

The Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Paradigm- What Have We Learned?

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Abstract: Government on all levels has actively promoted the Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) paradigm as a progressive antidote to past reliance on reactive police practices. This paper analyzes the impact of this paradigm on policing, describes examples of programs designed to implement the COPPS paradigm, and assesses some of the gains for our communities that have resulted, as well as some of the problems that have surfaced recently as a result of programs resulting from this paradigm.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will discuss the impact of the Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) paradigm on policing in the United States. The theoretical and research basis for this paradigm, examples of the application of the paradigm, and the results of this application are analyzed.

The COPPS paradigm proposes to move police agencies to a greater focus on proactive crime prevention strategies by:

- (1) creating police-citizen partnerships,
- (2) reversing environmental deterioration and decay to prevent crime,
- (3) targeting undesirable individuals and groups in the community who are seen as threatening social order,
- (4) and justifying radical organizational changes within police agencies.

An analogy to changes in policing rationalized by the COPPS paradigm can be seen in changes that have been taking place in the health care system in the United States. There are distinct similarities in the ways in which health care reformers have attempted to move from a reactive model of health care to a preventive approach and the ways in which police reformers are attempting to create a proactive, preventive approach to policing to balance the traditional reliance on reactive policing.

Traditional medical care in this country has emphasized professional intervention by health care practitioners after the onset of disease or after an injury. Graduates of our medical schools have developed expertise in after-the-fact or

reactive intervention to solve health problems.

This approach to health maintenance has traditionally received the most emphasis, the most respect, and the most funding in building a health care system in the United States. After a great deal of conflict, the medical establishment has begun to accept a more holistic approach to health care. A shift has been occurring to a proactive concern for prevention.

This involves more patient responsibility for maintaining health through diet, exercise, stress-management, and general lifestyle changes. A doctor-patient partnership is emphasized for care of the total person. A wide range of conventional intervention (drugs and surgery) and alternative therapies such as acupuncture, therapeutic massage, homeopathic and naturopathic medicine, chiropractic, and biofeedback are utilized in an attempt to maintain health and prevent disease. Both proactive and reactive approaches are seen as legitimate and necessary for health maintenance. The idea that building up and maintaining a healthy immune system and utilizing the body's natural healing mechanisms will prevent future problems is the basis for holistic health care.

I submit that a similar movement is developing in policing in the United States and is influencing the criminal justice system as a whole. As in medicine, the dominant approach has emphasized after-the-fact reaction to community disorder, crime, delinquency, and violence. The enforcement and punishment approaches to crime have received the most support, prestige, and funding.

We are experiencing conflict in policing and in criminal justice administration, as in medicine, as a new paradigm challenges the reactive-punishment paradigm on which we have

traditionally relied for crime control. The new paradigm—the COPPS paradigm based on the “broken windows” thesis—proposes a shift in emphasis to a more holistic approach emphasizing the primacy of proactive crime prevention.

This new paradigm emphasizes prevention of crime through community mobilization and police-citizen partnerships to reinforce informal community social controls and to immunize the community to crime and delinquency. It attempts to reverse community disorganization and decay, thereby immunizing the community to continued delinquency, crime, disorder, and violence.

The use of various community alternatives is emphasized to supplement the reactive punishment-based criminal justice system. Like the holistic health care movement, the application of this new paradigm proposes a new holistic, community-oriented approach to crime prevention and control.

Crime prevention research and policy have traditionally been concerned with offenders or potential offenders. Researchers have looked to define strategies that would deter individuals from involvement in crime or rehabilitate them so they would no longer want to commit criminal acts. In recent years crime prevention efforts have often focused on the incapacitation of high-rate or dangerous offenders so they are not free to victimize law-abiding citizens. In the public debate over crime prevention policies, these strategies are usually defined as competing approaches. However, they have in common a central assumption about crime prevention research and policy: that efforts to understand and control crime must begin with the offender. In all of these approaches the focus of crime prevention is on people and their involvement in criminality.

Although this offender-based perspective continues to dominate crime prevention research and policy, it has been challenged by a very different approach that seeks to shift the focus of crime prevention efforts. This new approach developed in large part as a response to the failures of traditional theories and programs. The 1970s, which saw a shattering of traditional assumptions about the effectiveness of crime prevention efforts, led to a reevaluation of research and policy about crime prevention. For many scholars and policymakers this meant

having to rethink assumptions about criminality and how offenders might be prevented from participating in crime. Many suggested that a more radical reorientation of crime prevention efforts was warranted. They argued that the shift must come not in terms of the specific strategies or theories that were used but in terms of the unit of analysis that formed the basis of crime prevention efforts. These new crime prevention efforts called for a focus not on people who commit crime but on the context in which crime occurs.

