

# REFLECTIONS ON THE MOVE TO COMMUNITY POLICING

A POLICY PAPER REVISED FOR THE

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# REFLECTIONS ON THE MOVE TO COMMUNITY POLICING

## *Abstract*

*An eclectic approach to providing "reflections" is presented in this paper. The author presents a nontraditional discussion of critical junctures and initiatives in the history of policing. For example, the lessons of failure in police patrol research from Kansas City and the unfulfilled opportunities from Project STAR and the Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program. The paper also examines the distinct development of Problem Oriented Policing and Neighborhood Foot Patrol, arguing how they have cooperatively emerged as community policing. Other factors relating to the development of community policing are discussed ranging from the difficulty of changing patrol officer behavior to the effects of quality management on community policing to the role of patrol-related research in the community policing movement. The paper concludes with some observations on contemporary and future issues related to the role and effectiveness of community policing.*

This text has taken a broad view of community policing issues based on a comparatively short, yet intense, history of empirical research and the experiences of practitioners. Based on funding from the federal government, private foundations, and police organizations which simply want to know "what works", the body of data and qualitative findings are rich. Since many of these studies, as well as the data generated from the Michigan State University COPS project, have been thoroughly discussed, the current chapter is taking a generous interpretation of the title "reflections" by offering thoughts, ideas, and observations about the ideological formation and current status on community policing with the belief that these will provide a guidepost to the future.

This chapter is intentionally eclectic. It takes bits and pieces of history, theory, and practice which are frequently superficially addressed or ignored in the community policing debate. Essentially, the discussion has two roots: First is a combination of collective observations of the author over the last twenty-plus years in policing and academe; ruminations on the transitions in policing. Second, the author revisits some milestones of policing practice which has somehow "fallen through the cracks" of the legacy which led to community policing. These two factors have been integrated to reflect on this movement.

## **A PERSPECTIVE**

By pure serendipity, the author has had the fortune of being associated with policing during some critical junctures. Starting his career in Kansas City, Missouri, the author was a police officer while the Police Foundation Task Forces were experimenting with alternate patrol models. Under the leadership of the late Clarence Kelly, the KCPD was aggressively conducting experimental research. Together, researchers from the Police Foundation and KCPD officers worked in developing concepts, taking the best ideas and translating them to operational plans,

implementing the plans as independent variables in patrol operations, and then evaluating the results.<sup>1</sup>

The process alone was instructional. First we learned that police officers and researchers produced a creative team approach in developing and testing concepts that were non-traditional. This, it should be noted, was not the conventional wisdom of the early 1970s. Second, we learned that experimental research could be effectively performed in a police agency without posing undue threats to public safety and at the same time maintaining the integrity of the research design. Third, we learned what did not work. Furthermore, we learned that if a program was implemented and it did not have the intended effects, the program could be dismantled and personnel re-assigned. This was-and remains-a problem in many organizations: Once an empire is started, it is difficult to abdicate the throne.

These lessons have served us well in our attempts to learn more about the process of policing. Much of the community policing experimentation of can trace its methodological and substantive roots to the ground breaking efforts started in Kansas City. The importance of this process may easily be lost by those who did not experience the early days of police field research.

As a recent college graduate working in an "enlightened" police department, the author still felt the barbs of being a "college boy" whom veterans asserted would treat criminals with "kid gloves" rather than teach them who "the man" was. It was a time when "respect" was "taught with a good thumping"; when a publicly intoxicated homeless person was arrested for the specific reason of the officer earning overtime pay in holdover court the following morning (because bond could not be posted); and when an officer who wanted to switch days off knew that such a request to the desk sergeant should follow the subtly proffered gift of a fifth of whiskey. In this environment, it took courage for Chief Kelly and the officers participating in the Task Forces to color outside of the lines. Challenging conventional wisdom and opening oneself to ridicule in an organization where peer support is obsessive, is indeed difficult. Following the turbulence of the 1960s, the organizational culture in policing was cloistered, suspicious, and cynical. Thus, the process experienced in Kansas City was important for starting an important legacy of research in policing.

No less important were the findings of the Kansas City Patrol Task Forces. Everyone reading this chapter is undoubtedly aware of the Preventive Patrol Study findings. The implications for community policing were important, not the least of which was the fact that officers could free up time from patrol therefore using that time more efficiently through problem solving. However, the findings from many of the other Patrol Task Force research projects were not as well known. High visibility patrol, low visibility patrol, directed patrol, patrol technicians, and crisis intervention were among the other diverse projects tested in Kansas City during the same years as the Preventive Patrol Study. The findings of these lesser-known projects were similar: Essentially, the results demonstrated that these strategies provided no lasting, cost-beneficial effects as alternate models for managing a patrol force.

An important lesson from these projects was the inevitable conclusion that not every idea will translate to useful policy. Indeed, many ideas were simply ineffective; the lone productive experiment-testing preventive patrol-which produced a watershed of debate and stimulated the general application of scientific research to policing was the exception, not the rule. The Police

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed discussion of lessons learned from the preventive patrol study and its impact on community policing will be discussed later in the paper.

