



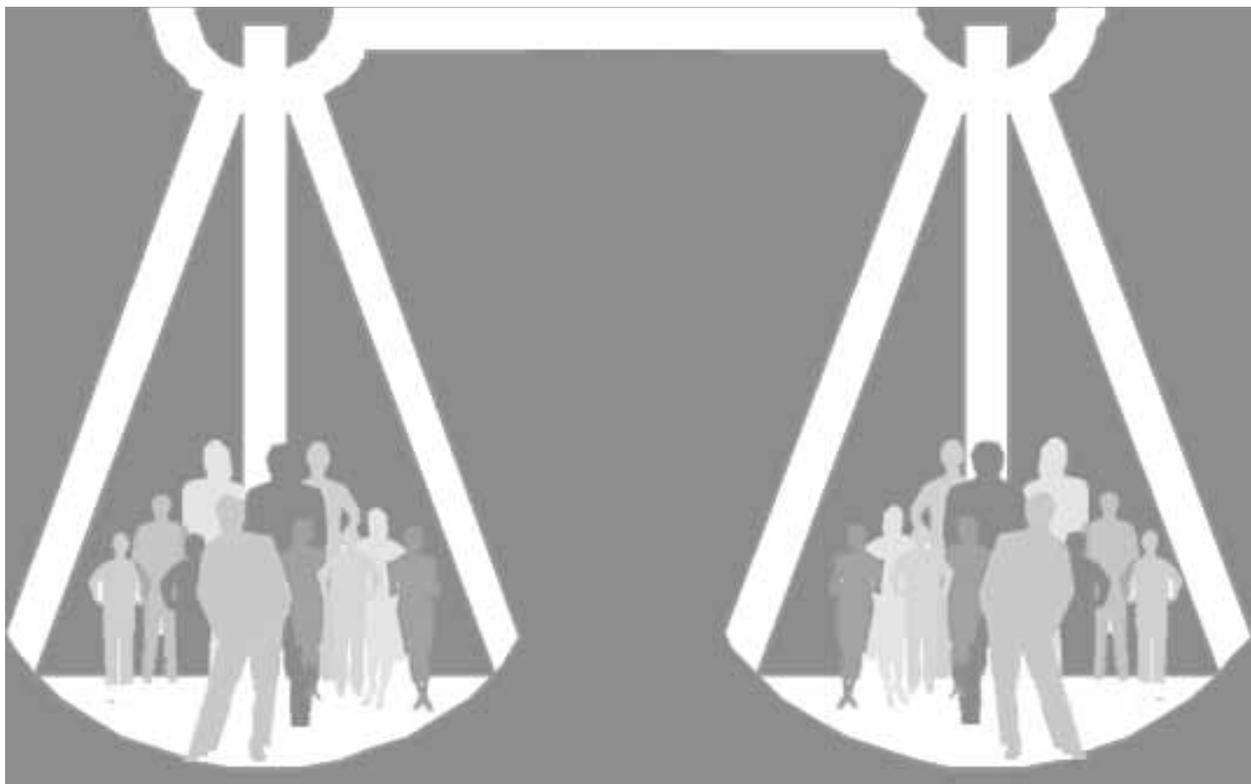
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## COMMUNITY POLICING, COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

EXPLORING THE LINKS FOR THE DELIVERY OF A  
BALANCED APPROACH TO PUBLIC SAFETY



BY CAROLINE G. NICHOLL

# COMMUNITY POLICING, COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

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Exploring the Links for the Delivery of a Balanced Approach to Public Safety

By **Caroline G. Nicholl**

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## Author's Note

This report is about promoting public safety in a democracy through policing and justice. Within these few words lies a kaleidoscope of thousands of pieces. We all see those pieces differently, depending on what we know and what we do not know, what we have experienced and what we have heard second- or third-hand. From my stance, the current pattern seems out of balance. Efforts with community-oriented policing and justice are heartening, but the rich potential for further reform is vulnerable. The vulnerability lies in a confusion about the central point of the kaleidoscope. Democracy requires that the public not be merely a spectator in the campaign for crime reduction. Rather, the public must learn its role and responsibilities in preventing the conditions that are criminogenic. Government provides the vehicle for accomplishing that goal: leadership, empowerment, and resource distribution in accordance with the values of collective resolution of problems rather than short-term professional or political expediency.