This approach, which is often associated with situational and environmental crime prevention, looks to develop greater understanding of crime and more effective crime prevention strategies through concern with the physical, organizational, and social environments that make crime possible. It demands a shift in perspective, from one that looks primarily at why certain people commit crime to one that is primarily concerned with why crime occurs in specific settings or places. It moves the context in which crime occurs to the central focus of theory, research, and practice in criminology and criminal justice administration. It places the traditional focus of criminology and criminal justice administration—the offender—as one of a number of factors that affect crime and crime prevention.

The community-oriented policing and problem-oriented policing (COPPS) paradigm has attempted to incorporate these approaches in emphasizing an understanding of the community contexts in which crime occurs so that preventive community-based intervention strategies can be devised and applied. The goal is a more holistic approach in which prevention of crime is combined with traditional reactive enforcement. In this way, police agencies have been striving to recapture public legitimacy by forming partnerships with the public to improve the quality of life in endangered communities.

The problem with this approach is that some of the public has been included in these efforts to reform policing and some of the public has been further isolated and excluded. There is increasing evidence that a new cycle of distrust and delegitimation may be occurring at present because of the way in which the new paradigm is applied in many communities.

ORIGINS OF THE COPPS PARADIGM

Although it has largely been unacknowledged by advocates of the COPPS paradigm, the basis for the shifts in emphasis in policing practices rationalized by this paradigm can be found in a criminological tradition associated with the Chicago School of Sociology (Boostrom and Henderson, 1986). Researchers from the University of Chicago began a tradition in the 1920's that viewed the urban environment as a laboratory for studying the causes and solutions of various social problems, including crime and delinquency.

Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay developed a theoretical model that correlated high rates of crime and delinquency with conditions of social disorganization. Their studies of neighborhood crime rates in Chicago showed that certain neighborhoods in the center city had consistently high rates of delinquency, crime, and violence year after year and generation after generation.

They concluded that delinquency and criminality are cultural traditions in these neighborhoods characterized by social disorganization. Conditions of social disorganization lead to ineffective informal social controls and guardianship. As long as these social conditions persist, no matter which individuals or groups move into these neighborhoods high rates of delinquency and crime will continue. Without effective intervention to change these negative social conditions, these neighborhoods will continue to reproduce deviance, social disorder, and violence.

Other, more recent, research following in this tradition has documented the "spiral of decay" a neighborhood can fall into with high rates of residential turnover, low rates of home ownership, family disruption, traditions of tolerance for various forms of deviant behavior, and low levels of guardianship and informal social controls (see Rosenbaum, 1988; Skogan, 1992 and Ellickson, 1996).

A study published in the journal *Science* reporting on the project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods concluded that the largest single predictor of crime levels in the neighborhoods studied was "collective efficacy." (Sampson et al., 1998) The authors' defined collective efficacy as mutual trust among neighbors combined with a willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good. These

factors are, in turn, related to neighborhood characteristics such as those mentioned above. They found that in neighborhoods scoring high on collective efficacy, crime rates were 40 percent below those in lower-scoring neighborhoods. Neighborhoods with high residential stability tended to be strong on collective efficacy. The authors state that understanding these social factors can help shape crime prevention strategies.

Such findings, and the criminological tradition that spawned them, evolved into the "broken windows" thesis of policing. The broken windows thesis, in turn, has provided a theoretical basis for community policing and problem solving policing and a theoretical rationale for the COPPS paradigm.

