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Advocate

Community Policing

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The concept of community policing is very popular with politicians and the general public – so popular that few police chiefs want to be caught without some program they can call community policing. As early as 1997, a survey of police departments conducted by the Police Foundation found that 85 percent reported they had adopted community policing or were in the process of doing so (Skogan, 2005). The biggest reason they gave for not doing so was that community policing was "impractical" for their community. In my own tabulations of the data, this reply was mostly from small departments with only a few officers. Bigger cities included in the survey (those with populations greater than 100,000) all claimed to have adopted community policing – half (they recalled) by 1991 and the other half between 1992 and 1997. The most recent similar figures come from a national survey of departments conducted in 2013. In my tabulations, about 95 percent of the departments in cities of more than 250,000 in population that had an official mission statement included a commitment to community policing (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

What do cities that claim they are "doing community policing" actually do? They describe a long list of projects. Under the rubric of community policing, officers patrol on foot (in the 1997 survey, 75 percent listed this as a community policing activity), or perhaps on horses, bicycles, or Segways. Departments variously train civilians in citizen police academies, permanently assign officers to small geographical areas, open small neighborhood storefront offices, canvass door-to-door to identify local problems, publish newsletters, conduct drug education projects, and work with municipal agencies to enforce health and safety regulations. The 2013 survey found that two-thirds of larger departments utilized information from community surveys to assess the extent of neighborhood problems and evaluate their own performance (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

However, community policing is not defined by these kinds of activities. Activities, projects, and programs come and go, and they should as conditions change. Communities with different problems and varied resources to bring to

bear against them should try different things. Community policing is not a set of specific programs. Rather, it involves changing decision-making processes and creating new cultures within police departments. It is an organizational *strategy* that leaves setting priorities and the activities that are needed to achieve them largely to residents and the police who serve in their neighborhoods. Community policing is a process rather than a product. Digging beneath the surface, it is defined by three ideas: citizen involvement, problem solving, and decentralization. In practice, these three dimensions turn out to be densely interrelated, and departments that shortchange one or more of them will not be very effective.

This essay sets the stage for a discussion of community policing. It reviews the three core concepts that define community policing, describes how they have been turned into concrete community policing programs, and reports some of what we know about their effectiveness. It draws heavily on my experience evaluating community programs in several cities, as well as on what others have reported. It summarizes some of the claims made for community policing, and some of the realities of achieving them in the real world.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community policing is defined in part by efforts to develop partnerships with community members and civic organizations that represent many of them collectively. It requires that police engage with the public as they set priorities and develop their tactics. Effective community policing requires responsiveness to citizen input concerning both the needs of the community and the best ways by which the police can help meet those needs. It takes seriously the public's definition of its own problems. This is one reason why community policing is an organizational strategy but not a set of specific programs – how it looks in practice *should* vary considerably from place to place, in response to unique local situations and circumstances.

Listening to the community can produce new policing priorities. Officers involved in neighborhood policing quickly learn that residents can be deeply concerned about problems that previously were not high on the police agenda. To a certain extent, they define things differently. The public often focuses on threatening and fear-provoking *conditions* rather than discrete and legally defined *incidents*. They can be more concerned about cars speeding down their residential streets and the physical decay of their community than they are about traditionally defined "serious crimes." They worry about graffiti, public drinking, and the litter and parking problems created by nearby commercial strips. The public sometimes defines their problem as people who need to be taught a lesson. In Chicago, a well-known social type is the "gangbanger," and people want them off the street. The police, however, are trained to recognize and organized to respond to crime incidents, and they have to know what people do, not their popular category. Given these differences,

community residents are unsure if they can (or even should) rely on the police to help them deal with these problems. Many of these concerns thus do not generate complaints or calls for service, and, as a result, the police know surprisingly little about them. The routines of traditional police work ensure that officers will largely interact with citizens who are in distress because they have just been victimized, or with suspects and troublemakers. Accordingly, community policing requires that departments develop new channels for learning about neighborhood problems. And when they learn about them, they have to have systems in place to respond effectively (Skogan et al., 1999).