Foundation/KCPD Task Force was an experiment which provided useful, policy-based results. It is important to recognize that police managers and researchers alike need the freedom to experiment without the obligation to succeed, for even through failed ideas and rejected hypotheses we learn. Such has been the experience of community policing initiatives.

Following debate of the Preventive Patrol findings and spurred on by both the leadership of the Police Foundation and funding from the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (NILECJ), there was a plethora of creative research being conducted in police departments across the country. Response time, differential police response, managing patrol operations, managing criminal investigations, police productivity measures, staffing allocation models, crime analysis, and team policing are samples of the higher profile projects. With each project we learned more about what works in policing. Perhaps more importantly, these projects offered new questions to answer:

- What do the police actually do?
- How well do they do it?
- Are there alternate models of police deployment and service delivery which may be more efficacious?
- Are any of the "self-evident truths" of police practice valid?
- What is the relationship between police practice and other government service delivery?
- What could that relationship be?

Despite the ever-expanding body of research on community policing, this author would argue that the concept remains experimental. We do not know the long-term effects of the research. Little of the research has been replicated, most of it searching new hypotheses to test. These reflections are not meant to sound cynical, but to view the prospect of community policing in the scientific caste of mind. Replication, reliability, and consistency are important benchmarks in verifying a theory. We must not conclude that we have been successful until the body of evidence supports that conclusion. The caveat, therefore, is to pursue continued research, particularly that which replicates important findings.

## **THE PAST AS FUTURE**

One frequently hears critics argue that community policing is nothing new. "We've been doing that for years" is a common refrain. The author argues that such antagonists have not grasped the subtle, but significant, differences from past practice and the concepts postulated in community policing. It is not simply the tasks the officer does on the street—for example, foot patrol, meeting with citizens, and dealing with quality of life issues rather it is the infrastructure supporting community policing which is radically different.

Reform era policing postulated that the police role was simply that of crime fighter. While calls such as responding to domestic disturbances, landlord-tenant disputes, ambulance calls, missing persons, etc. were answered, they were ancillary, not really part of the police role. However, the public called the police to handle these problems simply because no one else would. Reform policing viewed these calls as interruptions in crime fighting duties (including preventive patrol).

Community policing takes a pragmatic view of these calls for service: If the public, who finances the police and from whom the police derive their authority, regularly calls the police

department to handle these incidents, then such incidents are implicitly part of the police role. As such, taking proactive measures (i.e., prevention and problem solving) is simply the most efficient and effective way to deal with the issues. In many ways, reform policing self-defines the police role while community policing recognizes that the public defines the police role.

Building on this premise, community policing endeavors to develop operating policies and procedures which emphasize problem solving as a primary activity, supporting officers creativity, and developing performance measures recognizing community policing skills. Call prioritization also gives parity to handling order maintenance and quality of life issues with crime issues (with the exception, of course, being emergencies). In essence, the community policing movement provides organizational support and rewards which simply were not present in reform era policing. While most police agencies are still in transition to this new infrastructure, it remains significantly different from the traditional model.

Changes in tradition were tried earlier, but the spirit of the times was apparently not right. Two examples of this exploratory legacy are rarely mentioned, but provide interesting insights: Project STAR and the Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program.

## **PROJECT STAR**

In the early 1970s a group of criminal justice professionals, educators, and social scientists developed a comprehensive policy research initiative called Project STAR. Funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the California Council on Criminal Justice, the Michigan Office of Criminal Justice Programs, the New Jersey Law Enforcement Planning Agency, and the Texas Criminal Justice Council, Project STAR developed forecasts related to future criminal justice system requirements. Specifically, using socio-demographic and economic indicators, this complex project identified changing system requirements and identified roles, tasks, and performance objectives for criminal justice personnel to meet these future conditions.

Among the recommendations for the police were...

- Recognition that the majority of police work is not law enforcement but a unique form of social service.
- That the standard police organizational structure and operating practices, particularly in urban regions, diminished the opportunities for the police and public to have face-to-face relationships.
- That police departments should demilitarize their role and emphasize non-authoritarian, cooperative relationships with the public.
- That the police role should be professionalized with wider criteria for selecting officers and a minimum requirement of a baccalaureate degree.
- Police officers should broaden their specialties to handle more diverse problems beyond crime control more efficiently and effectively. (Project STAR, 1976).

While postulated in 1976, many of the forecasts from Project STAR were surprisingly accurate. Moreover, these recommendations to change role of police officers bears important similarities to the community policing model. Despite the comprehensive nature of Project STAR and the wide array of policy-directed and user-friendly publications released by the Project, most of the recommendations slowly disappeared and little was heard of the Project after the 1970s.

Yet, moving into the late 1980s and 1990s, many changes occurring in policing reflect the findings from STAR.

### **INTEGRATED CRIMINAL APPREHENSION PROGRAM (ICAP)**

Influenced by systems theory, ICAP sought to take the best knowledge learned from research on policing and integrate it to develop a police management and delivery system which would efficiently and effectively fight crime. A foundation to ICAP was effective crime analysis which, unfortunately, experienced some limitations. Under the technology of the time, the output of computerized crime analysis (usually batch processing) was always comparatively slow and, consequently, its decision-making impact was somewhat hindered. Crime analysis was performed via hand calculations, but the analytic capability was not particularly robust.

