Police and the Community

Recent History

Attitudes toward police

Conservative vs Liberal
- More cooperation with police in terms of reporting entries and giving information
- Greater Support for higher levels of funding
- Support for a variety of modifications of liberal Supreme Court decisions
- Improved morale for police officers, who were coming to see themselves as surrounded by hostile citizenry

Liberal - positive attitudes - especially among minorities - was a goal insofar as it was an indicator of improved police behavior

Race, Age, Social class - More negative attitudes toward police among minority, under 30, and lower socio-economic class

Conservative more favorable than liberal

Recent experiences - citizens with more favorable attitudes toward police likely to evaluate their more recent experiences with police officers more positively and therefore:

1. remember favorable experiences
2. evaluate any given experience as favorable
3. induce courteous behavior from police

Police and the community

Police cannot perform their function successfully without interacting with the community they serve - citizens report crimes and provide information about them.

Police - community relations

Political involvement from the 1840s - and included many of the characteristics of community policing
- Decentralizes neighborhood based structure
- Close personal relationships with the citizens
- Programs and techniques were grounded in foot patrol, call boxes, and police performing a variety of functions including patrol, investigations, an order-maintenance and service activities
- Keeping prominent citizens and politicians satisfied was a major goal of police

Reform era emerged in the 1930s but succeeding decades there was still considerable involvement of the police in politics.

By 1960s police work had moved to the opposite extreme - police were removed
from community contact and found themselves in the center of each controversy (war in Vietnam, race equality, and women's rights) and were untrained to deal adequately with crowd control and violent encounters with citizens groups. Police viewed as the embodiment of the establishment.

Public Relations
looking good

Police Community Relations
doing good (searching for ways to best deal with the problems of disenfranchised and estranged society - moved away from the practice of apprehension of law breakers to that of more positive citizen interaction)

Programs:
Storefront centers
Appointment of public relations officers
Establishment of neighborhood watch programs
Drug awareness workshops for concerned citizens
Project ID programs

For PCR programs to be truly successful, they need to reach to the grassroots of discontent where citizen dissatisfaction with police exits

Additional changes

Team Policing
Originated in Aberdeen Scotland

Viewed as the reorganization of conventional patrol strategies into an integrated and adaptable police team assigned to a permanent district

Idea is that police officers are assigned to fixed neighborhoods and therefore become personally acquainted with residents and the problems of those residents in those neighborhoods. A distinguishing feature is that it gave patrol officers the authority to process complaints and resolve localized crime problems

Crime Prevention
The goal of crime prevention involves the police playing an important role in initiating this program in the community.

The focus is on building stronger family units, providing counseling in schools, and developing better environmental conditions

Specific goal is to reduce the need to commit crime by providing opportunities for success and achievement -

Project Dare
Crimestoppers
One misconception of crime prevention programs is that police can control crime - since police cannot control what causes crime (poverty, lack of education, dysfunctional families, etc) little can realistically be done about it by police.

- Public forums for victims
  - Americas Most Wanted
  - COPS
  - FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted

Strategies for policing

- Strategic Policing
- Problem-Oriented Policing POPs
- Community-Oriented Policing

Strategic Policing

Emphasizes an increased capacity to deal effectively with nontraditional crimes. Offenders of such crimes include serial rapists and killers, domestic terrorists, drug-trafficking organizations, white-collar crimes, and organized crime organizations - involves specialized approaches such as criminal intelligence gathering, undercover operations, reverse stings, and wiretaps and other electronic surveillance.

Problem-Oriented Policing

Based on the view that underlying social conditions cause crime. To control crime effectively, police must uncover and address the existing social problems that contribute to those crimes.

Strength of POP lies in its ability to make use of social resources such as counseling centers and job training facilities.

Incorporation of citizens is also important - It is as important for departments respond to specific incidents as it is for them to fulfill their general responsibilities to provide order maintenance, community service, or law enforcement - specific events are called to officer attention by personal observation or by being called in to dispatch.