Civic engagement extends to involving the public in some way in efforts to enhance community safety. Community policing promises to strengthen the capacity of communities to fight and prevent crime on their own. The idea that the police and the public are "coproducers" of safety, and that officers cannot claim a monopoly over fighting crime, predates the community policing era. The community crime prevention movement of the 1970s was an important precursor to community policing. It promoted the idea that crime was not solely the responsibility of the police. Now police find that they are expected to lead community efforts. They are being called upon to take responsibility for mobilizing individuals and organizations around crime prevention. These efforts include neighborhood watch, citizen patrols, and education programs stressing household target hardening and the rapid reporting of crime. Residents are asked to assist the police by reporting crimes promptly when they occur and cooperating as witnesses. Community policing often involves increased "transparency" in how departments respond to demands for more information about what they do and how effective they are. A federal survey of police agencies found that by 1999, more than 90 percent of departments serving cities of 50,000 or more were giving residents access to crime statistics or even crime maps (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). Even where efforts to involve the community were already well established, moving them to center stage as part of a larger strategic plan showcases the commitment of the police to community policing.

All of this needs to be supported by new organizational structures and training for police officers. Departments need to reorganize in order to provide opportunities for citizens to come into contact with their officers under circumstances that encourage these exchanges. There has to be a significant amount of informal "face time" between police and residents, so that trust and cooperation can develop between the prospective partners. To this end, many departments hold community meetings and form advisory committees, work out of storefront offices, survey the public, and create informational web sites. During the height of community involvement in Chicago's community policing effort, the city held about 250 small police–public meetings every month. These began in 1995, and, by the end of 2016, residents had shown up on more than one million occasions to attend almost 54,000 community meetings (author's tabulations). In some places,

police share information with residents through educational programs or by enrolling them in citizen-police academies that give them in-depth knowledge of law enforcement. By 1999, almost 70 percent of all police departments – and virtually every department serving cities of 50,000 or more – reported regularly holding meetings with citizen groups (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001).

What are the presumed benefits of citizen involvement? Community policing aims at rebuilding trust in the community and ensuring support for the police among taxpayers. This is clearly a difficult target. Opinion polls document that Americans have given up thinking that politicians and government adequately represent them. For example, in 1961, almost 80 percent of Americans reported that they "trust the federal government to do what is right just about always, or / most of the time." By 2015, that figure had dropped to 19 percent (Pew Research Center, 2015). Police come off better than most government bodies when Americans are asked how much confidence they have in them; during the 1990s and 2000s, police stood above the President, the Supreme Court and most national institutions. In June 2016, Americans were most confident in the military (73 percent had "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in them), but police came next, at 56 percent. About one-quarter of Americans had that much confidence in the criminal justice system, and only 9 percent rated members of Congress positively (Gallup, Inc., 2015).

Community policing is especially about recapturing the legitimacy that police have in large measure lost in many of America's minority communities. The same opinion polls show that African Americans and recent immigrants have dramatically less confidence in the police. A 2016 analysis of national trends in opinion found that, while 58 percent of White respondents had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in police, the comparable figure for African Americans was 29 percent. Blacks were much quicker to report that racial minorities were being treated unfairly by the police, and that police are corrupt (Gallup, Inc., 2016). Likewise, in surveys conducted in Chicago, African Americans and Hispanic immigrants were much more likely to believe that officers are brutal and corrupt (Skogan and Steiner, 2004). These groups are the only growing part of the population in a number of American cities, and civic leaders know that they have to find ways to incorporate them into the system. Police take on community policing in part because they hope that building a reservoir of public support may help them get through bad times when they occur (see the discussion of "nasty misconduct" below). Community policing might help police be more effective. It could encourage witnesses and bystanders to step forward in neighborhoods where they too often do not, for example. More indirectly, it might help rebuild the social and organizational fabric of neighborhoods that previously had been given up for lost, enabling residents to contribute to maintaining order in their community (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997).