The idea of ICAP was to comprehensively and regularly analyze crime patterns (and in some cases the calls for service) in order to more accurately deploy personnel (including alternate deployment models by time, day and location) and respond to special crises. Deployment was also based on the best knowledge of "what worked" in policing given the findings of the research at the time. Since the ability to do timely analysis was limited, the application of ICAP was similarly limited. Deployment of personnel relying on contemporary research findings was also difficult to accomplish because many of the managers and decision-makers were "old school" who did not understand-or perhaps believe-the research. They essentially became obstacles to change. While ICAP was used, it never really gained widespread acceptance. Like Project STAR, it was somewhat ahead of its time.

Community policing relies on effective crime analysis and deployment of personnel in creative ways. The experiences of ICAP, while dormant for a few years, has resurfaced in spirit through various community policing models. The conclusion: Timing is everything. Both Project STAR and ICAP were ahead of their time. The police community-and perhaps American society-simply was not ready for these changes.

### **PROBLEM ORIENTED- AND COMMUNITY POLICING: DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION**

While many police professionals and academics were questioning the fundamental processes of policing, two catalysts spurred the current movement beginning in the late 1970s. Professor Herman Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin, building on both his research and experience working with O.W. Wilson at the Chicago Police Department, offered the concept of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) as a fundamental police strategy. Believing that the police could be more effective in crime control and order maintenance by being proactive, Goldstein discussed POP as a fundamental shift in the way police officers approached their job. POP asked officers to identify problems within their communities (Scanning) and then determine critical causal factors which permitted the problem to exist (Analysis). Next officers were to develop a strategy to change the variables and remedy the problem (Response) and finally to keep an eye on the problem to determine if the desired change occurred (Assessment). Thus, the SARA model became an intellectual tool for street-level policing.

Importantly, POP was an application of the scientific method to policing. The SARA protocol is a policy-based approach to research which Goldstein suggested officers could use as a fundamental part of their daily duties. Changing an organization's philosophy, hence culture, is difficult. However, the short, yet intense, legacy of research in policing coupled with the rapidly

increasing educational level of officers and more enlightened police management, paved the way for an easier transition to a more analytic patrol officer.

A second prominent figure in this movement was the late Professor Robert Trojanowicz of Michigan State University. Bob's initial experimentation in the "new policing" was called Neighborhood Foot Patrol which he extensively tested in Flint, Michigan beginning in the late 1970s. He shared Goldstein's view that the police needed to be more aggressive in identifying and solving community problems. Bob's approach was somewhat different, however, owing to the influence of his father who had been a police officer. Rather than predominantly relying on the patrol officer to proactively identify community problems, Neighborhood Foot Patrol sought to get officers out of their cars talking with citizens in order to learn what specific issues in the community were diminishing their quality of life. The police would then seek to remedy those problems or, in the case of more endemic issues, the officer would work as a community organizer to facilitate the community to help itself. Thus, it would be the citizens, not the police, which determined police priorities. Similarly, the role of police managers changed from an authoritarian one to that of a facilitator of resources which could be used to solve problems.

A second priority of Neighborhood Foot Patrol was to arrest serious and repeat offenders-in Bob's words, "To get the predators off the street." One of the ideas of Neighborhood Foot Patrol was that as citizens got to know officers and their presence talking to citizens was accepted as routine, people would be more likely to provide information to the police about crimes and criminals. Essentially, good community contacts meant the collection of good intelligence. Ironically, this was intended to be an aggressive approach toward crime, however, the label of "Neighborhood Foot Patrol" portrayed the image of "soft policing" which was interpreted as being little more than social work.

As in the case of Goldstein's POP, the Trojanowicz model also met with resistance. The resistance was natural; we all tend to be somewhat dogmatic-change is difficult and requires work. It forces us to re-evaluate our attitudes, values and beliefs which infers that if we accept the change, our past belief systems were wrong. The author admits to his own reluctance at times wondering if this new approach to law enforcement was "real police work." Or, as another academician and former police officer observed one time while reflecting on the community policing concept, "Don't you sometimes feel the need to kick a butt as a reality check?" Rational analysis often weakens, even if temporarily, to emotion. Thus resistance to organizational change must be understood, not stigmatized.

In both POP and Neighborhood Foot Patrol, patrol officers were asked to perform tasks for which they were unaccustomed:

- Think creatively.
- Overtly interact with the law abiding community.
- Get out of their cars rather than reactively patrolling waiting for calls.
- Conduct research.
- View quality of life and order maintenance responsibilities on a par equal to crime.
- Be responsible for overt activity, not just "bean counting" work such as taking reports, issuing traffic citations, checking buildings, towing cars, etc.

Risking the wrath of purists, the author argues that as the concepts have evolved and been placed into practice, both POP and Neighborhood Foot Patrol have largely become integrated under the rubric of community policing.

## **THE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT**

While the amount of information about community policing is growing constantly, some nagging questions remain:

- Should it first be tested on a small scale?
- What types of new responsibilities should the police embrace?
- Where do the police "draw the line" in responding to community needs?
- How are traditional responsibilities and practices reconciled with changes required of community policing?
- How does the relationship between the police and other government departments change with a broadened police role?
- How will management and labor relations change within the police department? How can a resistant community be motivated?
- How do the police reconcile 911 call demands with community policing deployment?