The basic tenants of the broken windows thesis were established in 1982 when James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling published an article entitled "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety" in the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine. This was followed in 1989 by a follow-up article called "Making Neighborhoods Safe" that elaborated earlier ideas and provided examples of the application of the broken windows idea. Wilson and Kelling in the following statement summarize the essence of the broken windows thesis (1989:34):

If the first broken window in a building is not repaired, then people who like breaking windows will assume that no one cares about the building and more windows will be broken. Soon the building will have no windows. Likewise, when disorderly behavior—say, rude remarks by loitering youths—is left unchallenged, the signal given is that no one cares. The disorder escalates, possibly to serious crime

These conditions are most likely to prevail in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of social disorganization, low levels of informal social controls, and low levels of collective efficacy. Untended deviant behavior, like untended property, leads to a spiral of neighborhood decay and a breakdown of informal community controls. Property is abandoned, weeds grow, trash accumulates, and more windows are smashed. Deviant behavior goes unchallenged, families move out and unattached adults move in. The stage is set for serious crime and violence to flourish. Residents may reduce their use of the streets out of fear and

might be hesitant to get personally involved in attempting to restore order in the community. Those who must remain in the neighborhood because of the inability to move out are seen as easy “marks” by criminal invaders (Wilson and Kelling, 1989:28).

The broken windows theory, building directly on community-oriented ideas about crime and crime control, shows how police practices based primarily on reactive law enforcement has been misguided. Community policing places the responsibility for order maintenance on police-citizen partnerships in communities and for rebuilding informal social controls to counteract community disorganization. From this perspective, police agencies must help community residents who value order and a crime free environment to reverse the spiral of disorder and decay in order to reestablish order and control. Community-oriented and problem-oriented policing and police-citizen co-production of crime prevention and community order are seen as solutions for a crime-ridden community.

Strategies such as foot patrol, team policing, neighborhood policing, and decentralization of police services, within the framework of community policing and problem solving policing, create opportunities for the informal flow of information about problems. Theoretically, it is this collaboration between residents and the police that creates the possibility that community residents can collectively set priorities that drive problem-oriented policing.

Herman Goldstein’s (1977) concept of “problem-oriented policing” reinforces these concepts about the nature of community policing and its potential benefits. In addition to addressing community disorder and crime prevention, Goldstein advocates a proactive style of policing that emphasizes the use of decoys, undercover and sting operations. He argues that the police must go beyond reacting to incidents to uncover the causes of social disturbances in the communities they police.

APPLYING THE COPPS PARADIGM

In order to break down barriers that have existed in the past between the police and the public, the police must maintain close ties with community groups so that they can anticipate problems and discern patterns of behavior that lead to crime

and violence. Maintaining ties begins by assigning patrol officers responsibility for specific geographical beats. Officers must be encouraged to create and utilize various community groups as partners, to gain a holistic community perspective on the life of the community and its problems. Police must collaborate with citizen groups to implement creative problem solving strategies and to reinforce natural informal social control exercised by citizens. In order for this collaboration to take place, the police must be engaged in regular “systematic inquiry” into community affairs and community problems (Goldstein 1977).

Systematic inquiry may take the form of participation in community meetings organized by educational institutions, church groups, and neighborhood groups designed to promote order and the prevention of crime. Because each community and each situation is unique, pre-formed solutions will not work and tailor-made strategies must be created.

Goldstein (1977) was one of the first police philosophers to advocate aggressive order maintenance strategies allowing police to intervene in problematic situations without a specific complaint. Kelling and Wilson (1982) utilized the concepts of proactive policing in their development of the broken windows thesis.

Many proactive police strategies, such as enlisting agencies that enforce code violations, health violations, and zoning violations, among others, in community policing efforts are a result of these writings. Other results include the visualization of police agencies, with the assistance of citizens groups, as a force for reversing community deterioration, for isolating deviants who tear down the fabric of an orderly and safe community, and as a force for promoting community crime prevention efforts. These ideas have all been utilized in promoting the COPPS paradigm.

In the COPPS model, the police become accountable for solving community problems, for forming partnerships with local community groups, and for improving the safety and quality of life in a community. The problem solving approach advocated by Goldstein, and the broken windows concepts of Wilson and Kelling promote all of the ideas incorporated in the COPPS paradigm.

The COPPS paradigm provides a rationale for the police to become proactive and to anticipate problems in the communities they police. The police do this by cultivating a trusting working relationship with citizen's groups and with business groups so information can be shared and crime can be prevented. One of the key ingredients in applying this new paradigm to reforming police philosophy and procedures is to develop strategies to overcome the isolation of the police from the rest of the community. In other words, citizen distrust of the police must be replaced by police-citizen cooperative partnerships so that community problems can be identified and citizens can be enlisted in crime prevention efforts.