An important spin-off of civic engagement is that the adoption of community policing almost inevitably leads to an expansion of the police mandate, and this

further expands the list of points on which it should be evaluated. Controlling serious crime by enforcing the criminal law remains the primary job of the police. But instead of seeing the police exclusively in these terms, and viewing activities that depart from direct efforts to deter crime as a distraction from their fundamental mission, advocates of community policing argue that the police have additional functions to perform, and different ways to conduct their traditional business. As a practical matter, when police meet with neighborhood residents in park buildings and church basements to discuss neighborhood problems, the civilians present are going to bring up all manner of problems. If the police who are present put them off, or have no way of responding to their concerns, they will not come back next month. Community policing takes seriously the public's definition of its own problems, and this inevitably includes issues that lie outside the traditional competence of the police. Officers can learn at a public meeting that loose garbage and rats in an alley are big issues for residents, but some other agency is going to have to deliver the solution to that problem. When police meet with residents in Chicago, much of the discussion focuses on neighborhood dilapidation (including problems with abandoned buildings and graffiti) and on public drinking, teen loitering, curfew and truancy problems, and disorder in schools. There is much more talk about parking and traffic than about personal and property crime, although discussion of drug-related issues comes up quite often (Skogan, 2006). The broad range of issues that concern the public requires, in turn, that police form partnerships with other public and private agencies that can join them in responding to residents' priorities. They could include the schools and agencies responsible for health, housing, trash pickup, car tows, and graffiti cleanups.

In practice, community involvement is not easy to achieve. Ironically, it can be difficult to sustain in areas that need it the most. Research on participation in community crime prevention programs during the 1970s and 1980s found that poor and high-crime areas often were not well endowed with an infrastructure of organizations that were ready to get involved, and that turnout for police-sponsored events was higher in places honeycombed with block clubs and community organizations (Skogan, 1988). In high crime areas, people tend to be suspicious of their neighbors, and especially of their neighbor's children. Fear of retaliation by gangs and drug dealers can undermine public involvement as well (Grinc, 1994). In Chicago, a study of hundreds of community meetings found that residents expressed concern about retaliation for attending or working with the police in 22 percent of the city's beats (Skogan, 2006). In addition, police and residents may not have a history of getting along in poor neighborhoods. Residents are as likely to think of the police as one of their problems as they are to see them as a solution to their problems. It probably will not be the first instinct of organizations representing the interests of poor communities to cooperate with police. Instead, they are more likely to press for an end to police misconduct. They will call for new resources from the

outside to address community problems, for organizations rarely blame their own constituents for their plight (Skogan, 1988). There may be no reason for residents of crime-ridden neighborhoods to think that community policing will turn out to be anything but another broken promise; they are accustomed to seeing programs come and go, without much effect (Sadd & Grinc, 1994). They certainly will have to be trained in their new roles. Community policing involves a new set of jargon as well as assumptions about the new responsibilities that both police and citizens are to adopt. The 2000 survey of police departments by the federal government found that "training citizens for community policing" was common in big cities; in cities of more than 500,000, 70 percent reported doing so (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013).

In addition, community policing runs the risk of inequitable outcomes. In an evaluation of one of the very first programs, in Houston, Texas, I found that White and middle-class residents received most of the benefits of the program. They found it easy to cooperate with the police, and shared with the police a common view of whom the troublemakers were in the community. Blue-collar African Americans and Latinos remained uninvolved, on the other hand, and after a year they had seen no visible change in their lives (Skogan, 1990). Finally, the investment that police make in community policing is always at risk. Nasty episodes of police misconduct can undermine those efforts. When excessive force or killings by police become a public issue, years of progress in police–community relations can disappear. The same is true when there are of revelations of widespread corruption.

On the police side, there may be resistance in the ranks. Public officials' and community activists' enthusiasm for neighborhood-oriented policing encourages its detractors within the police to dismiss it as "just politics," or another passing civilian fad. Officers who get involved can become known as "empty holster guys," and what they do gets labeled "social work." Police officers prefer to stick to crime fighting. (For a case study in New York City of how this happens, see Pate & Shtull, 1994.) My first survey of Chicago police, conducted before that city's community policing program began, found that two-thirds of them disavowed any interest in addressing "non-crime problems" on their beat. More than 70 percent of the 7,500 police officers surveyed thought community policing "would bring a greater burden on police to solve all community problems," and also "more unreasonable demands on police by community groups" (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997). Police are often skeptical about programs invented by civilians, who they are convinced cannot possibly understand their job. They are particularly hostile to programs that threaten to involve civilians in setting standards or evaluating their performance, and they do not like civilians influencing their operational priorities. Police can easily find ways to justify their aloofness from the community; as one officer told me, "You can't be the friend of the people and do your job."