These and other questions need to be discussed-al though admittedly not always answered-to further examine the breadth or scope community policing should have in a police organization.

## **BREAKING THE BONDS OF TRADITION**

In the early 1980s community policing was viewed a new, radical, social work approach to policing which did little more than add to the mound of responsibilities the police already faced. During this time law enforcement touted its crime-fighting role and lamented how busy it was doing such things as conducting investigations, profiling serial killers, doing buy-and bust dope deals, and refining street survival skills. While these issues certainly faced the police, the reality was (and generally remains) that police officers spend more time answering calls for service than fighting crime on the streets.

Taking offense reports, responding to disturbances, answering prowler calls, dealing with juvenile pranks, noise complaints, and checking out suspicious persons are the types of calls which remain the major "time consumer" of uniformed law enforcement officers.

## **THE PATROL OFFICER'S DILEMMA**

The change to community policing is not simple. For example, a police officer is typically socialized in the academy and during field training that when not handling calls, the most important activity is to patrol one's beat area. Implicitly, the officer learns-usually with reinforcement provided in a "butt chewing" by a Sergeant-that while patrolling one should also seek performance measures, such as buildings to check, cars to tow, and tickets to write. The socialization continues as the officer learns that when dispatched to a call, the problem should be handled quickly so he/she may "get back in service" as soon as possible in order to await the next call.

Interestingly, patrol sergeants historically do not seem to be as concerned with patrolling as a way to prevent crime, but as a way to occupy an officer's time. It does not "look good" to have an officer simply parked somewhere or, worse, sitting in a restaurant for a prolonged period. Thus, the patrol officer has learned that in order to receive good performance evaluations and keep the sergeant happy, the officer must simply handle calls quickly, keep moving, and look busy—a classic illustration of form over substance.

When a police department adopts the community policing philosophy this same officer is told to change the way he/she does the job. For example, they are told: "Stay out of service longer to handle the problem." "You may leave your patrol area if it facilitates your problem solving." "Instead of patrolling, you should spend more time out of your car talking to people getting to know them."

Based on the officer's socialization, these changes "don't feel right". The officer wonders if this is legitimate policy or whether the organization going to be fickle—they typically opt for the latter perspective. It is difficult to adjust to the new model because it opposes everything the officer has learned. Coupled with the cynicism and conservative personality common of police officers, there is distrust of the commitment to change and whether it will be lasting. Moreover, first-line supervisors must go through a similar change process. While they typically pass along the directives of change, they must also change the way they supervise and evaluate officers on a daily basis. It is a difficult mental adjustment when, for years, a sergeant has told officers to stay in service as much as possible and patrol, then suddenly must tell them the opposite. These are substantial obstacles to overcome—simply instructing that the change will occur and issuing organizational proclamations is insufficient. Personnel need to be patiently taught; they need commitment; they need leadership by example.

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT

An important variable external to policing was becoming the conventional wisdom for American business about the same time that community policing was emerging. Total quality management (TQM), or the Deming method, sought to be customer-driven and provide the best product or service to the customer while at the same time giving the worker "ownership" in the product or service. Moreover, TQM sought to be proactive by ensuring the product was manufactured correctly "the first time" rather than being manufactured, then inspected, then repaired. This element of TQM is similar to the community policing principle of proactivity in dealing with crime and order maintenance problems. TQM, followed by value-added service, continuous quality improvement, and benchmark management all produced philosophical changes in management practices directed toward customers which have positive implications for policing. Perhaps the greatest proponent of TQM in policing was David Couper, the former Chief in Madison, Wisconsin who, when adopting the community policing philosophy, referred to it as quality policing. In the author's opinion, the timing of TQM helped drive the popularity of community policing.

After providing extensive community policing training to police officers and managers across the country, the author's experience is that "selling" the philosophical principles as a new management style—TQM—rather than a new policing style seems to be more effective in gaining officer support. For one reason, the vision of community policing as "social work" immediately "turns off" most officers. They see the new philosophy as a *substantive* change in the work they do as police officers. However, when told that the management style has changed, officers are more

receptive because they see this as a *procedural* change. Thus, they are still doing "police work", only in a different way. Furthermore, when presented with the comparatively concrete principles of TQM, the concept appears to make more sense to officers.

## PATROL RESEARCH: A QUICK SUMMARY

Previously, some aspects of research were discussed related to developmental aspects of community policing. In addition, the efforts of Project STAR and ICAP relied on the police research movement. Important lessons were learned from patrol-related research which serves as a foundation which helps functionally legitimize community policing. In this regard, it is useful to briefly review some of these lessons from a selection of critical research projects.

**Preventive Patrol.** Perhaps one of the most important—and controversial—police research projects occurred in 1972, early in law enforcement’s contemporary research history. The Kansas City, Missouri Police Department’s (KCPD) Preventive Patrol Study was designed to question a sacred police strategy: Do marked, randomly patrolling police cars actually prevent crime? The concept of preventive patrol postulated the “self-evident truth” that the mere presence of the police (or reasonable potential for their presence) would deter criminals from committing offenses in the immediate geographic area of the patrol.