The popularity of community policing is evidenced by its adoption in approximately 40% of jurisdictions throughout the United States (Sadd and Grinc 1996). As we move into the first decade of the new millennium, community policing, in its many forms, is based at least in part, on procedural changes that took place in policing through the late 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s. Research showing the limitations of traditional police practices provided strong impetus for the implementation of community policing. Formerly promising strategies such as, random motorized patrols, rapid response to calls for service, criminal investigations and traditional crime analysis, seen as improvements to police efficiency, were shown not to have the intended effect (Rosenbaum 1988: 371). As long as policing remains reactive and focused on individual criminal incidents, fine tuning policing methods will not have the desired effect of bridging the gap between the police and community members thought necessary to impact crime rates (Rosenbaum 1988:371).

Application of the COPPS paradigm, calls for the decentralization of police operations and changes in management priorities. In order to successfully implement the COPPS model, there must be a buy-in of the top management of the police and other local government agencies, as well as a sustained personal commitment from all levels of management and other key personnel.

Community policing relaxes the traditional "chain of command," and encourages innovative and creative problem solving without regard for rank. This philosophy makes greater use of knowledge, skill and expertise found throughout the organization. Patrol services, the point of

contact between the police and the public, are expanded and given greater priority under community policing. Patrol officers are given the flexibility and support to develop creative problem-solving approaches to on-going community problems.

We are at the stage in the evolution of community policing where it is difficult to precisely define the activities community policing and problem-solving policing encompass. A review of the community policing literature illuminates common elements of community policing that can be grouped into three categories.

The first category can be conceptualized as changes in police behavior. This category includes changes such as proactive rather than reactive policing, greater utilization of foot patrols and focusing on the roots of community problems rather than on their symptoms. Herman Goldstein, (1977), the "father of problem-oriented policing," said that community policing involves the need for aggressive order maintenance strategies that allow the police to intervene to reestablish order without waiting for a specific complaint. Proactive policing is also based on the broken windows thesis of policing.

The second category is changes in police organization and is characterized by, beat officers identifying with a particular geographic area for patrol, a reallocation of police resources with more emphasis on crime prevention, the development of new performance evaluation measures and a commitment to "customer satisfaction." This also includes greater autonomy of decision-making for line officers.

The third category is based on changes in police community interactions, and is exemplified by a participative decision-making process, decentralized control of police operations, the development of new public relations and problem solving skills, and the recognition that police and community residents must be viewed as co-producers of public safety (Skogan and Hartnett 1997; Skolnick and Bayley 1986; Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990).

The idea of decentralization can be thought of as the process of increasing citizen participation in decision-making, thereby lessening the amount of authority residing in the police agency (Peak, Bradshaw, and Glensor 1992). Citizen participation creates an opportunity for criminal

justice agencies to become more accountable to the community (Clear and Karp 1998).

The COPPS paradigm provides a rationale for reorienting police organizations, police roles, and police training. The application of the COPPS paradigm attempts to change the working relationships between the police, citizen's groups, and agencies in the community. In addition, community policing requires the implementation of new evaluation methods to assist in assessing its success.

The COPPS model shifts the focus of police work from responding to individual incidents to addressing problems identified by the community and by the police. Joint police and public problem-solving approaches are utilized to supplement traditional law-enforcement methods.

IS COMMUNITY POLICING EFFECTIVE?

As community policing seemingly attempts to engage community members in the fight against crime in the neighborhoods, it is important to understand the current state of the relationship between community members and the police. Community members tend to view their concerns from a broad perspective and to identify problems that can be solved if police are willing to accept the role of deliverers of service. When citizens tell the police of their concerns, the police tend to characterize the problems as petty and not in need of police attention. Problems such as vandalism, noise, and street people, are priorities as defined by community residents that were not given high priority by the police until recently (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990). Police, on the other hand, are much more likely to identify problems that are solvable by the police in their role as law enforcers (Worsnop 1993)

Although the community policing philosophy is founded on the tenet of community participation, the development of true participation of the community has been, and continues to be, problematic. There is an assumption in the community policing literature that community members are interested in participating with the police in this new strategy to reduce crime. As Grinc (1994), has said, the first step in an examination of increasing citizen participation in community policing is a re-examination of the assumption that citizens want to be involved.