On the other hand, some studies point to positive changes in officer's views once they become involved in community policing. Lurigio and Rosenbaum

(1994) summarized twelve studies of this, and found many positive findings with respect to job satisfaction, perceptions of improved relations with the community, and expectations about community involvement in problem solving. Skogan and Hartnett (1997) found growing support for community policing among officers involved in Chicago's experimental police districts, in comparison to those who continued to work in districts featuring policing as usual.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND THE COMMUNITY

Community policing also involves a shift from reliance on reactive patrol and investigations toward a problem-solving orientation. In brief (for it is discussed in detail in other chapters of this book), problem-oriented policing is an approach to developing crime reduction strategies. Problem solving involves training officers in methods of identifying and analyzing problems. It highlights the importance of discovering the situations that *produce* calls for police assistance, identifying the causes which lie behind them, and designing tactics to deal with these causes. Problem solving is a counterpoint to the traditional model of police work, which usually entails responding sequentially to individual events as they are phoned in by victims. Too often this style of policing is reduced to driving fast to crime scenes in order to fill out pieces of paper reporting what happened. Problem solving, on the other hand, calls for examining patterns of incidents to reveal their causes and to help plan how to deal with them proactively. Problem-oriented policing also recognizes that the solutions to those patterns may involve other agencies and may be "non-police" in character; in traditional departments, this would be cause for ignoring them. The best programs encourage officers to respond creatively to the problems they encounter, or to refer them appropriately to other agencies (Eck, 2004).

Problem-solving policing can proceed without a commitment to community policing. The latter stresses civic engagement in identifying and prioritizing neighborhood problems; without that input, the former frequently focuses on patterns of traditionally defined crimes that are identified using police data systems. Problem-oriented community policing sometimes involves community members or organizations actually addressing particular issues, not just identifying them, but more often it is conducted by the police and allied city agencies. However, community policing involves neighborhood residents as an end in itself, and, in evaluation terms, it is important to count this as a "process success." The problem with relying on the data that is already in police computers is that when residents are involved they often press for a focus on issues that are not well documented by department information systems, such as graffiti, public drinking, and building abandonment. Effective programs must have systems in place to respond to a broad range of problems, through partnerships with other agencies. The 2013 national survey of agencies found that in cities of more than 250,000 residents, about 70 percent

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of departments reported they had formed problem-solving partnerships with community groups and local agencies (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Is this easy to do? It is at least as hard as involving the community, for bureaucracies are involved, and interagency cooperation can easily fail. For a long list of familiar bureaucratic and political reasons, other city and state agencies usually think that community policing is the police department's program, not theirs. They resist bending their own professional and budget-constrained priorities to accommodate police officers who call on them for help. Making this kind of inter-organizational cooperation work turns out to be one of the most difficult problems facing innovative departments. When the chief of an East Coast city was new, he told me that he could handle things in his department; his biggest fear was that his mayor might not handle the city's other agencies, and that they would not provide the kind of support that community policing requires. If community policing is the police department's program, it may fail. Community policing must be the city's program.

It is also hard to involve police officers in problem solving. Cordner and Biebel (2003) did an in-depth study of problem-solving practice in a major American city. Although the department had been deeply committed to problem solving for more than fifteen years, they found that street officers typically defined problems very narrowly (eg., one address, or one suspected repeat offender); their analysis of it consisted of making personal observations from their car; they crafted solutions from their own experience; and two-thirds of the time their proposed solution did not go past arresting someone. The study concluded that, after fifteen years of practice, this department's glass was only half full. What observers would classify as "full scale" problem solving was rarely encountered. Even the advocates of problem solving (you will hear from them in later chapters) admit that it requires a great deal of training, close supervision, and relentless follow-up evaluation to make it work. However, one important organizational function that often gets shortchanged is training. Training is expensive and officers have to be removed from the line – or paid overtime – to attend. And few departments are adequately staffed with supervisors who themselves were full-fledged problem solvers (Eck, 2004).