The Kansas City study found that preventive patrol was not only uncommitted time but it was also non-productive time. The findings do *not* argue that patrol officers are unnecessary, rather, they infer that traditional assumptions about the effect of random police patrol on crime and citizen’s attitudes may have been false. As such, the findings suggest that police agencies are wasting time and money by continuing or expanding traditional patrol procedures. The results suggested that police executives (1) needed to explore how police resources could better be used, and (2) examine what police processes may be more effective in dealing with crime problems and citizen concerns.

**Response Time.** Another element initially examined in the KCPD Preventive Patrol Study addressed the issues associated with officer response time. Typically, response time was broadly defined as the amount of time it takes a police officer to respond to a citizen’s call for assistance. Basically, it was assumed that the lower the response time the greater the chance of apprehending the criminal. It was further assumed that a faster response would indicate the police are more efficient and that this would also add to citizen satisfaction with police service. Of course, “speed of response” is a matter of perception that is interpreted differently by citizens and the police.

Using some general measures, the original Preventive Patrol Study found that response time and citizen attitudes did not vary among the three experimental districts. In fact, the findings stimulated more questions when it was learned that response time is a complex factor determined by distance, speed, geography, attitude of the officer, and behavior of the citizen who called the police. Further research was clearly warranted.

Overall, the research has shown that the difference between experienced and anticipated response time is a major determinant of citizen satisfaction. Once again, these findings flew in the face of the traditional wisdom and the results were hotly debated. As a result, PERF conducted a follow-up study on crime-reporting patterns of citizens in San Diego, Peoria, Rochester, and Jacksonville-Duval County (Florida.) While the PERF study measured additional

factors, the Kansas City findings were confirmed: Sophisticated technology and deployment strategies to shorten response time were well-intentioned, but misguided.

Since fast response time neither effectively dealt with serious crime nor directly increased citizen satisfaction, this research paved the way for an exploration of different police strategies. Another important element was now in place for the development of deployment by analysis.

**Differential Police Response.** The preventive patrol and response time findings provided the impetus for police managers and researchers to explore alternate patrol management strategies. Among these was a concept known as Differential Police Response (DPR.) Traditionally, police calls have been dispatched in the order they were received with the exception of life-threatening situations which received immediate attention. DPR recognizes that different calls should be assigned different priorities based on the “immediacy of need” for a police officer’s presence. Recognizing—from the preventive patrol and response time studies—that greater flexibility can be used in call management, DPR also developed alternative methods for handling calls.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) conducted DPR field tests in Garden Grove (California,) Greensboro (North Carolina,) and Toledo (Ohio.) DPR is a resource/time management plan that matches operational needs to available police resources and expertise. It permits flexibility in handling calls while contributing to both increased responsiveness to community needs and efficiency in police operations. Furthermore, the research indicates that DPR allows patrol officers more time for crime-focused activities, such as investigation and prevention, as well as community service and administration.

In the NIJ field test of DPR, several key findings have important implications Community Policing...

- Police departments can achieve a sizable reduction in the number of non-emergency calls for service handled by immediate mobile dispatch, without sacrificing citizen satisfaction.
- The results of the baseline citizen surveys showed an overall high public willingness to accept alternatives to immediate dispatch of a patrol unit for non-emergency calls.
- Three of four callers were willing to accept delays of up to an hour for non-emergency calls.
- As expected, there was a greater willingness to accept delays for calls that did not involve potential danger or threats.
- Citizen satisfaction with alternate services provided was high.
- Alternate responses are less costly than traditional mobile responses, and productivity levels are much higher for personnel using alternatives.

Since DPR is also a time-management strategy, it provides patrol officers more time for other Community Policing and problem-solving activities. Thus, DPR provides better responsiveness to citizen needs and demands, more efficient use of police resources, and greater levels of citizen satisfaction, all of which are important in the deployment by analysis concept.

**One- Versus Two-Officer Patrols.** An emotional issue for many patrol officers (and police labor organizations) is whether there should be one or two officers assigned to each patrol car. The most common issue in this debate is *officer safety*—it is assumed that cars with two officers will provide greater safety in hazardous situations. The counter argument is inefficiency:

The two-officer cars are more expensive since many calls require only one officer to perform the job. Thus, the presence of the unneeded second officer is wasteful of resources.

The most comprehensive research on this issue was conducted in San Diego, California. The study found that based on factors such as cost, number of calls handled, arrests, response time, and handling administrative duties, one-officer units are far more efficient and clearly as effective as two-officer patrols. On the emotionally-laden issue of officer safety, the San Diego study found ...

... both single and multiple ... units had approximately equal involvement in assaults on officers. However, two-officer units were shown to have been involved in resisting arrest situations (and consequently, in total critical incidents) more frequently than were one-officer units, despite the fact that the units had equivalent exposure to potentially hazardous situations overall, and to arrest situations in particular. The groups had equivalent involvement in police vehicle accidents and had experienced equivalent exposure in terms of miles driven. ... two-officer units were found to be more frequently involved in assaults on officers, in resisting arrest situations, and in total critical incidents than were one-officer units. ... *The weight of evidence from this analysis supports the conclusion that one-officer patrol unit staffing was safer for officers* (Emphasis added.)