If community policing is a way to co-opt citizen participation and is just another strategy to maintain current power differentials in the community, then the decision of most citizens not to participate is a logical one. In addition, community residents may refuse to participate in community policing efforts due to fear of retaliation from those who are the target of the law enforcement efforts. One of the largest groups targeted by community policing efforts, drug dealers, have a justified reputation for taking retaliatory actions against perceived "snitches." It is in the best interests of the drug dealers to ensure non-cooperation with official police duties by fellow residents. Neighbors of drug dealers are caught between fear of the dealers and their assumed desire to stop illegal behavior. Grinc (1994), characterized the situation, as a Catch-22, residents need to feel safe before getting involved with crime stopping activities, but police need residents to be involved in order to make the streets safer.

The historically strained relationship between poor and minority residents, and police, may lead to a diminished desire to cooperate with police among members of some communities. As long as the police are seen as agents of state sanctioned violence, and as having no desire to make a distinction between law breakers and law abiding residents of the community, there will not be much incentive for law abiding citizens to cooperate with the police.

The above-mentioned barriers to police/community partnerships; fear of retaliation and strained relationships, may lead to inaction on the part of community members. This lack of action and lack of participation with new methods of policing may be misinterpreted as apathy by police officers working in those neighborhoods. When police officers feel that they are more willing to get involved in solving the problems of a particular neighborhood than are the residents of that neighborhood, they are likely to respond with hostility. When neighborhood residents sense that the police are hostile toward them, the cycle of distance and distrust is renewed.

High-crime communities are more likely to be made up of people with divergent backgrounds, and needs. Residents are not likely to be motivated to organize formal community organizations to solve collective community problems. Many of these geographical areas are made up of individuals who speak a variety of

languages, creating even greater barriers to cooperation (Pepinsky 1989; Schneider 1997; Skogan 1989).

The last practical concern when examining barriers to community participation in community policing, is the idea that neighborhoods that could benefit most from the implementation of community policing are neighborhoods that are most likely to be characterized by social disorganization. These neighborhoods are likely to have high rates of poverty, unemployment, and crime; and to have poor educational systems. It is difficult to imagine that the police can overcome these intractable obstacles during the initial implementation stages of community policing.

Even in areas where community participation is more likely, barriers remain. An inability of the police to provide information to citizens about what their role in the co-production of community safety could be acts as a barrier to participation for some community members. Another problem related to identifying the proper role for residents is the idea, widely held by both police and residents, that the citizen role in community policing is limited to being the eyes and ears of the police. Many residents are not interested in taking on this role for the police.

Once it is understood that there are many and varied obstacles to community participation in community policing, it is important to understand who does participate in community organizations and how they participate. We know from the literature, and from practical experience, that certain types of community members are likely to participate in community organizations designed to impact the crime problem (Grinc 1994). Non-transient, well educated, middle or upper class homeowners are more likely to participate than other types of community residents (Rosenbaum 1988). The resulting unrepresentative make up of community groups may limit the ability of police departments to understand the true needs of the community.

Although the barriers to community involvement in community policing are many, there are jurisdictions that are currently implementing programs that promote community policing and the involvement of citizens in the co-production of public safety. In Reno, Nevada, police captains from each area of the city meet with neighborhood advisory groups (NAGs) made up of citizens from each area designed to keep the

police department in tune with the community. The main goal of this program is to increase "police accessibility to citizens". NAGs are useful in assisting police in determining the type of problem to confront when not busy with calls for service, and in helping to identify tactics for addressing particular programs (Peak, Bradshaw, and Glensor 1992:29).

As a result of the implementation of NAGs, the problems of abandoned vehicles, and noise pollution from off road activity identified by citizens, were taken seriously. The Reno Police Department purchased dirt bikes to enforce noise problems and removed over 100 abandoned vehicles that were the cause of many citizen complaints (Peak, Bradshaw, and Glensor 1992). This is an example of a problem that might have been initially relegated to a low priority by the police, but through communication with citizens, the police were convinced of its importance and took action to ameliorate the problem.

The San Diego Police Department is the recipient of both National Institute of Justice and COPPS office funding in order to improve the delivery of community policing services. These grants fund the variety of programs and services described below.

The COPPS grant assists the police department in its implementation of a "neighborhood policing resource team." Five police officers and a sergeant are assigned to mentor patrol officers in the implementation of community policing. Community policing will also be emphasized in area investigative units through the convening of a task force, which will create new policies and procedures, that will allow detectives and their sergeants to utilize problem solving in the commission of their duties. In addition, COPPS funds have been utilized to purchase a "communicator." An automated telephone mass communicator that will be able, when fully implemented, to allow for two-way communication between the police department and the citizens it serves.