Community policing has also revived interest in systematically addressing the task of crime prevention. In the traditional model of policing, crime prevention was deterrence based. To threaten arrest, police patrol the streets looking for crimes (engaging in random and directed patrol), they respond quickly to emergency crime calls from witnesses and victims, and detectives then take over the task of locating offenders. Concerned residents, on the other hand, do not want the crime that drives these efforts to happen in the first place. Their instinct is to press for true prevention. Police-sponsored prevention projects are in place throughout the country. Problem solving has brought crime prevention theories to the table, leading police to tackle the routine activities of victims and the crucial roles played by "place managers" such as landlords or shopkeepers, and not just offenders (Eck & Wartell, 1998; Braga et al., 1999). When

community policing came to Chicago, one of the first actions of a new district commander was to convince a bank to open an ATM machine in his police station, so residents had a safe place to go to transact business. An emphasis on "target hardening" has gotten police involved in conducting home security surveys and teaching self-defense classes. But when communities talk about prevention, they mostly talk about their children, and ways of intervening earlier with youths who seem on a trajectory toward serious offending. Much of the of work preventing the development of criminal careers lies with agencies besides the police, including family courts, children's protection agencies, parents, peer networks, and schools. To their efforts, the police add involvement in athletic and after school programs, DARE presentations in schools, special efforts to reduce violence in families, and initiatives that focus attention on the recruitment of youths into gangs.

DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization is an organizational strategy that is closely linked to the implementation of community policing. Decentralization can be pursued at two levels. Typically, more responsibility for identifying and responding to chronic crime and disorder problems is to be delegated to mid-level commanders in charge of the geographical districts or precincts that make up a city. Departments have had to experiment with how to structure and manage a decentralization plan that gives mid-level managers real responsibility, and how to hold them accountable for measures of their success. Here, community policing intersects with another movement in policing (and the subject of another pair of chapters in this book), the emergence of a culture of systematic performance measurement and managerial accountability.

The idea is to devolve authority and responsibility further down the organizational hierarchy. Departments need to do this in order to encourage the development of local solutions to locally defined problems, and to facilitate decision-making that responds rapidly to local conditions. There may be moves to flatten the structure of the organization by compressing the rank structure, and to shed layers of bureaucracy within the police organization to speed communication and decision-making. In Chicago, most of the department's elite units – including detectives, narcotics investigators, special tactical teams, and even the organized crime unit – were required to share information and more closely coordinate their work with the geographical districts. The department's management accountability process called them on the carpet when they failed to serve as "support units" for uniformed patrol officers (Skogan, 2006). To flatten the organization, Chicago abolished the civil service position of captain, leaving the department with just three permanent ranks (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997).

At the same time, more responsibility for identifying and responding to community problems may be delegated to individual patrol officers and their

sergeants, who are in turn encouraged to take the initiative in finding ways to deal with a broad range of problems specific to the communities they serve. Structurally, community policing leads departments to assign officers to fixed geographical areas, and to keep them there during the course of their day. This is known as adopting a "turf orientation." Decentralization is intended to encourage communication between officers and neighborhood residents, and to build an awareness of local problems among working officers. They are expected to work more autonomously at investigating situations, resolving problems, and educating the public. They are being asked to discover and set their own goals, and sometimes to manage their work schedule. This is also the level at which collaborative projects involving both police and residents can emerge. In 2013, a national survey of police departments found that assigning officers geographically was virtually the norm in cities over 250,000 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

This pattern of dual decentralization is adopted not only so that police can become more proactive and more preventive, but also so that they can respond efficiently to problems of different magnitude and complexity. Under the professional model, marching orders for the police traditionally come from two sources: 911 calls from the public concerning individual problems, and initiatives or programs originating at police headquarters or even City Hall. Every experienced officer can tell stories of the crazy things officers sometimes have to do because "downtown" announced a citywide initiative that was irrelevant for their district. A Chicago commander once described to me how he was punished (he lost a day's pay) because – as a district commander – he assigned two officers to identifying abandoned cars and getting them towed, rather than the maximum of one officer that the rule book mandated. He used this story to good effect whenever officers complained in a meeting that the department was getting away from its traditional practices because of community policing.

Decentralization, paired with a commitment to consultation and engagement with local communities, also allows the police to respond to local problems that are important to particular communities. Police were not organized to respond to the organized groups and community institutions that make up "civil society." Now surveys of departments indicate that, as part of a community policing initiative, virtually all larger departments now consult local advisory boards representing specific communities.