**Team Policing.** The “buzz words” of patrol management in the 1970s and early 1980s were *team policing*. Rather than being a philosophy of policing team policing was a patrol management strategy which attempted to group officers by geographic location with the purpose of them working cooperatively together toward a common end. Much like a football team, the policing team would have various officers with different expertise and responsibilities working together to attain their goals.

The common feature linking most team policing programs is their reliance on the notions of decentralization and generalization. Thus, the hypothesis underlying team policing is that effective patrol and other services can be provided in an efficient manner via a decentralized (sometimes neighborhood-based) police department consisting of officers who are generalists in the law enforcement field.

The actual structure, assignment, and operating philosophies varied significantly in the different cities which experimented with team policing. The effects of team policing projects are mixed. In many programs, the concept was well developed, but lacked clear policy direction. Furthermore, many evaluations were methodologically weak. In other cases, the concept simply was not given sufficient time to mature. One of the weaknesses of team policing may have been that it was a concept ahead of its time. With better-educated officers and more enlightened management throughout the chain of command, team policing may have been more successful. Despite its limitations, team policing established a conceptual foundation that was ultimately strengthened and redefined in Community Policing.

**Specialized Patrol.** In an effort to make police patrol officers more effective, a variety of different patrol configurations have been tried. The underlying theme of the different models was to efficiently handle calls for service, control crime, and make productive use of officers’ “uncommitted” patrol time. Collectively, these experiments have been referred to as “specialized patrol.” Different models of specialized patrol include split-force patrol (Wilmington, Delaware,) directed patrol (Kansas City,) low visibility patrol (New York, Boston, Nashville, Memphis, San

Francisco, Miami) high visibility patrol (Alexandria, Cleveland, San Jose,) and management of demand (Wilmington.)

The evaluations of specialized patrol consistently showed that effectiveness (goal attainment) did not change, but efficiency (use of resources) generally improved with the different experiments. These successes spurred attempts to refine specialized patrol so that it would also be more effective. The Wilmington Management of Demand Project adopted alternate “response strategies” to address the unique demands placed on the police department by citizens. The result was that the police were better able to assess the demand for police services (both crime and non-crime) and respond more effectively to those demands. The concept is dynamic because the police response changes when demand changes. Both the process of experimentation and the lessons learned from the evaluations provide insight which helped frame different operational strategies which could be used in analytic deployment.

The lessons learned from these—and other—patrol-related research projects provided the foundation for developing and implementing community policing.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

While community policing has become increasingly accepted as the future direction of policing, it remains an amorphous and fragile concept. In some locales where it had a strong start, the inertia has slowed and the movement regressed. In other locations, community policing has become institutionalized as the accepted practice, even after leadership changes in the departments. Many other agencies are just now exploring the idea, learning that understanding and communicating the philosophical nature of the concept is as difficult as grasping smoke. This inherently leads to confusion and uncertainty which retards maturation of the change process until the I/players"-officers, supervisors, citizens, politicians-can clearly see their role and the direction this change will take them. A strong foundation of thought, planning, and vision is essential to begin the change process. Without that, failure will be on the horizon.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES

Through interaction with police agencies around the United States and several foreign countries, police officials have asked a number of recurrent questions. Perhaps reflecting on some of these issues will provide some insight.

*Is community policing "the answer" to the crime and quality of life problems in America today?*  
No. It is a revised strategy of police service delivery built on a foundation of research and management practice which attempts to take a pragmatic view of demands for police service and provide an efficacious response. It is a matter of applying "best practice" to address crime and community problems.

*Is community policing responsible for the U.S. drop in the crime rate over the 12ast several years?*  
It has probably contributed to the crime drop in some communities, but the crime reduction is most likely a product of several factors merging together. The crime rate decline was first reported in 1991-roughly four years before the first officers were hired from the Federal community policing hiring incentives. At this time the concept was slowly being experimented with in many communities, but it certainly was not institutionalized. And in those communities which were implementing community policing it is uncertain whether there was sufficient time for the "treatment effect" to influence the crime rate. Moreover, during the years of the crime rate

drop there was a decline in the number of 15-20 year olds; those in the crime prone years who commit a disproportionate number of offenses. At the same time the economy was very strong with joblessness at a low point and prison incarceration levels skyrocketed, which at the least contributed to incapacitation. The interactive effect of these variables, and others, were probably more instrumental in the crime drop than policing strategies. It is possible that community policing has had a more substantial effect on sustaining the crime rate decline in recent years, but it is unrealistic to assume it was the sole cause.

*Is community policing right for every community?* No. The character and location of a community, the problems it faces, and the mandate of citizens may simply not support a community-based philosophy. The public may want a reactive, watchman style police department. Trying to force community policing will simply not work and should not be done.

*Is community policing the proper role for the police?* This is an issue of ideology and no theorist or police executive has an absolute answer; only a belief or opinion. Compelling arguments can be made on both sides of the issue. Ideology has arguments, principles, and advocates, but, in the end, it should be the citizens who decide what kind of police service they want.