The final component of the COPPS demonstration site project is adding the capability of the police department to utilize historical data in its crime mapping capabilities. Historical data allows for the identification of an "acceptable" level of crime in a given area. When this acceptable level of crime is exceeded in a given area, that area is defined as a hot spot

and as in need of proactive, problem solving activity on the part of the police.

The Comprehensive Communities Program (CCP), initiated in 1994, by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, emphasizes the collaboration of the community, public agencies and social service providers in order to solve crime and disorder problems. In Columbia, South Carolina, sworn police officers assigned as community mobilizers, link city government agencies, social service agencies and community volunteers in an attempt to reduce crime and disorder. Boston, Massachusetts, created neighborhood-planning teams consisting of community leaders, residents, criminal justice agencies, churches and social service providers. These teams aided the police in problem identification as well as problem solving. In Salt Lake City, Utah, community action teams made up of: a community oriented police officer; a probation officer; a city prosecutor; a community mobilization specialist; a youth/family specialist; and a community relations coordinator are being used to “re-invent government at the neighborhood level.”

After reviewing the summaries of the attempts to create police-community partnerships, it can be argued that the partnerships were most effective when the community organization that participated in the partnership existed prior to their partnership with the police. Those organizations that were created for the purpose of participating in the partnership provided less satisfactory outcomes (Kelling, et al., 1998).

Another major project funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance is the Innovative Neighborhood-Oriented Policing (INOP) project. All of the INOP projects incorporated the use of police-community partnerships in an attempt to reduce neighborhood drug problems. The guiding philosophy of the INOP programs is “the idea that crime and drug problems must be addressed by the entire community, not just the Police Department” (Sadd & Grinc, 1996). Police-community partnerships are seen, in this model, as a way to impact the demand for drugs in the communities rather than as a way to reduce the supply, as a Neighborhood Watch program would do.

Satellite “offices” were the cornerstone of four INOP projects. These mini-station’s consisted of vehicles, a modular unit, and a converted apartment in a low income complex. A

“Neighborhood Access Vehicle” was deployed in Hayward, California to act as a mobile office and community-meeting place. The use of the vehicle made the police more visible and accessible to community members. The vehicle is also used to provide information and referrals for drug services available in the community.

In New York City, a van was parked outside schools. The van was there to provide information, not to collect it. Residents were specifically advised not to report crime to the individuals staffing the van. Although the original plan was to staff the van with community volunteers, a police officer was assigned due to a low level of community interest. Community patrol officers also were assigned to walk beats in the areas surrounding the placement of the van.

A police mini-station in Tempe, Arizona was a modular unit sited in a park. Officers received intensive training and then long term assignments to the “beat” surrounding the modular unit. The officers focused on problems within that beat only. The community orientation, aside from the geographical placement of the modular unit, came from close ties with youth prevention programs.

A satellite office in Prince Georges County, Maryland was a converted apartment in a low income apartment complex. The officers assigned to the satellite office provided the complex with increased visibility and allowed the officers to enforce the law using community information. Partnerships consisted of community members being represented on the planning committee, a police advisory body. In addition, smaller planning committees worked with church groups, neighborhood watch, and business watch and tenants organizations.

Houston, Texas used their INOP funds to further their use of “high visibility patrols” as part of “Operation Siege.” While part of their program involved the use of community meetings to identify problems, and teaching older residents how to prevent property crime (target hardening), most community involvement in Houston can be thought of as the community being the “eyes and ears” of the police.

Community partnerships were emphasized in Norfolk, Virginia and Portland, Oregon. Norfolk’s PACE program, mandated participation of all city agencies in problem

solving and order maintenance activities. Portland emphasized human services partnerships to deal with drug problems in low-income housing. In addition, the police department assigned two officers, "a response team," to attend resident association meetings and to work with a resident's council.

The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) is a beat based policing strategy that promotes teamwork between the police, residents and community groups. The CAPS program requires regular community meetings to be held in each beat. The purpose of these meetings is to let the residents become familiar with their police officers in a non-confrontational setting, to jointly identify problems, and to work to reduce problems that are identified.

Community policing literature tends to focus on the successes of the new paradigm in combating some of the negative attributes of traditional reactive policing. The benefits of proactive policing and community involvement are seen as antidotes to the distance between the police and the community thought to be caused by emphasizing rapid response to calls for service and other reactive policies. Success of community policing however, cannot be measured using traditional policing variables.

