582 |