*Have community policing responsibilities been sufficiently articulated?* This varies widely by community. The key to successful implementation appears to be that a police department should have an incremental transition in policies, practices and responsibilities. Perhaps because of the compulsive nature of our society many police departments have made the switch rapidly with little time for reflection. As a result, new programs and duties have been thrown at officers so fast they have been unable to absorb them. For example, one officer whose department implemented the concept on a "fast track" was obviously not grasping the philosophy when he told the author,

"It seems that all of this training we are getting [on community policing] is essentially saying, 'be nice to people'. We could use a little more concrete direction."

Building on this, many police departments appear to be trying to do too many things at once. On this point, the author has heard repeated comments, some favorites are:

- "We [the police] say yes to every request. We need to learn to say no."
- "We have so many new programs, each with its own acronym, now we're going to have to start using the Greek alphabet."
- "In the last six months you can't believe all the new programs and acronyms-CPOP, FAST, COPS, CRIME, ERAD, GREAT. Someone must have gotten the Chief "Hooked on Phonics'."
- "It's a new week-there must be a new paradigm."

*How do we keep citizens motivated and involved-or do we?* Overcoming citizen apathy and sustaining citizen participation is a constant problem in communities where the police have been successful in addressing citizen concerns. In trying to deal with this problem, one officer commented to the author,

"Nothing swings citizens into action faster than the fear of crime.  
What we need is a good crime wave."

While effective, it seems to lack the foundation of good public policy. The author's advice on sustaining citizen participation is admittedly unorthodox: Don't worry about it. To expand on this, if the police have established a cooperative relationship with the community and effectively responded to the community's concerns there is probably no need to continue active citizen involvement. Permit them to go into dormancy and when problems arise, reactivate the community. Indeed, finding "make work" for the community just to keep them active may have a more negative long-term effect than allowing them to go dormant.

*What are some of the key factors which will lead to the successful implementation of community policing?* Throughout the author's work, several key factors have been identified as critical tools for effective organizational change. While some of these factors have been mentioned previously, they warrant a brief recap here:

- *There must be a stimulus for change.* There must be a leader with a vision willing to take the first step in challenging the status quo; a "change agent". Importantly, this stimulus must be on-going and widespread. Given this, there are two significant elements that a change agent must address: (1) vigilance in effort and (2) diversity in focus. A one-time pep rally for change will simply have no effect.
- *There must be administrative commitment.* The effective change agent must also provide on-going support for the philosophical change. That is, providing consistency between what is said and what is done. If administrators are not willing to try such things as reallocation of resources, unconventional deployment models, amending policies and procedures, or experimentation with new ideas, then there is little reason to believe the sincerity of their pronouncements. If commitment is not shown to employees, the community and elected officials, the probability for success will be significantly reduced.
- *Any change must be grounded in logical and defensible criteria.* While it is somewhat of a cliché, it is worth noting that changing to simply "shake up" the organization will be dysfunctional rather than productive. If officers and elected officials are going to tie their professional fortunes to change, they must be given good evidence to support the change. Moreover, since change consumes resources, it is wasteful to pursue it unless the change is well-grounded in logic and evidence. Perhaps the best test for this criterion is to ask yourself, "Why are we moving to community-based policing?" If you are not satisfied with your answer, perhaps the plan needs to be re-thought.
- *People at all levels must be able to provide input.* The importance of team building for a new endeavor cannot be understated. Any initiative must have participation from as many people as possible. Not only will this diverse input provide new insights, but team building provides "ownership", hence a sense of investment and responsibility by members of the team.
- *There must be sufficient time for experimentation, evaluation, and fine'-tuning of any new program or idea.* When a new initiative is started for the first time it will inherently have "bugs" in it; not every malady or problem can be anticipated and some ideas will not work as originally conceived. Just because operational problems arise does not mean the idea was bad. Administrators, and officers alike must be flexible, adjusting their activities until there has been sufficient time to actually evaluate the initiative's true effects. The team concept comes into play here also—seek input from team members to identify problems and develop remedies.