Is decentralization easy to pull off? It is at least as hard as problem solving, and politically risky to boot. For all of the adoption of specific programs, researchers who track trends in police organization are skeptical that there has been much fundamental "flattening" of police hierarchies – which is, after all, about their jobs (Maguire et al., 2003; Greene, 2004). Resistance to reform does not just come from the bottom of the organization. Junior executives at police headquarters may resist having authority taken from them and pushed to lower levels in the organization. Managers at this level are in a position to act as

a filter between the chief and operational units, censoring the flow of decisions and information up and down the command hierarchy (for a case study of how this can undermine community policing initiatives, see Capowich, 2005). This is one reason why special community policing units are often run from the chief's office, or housed in a special new bureau; this enables the department to get neighborhood officers on the street while bypassing the barons who dominate key positions at headquarters. Too often they are command- and control-oriented and feel most comfortable when everything is done by the book. Discussions of community policing often feature management buzz words like "empowerment" and "trust," and this makes them nervous because they also worry about inefficiency and corruption.

And, of course, these concerns are real. One of the dilemmas of community policing is that calling for more operational and street-level discretion runs counter to another trend in policing, which is to tighten the management screws and create an increasingly rule-bound corner in order to control police corruption and violence. Police do misuse their discretion, and they do take bribes. Ironically, however, *many* of the recent innovations discussed in this book go the other way; they recognize, widen, and celebrate the operational independence of individual officers. Community policing recognizes that problems vary tremendously from place to place, and that their causes and solutions are highly contextual. We expect police to use "good judgment" rather than somehow enforce "the letter of the law." Community policing stresses that workers at the very bottom of the organization are closest to the customer, and are to use their best judgment about how to serve the neighborhoods where they are assigned. It calls for the bottom-up definition of problems. Decentralizing, reducing hierarchy, granting officers more independence, and trusting in their professionalism are the organizational reforms of choice today, not tightening things up to constrain officer discretion.

Decentralization almost certainly puts new responsibilities on the shoulders of front-line supervisors, the sergeants, and others who watch over the daily activities of working officers. Traditionally, their role was to watch for infractions of the rule book. However, translating organizational policy into practice has become more complex than that. The chapters in this book provide an inventory of the many, and more complicated, things society is asking officers to do, and in this environment their immediate supervisors need to become teachers, coaches and mentors, as well as disciplinarians. Examining one of the first experiments with community policing, Weisburd, McElroy, and Hardyman (1988) observed that successful sergeants had to develop work plans, prioritize problems and encourage their officers to take the initiative, and then assess their successes and failures in light of the diverse and very particular problems facing the beats in which they worked. Recognizing this, when Chicago launched its community policing initiative, they paid special attention to sergeants. Sergeants received more training than anyone else in the organization, in order to backstop their teaching and coaching capabilities.

Beat officers working around the clock were assigned the same sergeant, whose tasks including building their team spirit, encouraging cross-shift communication among them, staffing monthly beat community meetings, and seeing to it that the formal plan they were to develop for their beat was put in motion (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997).

It may be difficult to pull off decentralization to the turf level because it takes too many people. Community policing is labor intensive, and may require more officers. Police managers and city leaders will have to find the officers required to staff the program. Finding the money to hire more officers to staff community policing assignments is hard, so departments may try to downsize existing projects. This can bring conflict with powerful unit commanders and allied politicians who support current arrangements. Research on changes in police organizational structure did find that their "spatial differentiation" increased during the 1990s, with the spread of storefront offices and the creation of more and smaller district stations (Maguire et al., 2003), but there was a price to be paid for this. Police departments also face "the 911 problem." Their commitment to respond to 911 calls as quickly as possible dominates how resources are deployed in every department. Community policing has encountered heavy political resistance when the perception arose (encouraged, to be sure, by its opponents) that resources previously devoted to responding to emergency calls were being diverted to this "social experiment."

Decentralization is also difficult to manage because evaluation of the effectiveness of many community policing initiatives is difficult. The management environment in policing today stresses "accountability for results" (Willis, Mastrofski & Kochel, 2010). In this model, units are not rewarded for their activities, however well meaning, but for declining crime. However, the public often wants action on things that department information systems do not account for at all. In decentralized departments, residents of different neighborhoods make different demands on police operations. They value the time officers spend meeting with them, and they like to see officers on foot rather than driving past on the way to a crime scene. Agencies committed to both community policing and CompStat-style accountability assessment seem to have to run their associated operations independently, so contrary are their managerial demands (Willis, Mastrofski & Kochel, 2010). As a result, both individual and unit performance is harder to assess in community policing departments (see also Mastrofski, 1998).