Goal is to make a determination as to the cause of the citizen complaints rather than simply treating the symptom of the problem.

Note: in “regular policing” Police spend their time responding to specific incidents and is therefore difficult for them to seek underlying reasons.
Problems:

A. Likely that some police officers may not be ready to accept the new role as “community relations expert” as opposed to law enforcer - the traditional police attitude is that the good cop always “gets his man” may be jeopardized

B. Not all citizens are ready to accept the new role of police officers becoming involved in their everyday lives - communities which have had negative experiences with police and still harbor suspicions about them

Community-Oriented Policing

Congress passed a comprehensive crime bill (1994) providing $11 billion for putting 100,000 police officers on the street and enhancing law enforcement programs.

Features of Community-Oriented Policing

- Freeing the officer from the emergency response system permit her/him to engage more directly in the proactive crime prevention
- Making operations more visible to the public increases police accountability
- Decentralizing operations allows officers to develop greater familiarity with the specific workings and constituencies in the community and adapt procedures to accommodate those needs
- Encouraging officers to view citizens as partners improves relationships between police and the public
- Moving decision making and discretion downward to the patrol officer places more authority in the hands of the person who best knows the community’s problems and expectations

Extends beyond strategic and problem-oriented policing

Community-Oriented Policing is (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux):

a philosophy and an organizational strategy that promotes a new partnership between people and their police

based on the premise that both the police and the community must work together to identify, prioritize, and solve contemporary problems such as drugs, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and overall neighborhood decay with the goal of improving the quality of life in the area

requires a department-wide commitment from everyone, civilian and sworn, to the philosophy
challenges all personnel to find ways to express the philosophy in their jobs

rests on establishing community policing officers as decentralized “mini-chiefs” in permanent beats who act as community-based problem solvers who work directly with the community

Theoretical base for Community-Oriented Policing

The broken windows theory - (James Q. Wilson & George Kelling)
Increasing spiral of predatory behavior and citizen fear based on acts that degrade the physical environment or acts of disorder based on public apathy and neglect

The normative Sponsorship Theory
Most people are of good will and that they will cooperate with others to facilitate the building of consensus. The more that various groups share common values, beliefs, and goals the more likely it is that they will agree on common goals

Critical Social Theory
Focuses on how and why people coalesce to correct and over come social, economic, and political obstacles that prevent them from having their needs met

A. Enlightenment - people must be educated about circumstances before they can lobby for change
B. Empowerment - people must take action to improve their conditions
C. Emancipation - people can achieve liberation through reflection and social action

Zero Tolerance
An approach to using the theories - basic premise is that small crimes must be taken as seriously as big crimes

Components

The police department
The community
Elected civic officials
The business community
Other agencies
The media

Effectiveness based on:

External environmental factors

Internal environmental factors

Dimensions of Community Policing
Philosophical Dimensions
  Broad Based Police Function - move from law enforcement or crime fighting as the primary function
  Citizen Input - move from “educating public to learning from citizens
  Neighborhood variation - move from disavowel of discretion and one-size fits-all to political jurisdiction comprised of a number of communities

Strategic Dimensions
  Geographical Focus - change from time and function focus to location and problems
  Prevention Focus - change from reactive to proactive and from limited focus to broaden range of activities
  Substantive Focus - more than responding to calls or generating activity such as arrests and citations

Programmatic Dimensions
  Reoriented Police Operation - from random, routine patrols to deter crime, distribution across beats to detect activity, detectives dispatched to investigate to identify and target problems and implement solutions, intensified police presence through larger number of positive and negative citizen contacts
  Problem-solving and Situational Crime Prevention -
    Identify problem
    Careful analysis of problem and its attributes
    Identification of possible solutions
    Implementation of a solution and subsequent evaluation to measure effectiveness of the solution
  Community Engagement - involve the community in protecting itself - crime and disorder not the exclusive domain of the people and government

Community policing involves individual and organizational change