New measurement standards for police effectiveness must be established and understood by both the police and the public. 911-response time, arrest, and crime statistics are insufficient to measure the success of the application of the COPPS paradigm. New measures must include quality of service criteria, customer satisfaction with police services and problem-solving efforts, responsiveness to community-defined issues, and cultural sensitivity on the part of police agencies.

Published research from the jurisdictions that have implemented community-policing makes clear that the new policing philosophy is regarded by many as a successful program that is able to positively impact crime rates as well as diminish the fear of crime by community members (Kelling et al. 1998; Mastrofski et al. 1998; McFadden 1998; Sadd and Grinc 1996; Safir 1997). Many of these successes however, are supported only by descriptive reports that fail to systematically isolate the results of the implementation of community policing (Erickson 1998; James 1998; Safir 1997). For programs that do report research findings, mixed results may be a more accurate reflection of the

impact of community policing (Schobel, Evan, and Daly 1997).

Most evaluations of community policing continue to focus on outcome measures and relegate the examination of process measures to secondary importance (Grinc, 1994). To provide one specific example; in the Bureau of Justice Assistance funded Innovative Neighborhood Oriented Policing Programs (INOP), six dependent variables were examined. Only two of the six, police-community relations, and level of community organization and involvement were related to community involvement, the other four were typical police outcome measures (Sadd and Grinc, 1996).

CONCLUSION

With the modest and often ambiguous results achieved by the application of the COPPS paradigm in local law enforcement agencies and the continued resistance of many agencies to the idea of refocusing their efforts on proactive prevention and citizen involvement, why is this reform idea being actively sponsored and funded by Congress and the Justice Department? Many of the federal grants earmarked for police agencies come with a demand that police agencies receiving this funding demonstrate their active commitment to the COPPS principles.

A recent book by Gary LaFree *entitled Losing Legitimacy: Street Crime and the Decline of Social Institutions in America* provides an answer. LaFree makes the point that, compared to other industrialized nations, the United States is characterized by low levels of trust in political institutions and authority in general, high levels of economic inequality, and high levels of family disintegration (1998: 189). All of these factors insure high comparative levels of street crime and violence. They also demand relatively high levels of per capita investment in the expansion of the criminal justice system, especially for enforcement and imprisonment.

However, in order for the formal criminal justice system to be effective it must operate within a community context where the majority of people are enmeshed in informal social control networks that keep them law abiding. Effective criminal justice systems, especially police departments, depend on the informal support of citizens. Punishment meted out by the criminal justice system is unlikely to deter offenders or potential offenders in a community where political and

legal institutions have little legitimacy. Without citizen confidence in the system, police are less effective in order maintenance and apprehension of criminal suspects, courts are less likely to convict, and corrections agencies are less likely to deter or rehabilitate offenders (LaFree, 1998:155).

When members of a society begin to doubt the fairness and effectiveness of their political and legal institutions, even if they don't violate the law they become less willing to act as informal agents for the social control of others in their community. Political and legal institutions that have lost legitimacy can, thus, result in weakened community controls that set up the conditions for increasing levels of crime, disorder, and violence (LaFree, 1998:80).

Seen from this perspective, the application of the COPPS paradigm to reform policing in our communities can be seen as an effort to recapture political legitimacy by encouraging police-citizen partnerships and focusing attention on issues such as improving the quality of life in a community, improving property values in declining and decaying neighborhoods, making tourists and shoppers feel safer in inner city business districts, and reducing "incivilities" which middle and upper class residents and visitors find disgusting and distasteful.

Unfortunately the application of this paradigm often further disenfranchises and isolates those committing low-level quality of life offenses that would have been previously ignored by the legal system.

Tolerance of lifestyle differences is seen as weakness, inviting further broken windows, decay, and disorder into the community. Take back your streets is the motto- save our communities from the scourge of drug dealers, gangs, hustlers, lowlifes and losers. Save our neighborhoods from graffiti, noise, crazies, and broken down cars that lower property values. Reassert a combination of informal and formal social controls to rid our communities of eyesores and uncivil deviants. Unfortunately, this approach, to the extent that it can redirect police resources, may make the political and legal institutions even less legitimate in the eyes of the losers in this game.

This may set up a self-fulfilling prophecy-driving those who are further ostracized from the community into more serious criminal behavior

and convincing us that we had it right all along when we cleaned up the streets to rid ourselves of disorder and deviance.

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