- *Before change is introduced, you must communicate it to everyone and enlist their support.* Officers, citizens, and elected officials alike must understand clearly what is being done and why. There is a tendency to assume that everyone knows and understands the issues of a new endeavor to the same extent as those who are immersed in the planning. The conceptual nature of community policing and the need to develop operational procedures in support of the concept makes communication even more essential. Lack of communication is something which can destroy a new activity but, fortunately, is fairly easy to avoid. Remember that communication is more than sending messages, it also involves gaining feedback to the messages. Be cognizant of the issue recalling the admonishment, "don't leave people in the dark."
- *Change takes time in order to have an effect; major change play take a generation.* As has been noted, we are generally a short-term and impatient culture. However, when implementing major organizational and behavioral change such as community policing, a key ingredient is re- socialization of employees, citizens, and political leaders. This is inherently a long-term endeavor which requires patience and stamina before positive results can be seen. This sense of time and patience must be instilled to all involved in order to minimize frustration and impatience.
- *Recognize that not everyone will "buy in" to new ideas.* For virtually any endeavor that is proposed, we must recognize that complete support is improbable; it is the nature of the human psyche. One must take care, however, to avoid discounting people who oppose new initiatives as being "lost causes" or obstructionists. Listen to their concerns-they may raise some valid issues which need to be addressed. By using them positively, they may become part of the team. Realism dictates, however, that there will still be those who oppose the new system (frequently for emotional or personal reasons). In these cases, an administrator" s options are: continue to try to convince them to change; ignore or avoid them; place them in an assignment where they can do little damage; increase the quality of the relationship with those individuals who support the initiative; or tolerate officers or politicians until they resign, retire, lose their influence, or die.
- *Be flexible and open in your view of organizational, philosophical and programmatic change.* No matter how much thought is given to a new initiative and how much effort is invested in planning, we still must recognize that many ideas are "losers". However, we frequently will not know this until the idea has been tried and evaluated. As noted previously in the discussion of the Kansas City Task Forces, even in failure, we have learned something. Unfortunately, given the culture of our political environment, there is a tendency to mandate success; a practice which is tantamount to a search for mediocrity. We must maintain the "freedom to fail"-without this, creative new ideas will be few and far between.
- *The chance always exists that one may be placed "on the hot seat" from a political perspective.* It cannot be denied that any attempt at change carries risks-the more massive the change, the greater the risk. Questioning traditional orthodoxy is not easily accepted by organizations, particularly bureaucratic organizations as typically found in government. Thus, proponents of new initiatives must understand that when they are on the forefront of change, their political necks are on the line. In light of this, administrators must be supportive and empathic with the personnel supporting the change.
- *Change requires challenging conventional wisdom; or at least traditions.* Debating the value of traditions has not been a politically popular avenue for people to follow,

yet it is a necessary one in order for new ventures to be undertaken. When conventional wisdom is challenged it will be met with resistance, criticism, and perhaps ridicule from doubters, dogmatists, and traditionalists. The astute leader must be prepared to deal with these reactions both personally and professionally. Importantly, when those who support the leader's ideas of change are ridiculed, the leader has the obligation to reassert that person's value and contributions to the organization.

- *The organization's personnel evaluation system must measure and reward effective involvement in change.* Since change requires a personal commitment, or investment, there must be some individual benefits which can be accrued from one's participation. Benefits do not have to be monetary, but can include such things as positive reinforcement, job perquisites, creative freedom, recognition, and awards or commendations. Similarly, awards and expressions of appreciation must also be afforded to politicians and others who substantially help usher change. In essence, without rewards, failure is assured. (Adapted from Carter, 1995).

## FINAL ISSUES

What's next? Beyond continued experimentation and full implementation of community policing, three factors are likely to emerge as complementary initiatives. The first is comprehensive "real time" crime analysis. Problem identification and solving, personnel deployment, and resource allocation can all be most effectively achieved with timely, accurate information. Crime analysis-including broad-based order maintenance issues-remains a key element in this regard. With the growth of technological capabilities ranging from high performance laptop computers with simple-to-use yet powerful complaint reporting software to simple, reliable telecommunications and networking, the ability to capture the data we need and analyze it quickly is within our grasp. As these systems become more affordable, the value of crime analysis will increase dramatically. Ideally, such systems would include information and data sharing to permit regional crime analysis across jurisdictions, not just within a jurisdiction.

A second issue will be the growth and integration of crime-specific policing. A number of people argue that crime-specific policing is the antithesis of community policing. That it seeks tactical suppression of certain crimes and is little more than a short-term solution. Moreover, it is argued that crime-specific policing uses loosely created criminal profiles-such as for gang members-as a tool to stop or harass citizens whereas community policing seeks a more cooperative approach to law enforcement. In reality crime-specific policing is an emerging strategy which is still being conceptually developed. It serves a legitimate need, and can complement community policing, when there are unique crime trends or problems which need to be addressed in a community. For example, in metropolitan areas where there is a burglary ring operating, the burglars are very likely to be from a different jurisdiction than their targets. While community policing may help by adding eyes and ears to the street, community policing alone will be limited in its ability to identify the nonresident burglars. If, using crime analysis and intelligence, profiles can be developed to help forecast burglaries and probable suspects, then arrests are more likely. If the burglaries are stopped using the crime-specific approach, the community members will be better protected, their fear of crime will go down and their quality of life will increase. Crime-specific policing should not be viewed as a "competitive" or "anti-community policing" strategy. Instead, it should be viewed in a cooperative light which can provide citizens better safety and security.

The third factor is regional initiatives in community policing. At first blush the ideas of "regional" and "community-based" may seem incongruent. However, many crime and quality of life issues are systemic, transcending jurisdictional boundaries. Too frequently, one community's problems are largely influenced by a neighboring community. We recognize this problem in crime as evidenced by regional drug task forces and regional major case squads. Community policing should be no different. With regional crime analysis and regional problem investigations, officers can develop more holistic pictures of problems to solve. Given the ability to work cooperatively with other agencies in the region can enhance the effectiveness of problem solving activities.

The rapid expansion of community policing can be traced to a number of variables, not the least of which is money. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services has provided millions of dollars to communities across the country to hire police officers. The COPS office has also funded special programs, research and is involved in a massive training initiative. The significant question is what will happen to community policing when the concept has lost its luster, lost its national stage, and lost its federal funding. That is when the true commitment and its conceptual viability will be tested.

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