CAN IT WORK?

Because many different projects and activities take place under this conceptual umbrella, it has long been difficult to come to an overall assessment regarding whether or not community policing works. A further complexity has been that community policing aims at affecting different and more diverse outcomes than those that are targeted by routine proactive policing projects. Often these

targets are not to be found in standard policing databases, increasing the complexity and expense of conducting studies of community policing effectiveness. The long-term character of many of the concerns addressed by community policing, and the patience that they require in dealing with them, provide additional challenges, as few studies have tracked community policing for longer than a year or so. Studies of the effectiveness of its major features across a broad range of outcomes took some time to accumulate.

The best evidence available on the impact of community policing was systematically reviewed in a report appearing in 2014 (Gill et al., 2014). It came to mixed conclusions. Across the evaluations that could be identified for analyses there was little sign that conventional measures of crime were much impacted by the effort, including in the subset of interventions that included a specific problem-solving component. Fear of crime showed mixed results depending on how it was measured, but overall was not greatly affected. However, survey measures of the extent of social and physical disorder – neighborhood problems that frequently go unrecognized without community input – were positively affected by community-oriented interventions. A 2017 review by a panel of the National Research Council concurred with this, noting that the highly variable set of activities undertaken as part of community policing initiatives can make it difficult to generalize about its possible effects on crime (Weisburd & Majmundar, 2018).

That said, I do not know of a single police department that adopted community policing because they thought that it was a *direct* route to getting the crime rate down. In any event, crime has dropped dramatically across the United States, while police continue to face a legitimacy crisis of major proportions. In addition to crime, efforts to evaluate it need to focus as well on the important community and governance processes that it is intended to set in motion, because they represent potentially important "wins" on their own. The extent of the public's trust and confidence in police is an obvious first issue. Here the reviewers found more evidence that community policing could make a difference. Satisfaction with the police went up significantly in three-quarters of the neighborhoods where it was tested. Measures of the legitimacy of the police improved in six of the ten studies in which it was assessed. The report concluded that community policing had clear effects on quality-of-life and "citizen-focused" outcomes that research suggests could have longer-term effects on crime through their community-building effects, if they could be tracked over time (Gill et al., 2014). The report did not consider possible racial and ethnic differences in outcome patterns, despite the fact that this is among the most significant policing issues of our time. For example, my own long-term evaluation of ten years of citywide community policing in Chicago found that resident's views of their police improved over time, in the end by 10–15 percentage points on measures of their effectiveness, responsiveness, and demeanor. Importantly, Hispanics, African Americans, and Whites all shared these improved views (Skogan, 2006).

Evaluators also should look into the "mobilizing" effects of programs, including the extent of parallel community self-help efforts and extending even to the possible development of organizational and leadership capabilities among newly activated residents. Most observers would agree that community factors are among the most important determinants of safety, not the vigor of police enforcement activities, and that is an important rationale for a community-building approach. Sociological research indicates that "collective efficacy" (a combination of trust among neighborhood residents and the expectation that neighbors will intervene when things go wrong) plays an important role in inhibiting urban crime. However, the same work indicates that it is mostly White, home-owning neighborhoods that currently have it, and researchers have yet to document how neighborhoods that do not have collective efficacy can generate it for themselves (Skogan, 2012). Many probably need help, and that is where community policing could step in. The 2017 National Research Council report – which found only mixed evidence, but not much of it – described how this *might* work:

Many expect that community-oriented policing should bring police and citizens closer together in common cause and should strengthen communication among various community groups as well as between police and public. It should invest residents with the necessary skills, resources, and sense of empowerment to mobilize against neighborhood problems. (Weisburd & Majmundar, 2018, 6–7)

Some survey studies, but not all, find a link between positive views or experiences with police and perceptions of stronger community responses to crime, but the jury is still out on the causal link between the two (Kochel, 2017). Certainly the community-building spirit of community policing, and its accomplishments in involving residents in anti-crime activites, point in this direction, and this should be an important focus of evaluation in this area. That it is actually focused on community building is another reason why evaluation studies need to be long term, able to assess the underlying logic of community policing: that focused police and city efforts can help revitalize community processes like collective efficacy. However, none of the comparisons of program and control areas considered in the most systematic review of community policing research looked at the effect of programs over a period longer than one year.

PROSPECTS

One unanswered question is whether community policing can survive the dual blows of plummeting federal financial support, plus the effects of the fiscal crises that engulfed many cities and their pension funds. Under the 1994 Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act, the federal government spent billions of dollars to support community policing. Federal agencies sponsored demonstration projects designed to spur innovation and promote

the effectiveness of community policing, and they promoted it heavily through national conferences and publication. The Act specified that one of the roles of these new officers should be "to foster problem solving and interaction with communities by police officers," and it also funded the creation of regional community policing centers around the country. But even where commitment to community policing is strong, maintaining an effective program can be difficult in the face of competing demands for scarce resources (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2011). Critics call for returning to the "core functions" of policing, and even supporters of community policing have acquiesced to cutbacks in neighborhood units and closed storefront offices. Training appears to be continuing, at least selectively. In 2013, all or almost all new recruits in cities over 250,000 in population were receiving community policing training, but in-service retraining of experienced officers was much less frequent (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Another issue is whether community policing can continue to survive CompStat. As I noted earlier, many of its features push in the opposition direction. To a significant extent, in the current management environment, what gets measured is what matters. The accountability process is about harnessing hierarchy to achieve top management's objectives, which are in turn driven by the data they have at hand, and those data usually say little about community priorities. Police researchers attribute many of the problems of contemporary policing to the mismatch between the formal hierarchical structure of police organizations and the true nature of their work, which is extremely decentralized, not amenable to "cookie cutter" solutions to problems, dependent on the skills and motivation of the individual officers handling it, and mostly driven externally by 911 calls rather than management strategies. Perhaps the accountability process has ridden to the rescue of the traditional hierarchical structure, trying again to impose that hierarchy on work that does not fit its demands.

The two certainly collide. James Willis and colleagues (2010) explored how community policing and CompStat might manage to coexist. They found that, at best, agencies attempting to deploy both essentially ran them in separate worlds. They concluded,

By operating them as systems mostly buffered from each other, the departments avoided having to confront in highly visible ways the dilemmas that would inevitably arise where the doctrines of the two reforms were at odds ... In contrast, a more integrated CompStat/community policing model would require much more radical changes to existing organizational routines, and such changes may have greater costs and risks and meet with considerable resistance from threatened parties. (Willis et al., 2010: 978)

Faced with this pressure, there is a risk that the focus of departments will shift away from community policing, back to the activities that better fit recentralizing management structures.

There are additional counter trends. One is renewed pressure from the federal government to involve local police extensively in enforcing immigration laws. This is often stoutly resisted by chiefs of police, who claim that it would be a great setback to their community involvement and trust-building projects with the burgeoning immigrant populations of many cities. We shall see if they can continue to resist (Skogan, 2009). Community policing also competes for attention, resources, and political interest with a number of "wars." These include the war on drugs, the global war on terror ("GWAT"), and zero-tolerance misdemeanor enforcement being pursued in the misguided belief that this is somehow broken windows policing (for more on broken windows, see the next section of this book). Most recently, stop and frisk has become the crime-prevention strategy of choice in American policing (see Chapter 9 and 10 of this book). The threats this policy poses for effective community policing include the high volume of unwarranted stops that generates, the extreme concentration of stops in minority communities, and the focused impact of these on the legitimacy of policing, and perhaps of the state. And the contrary effects all of these pale in significance in comparison to that of officer pushback against this and related reforms. When community policing, procedural justice initiatives, and other community-facing strategies come into conflict with police politics and culture, the latter threaten (in the words of President Obama's police reform commission) to "eat policy for lunch" (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015: 11).

In summary, reform is difficult, and fragile. It is important to note that reports from cities that have – reluctantly, they say – cut back on their community policing units usually claim that they will continue doing it anyway, because it has become part of their agency's regular way of doing business. This signals that they see it as one of their significant claims on legitimacy. It is also entrenched in many places. Compared to many innovations considered in this book, community policing is a relatively old idea, but it is one that has legs. Community-oriented policing has taken off across the world, reshaping public service in many nations. In the end, it will be politics, in the form of broad grassroots support for community policing and elite concern regarding the continuing legitimacy crisis that threatens the stability of polity, that will rescue it.

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