This lofty mission is within our reach more than is widely recognized, but clarifying where we are *now* is a starting point to determining our *future path*. This report attempts to sketch out the bridge between the two.

At an early point in the preparation of the report, it became clear that an exploration of the current state of crime, policing, and justice would be problematic. The police and the criminal justice system appear to be in a state of perpetual change. Hundreds of restorative and community justice experiments are going on across the United States, with community policing being undertaken by thousands of police departments. Experiments are very much part of a developing field, constantly creating new awareness.

Crime, including the fear of crime and disorder, is subject to the vagaries of statistical interpretation; and important qualitative considerations are susceptible to subjective opinion. With so much change happening simultaneously, and with lots of room for *diverse* interpretation, it seemed sensible to attempt to define the common drivers behind existing policies and practices—and to look to the future open to the possibilities becoming commonplace in many discussions. Since the perspective is a “helicopter view” of current developments, the product is a commentary, not an academic piece.

In writing this report I have had in mind two audiences: those who can influence and shape public policy, and those who have responsibility for implementing change—including local communities. Ideas are one thing. Getting them accepted to a point where they may become a reality is quite another! This work aims to stimulate grassroots innovation that can be supported by policymakers. The result is two documents: this *monograph*, which explores the rationale for a shift in focus and values, and a *toolbox* that tackles the implementation issues that need to be addressed in bringing about such a shift.



Finally, I have found writing this work unusually hard because a helicopter view taken to survey the current landscape and to look toward the horizon on such a broad subject is bound to omit or simplify important developments. For this I apologize. My hope is that, nonetheless, it serves this useful purpose: to stimulate helpful dialogue about how to face the challenges of crime in the new millennium in the context of a free society. Written words cannot replace the value of people figuring out together what can be done differently today for a better tomorrow.

Caroline G. Nicholl  
September 1999

# Acknowledgments

There are many people to thank for making this project a reality. First, my colleagues and the communities in Britain who tolerated my experimenting with community policing and exploring restorative justice; in particular, Charles Pollard, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, and Ian Blair, now Chief Constable of Surrey Police, both of whom placed considerable trust and faith in the work I was attempting to do while I was Chief Superintendent at Milton Keynes. I must also thank The Commonwealth Fund in New York, which awarded me a Harkness Fellowship in 1995–96, thereby providing an unusual and wonderful opportunity to test and further develop my thesis in a different cultural context.

I wish to express a special thanks to Professor Herman Goldstein of the Law School at Wisconsin University, who is a constant source of inspiration; to Beth Carter and everyone involved in the Campaign for Effective Crime Policy in Washington, D.C. (it is comforting to know there are so many eminent people who believe change is needed); to Kay Pranis, Annie Roberts, and all the other restorative justice visionaries in Minnesota who have influenced my thinking; to Mike Dooley, Ronnie Earle, Ellen Halbert, Kay Harris, John McKnight, Mark Umbreit, and Howard Zehr, all of whom have been especially helpful in their own way in getting me thinking “outside the box”; to the inmates and staff from Grendon (United Kingdom) and Shakopee (United States) prisons, whom I will remember always; to those parents and spouses of murder victims I have met, from whom I learned what can be achieved through gaining understanding and giving compassion; and to the many police officers I know—in England and in the United States—who provide a constant reminder of the realities of the street.

I owe my gratitude to Joseph Brann, Stacy Curtis Bushée, and Karen Beckman of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, without whom this project would not have become a reality. Finally, a huge thank you to my closest allies, Jenny Edwards, Dr. Catherine Fitzmaurice, Chris George, John Stuart, and Ken Webster, whose confidence in my work is always a source of encouragement.

## Note

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## About the Author

Caroline G. Nicholl has been in policing for more than 20 years and is a former police chief. Thus she has practical experience of the limitations of the criminal justice system and of traditional crime control policies. At least half her career has involved learning how to apply community-oriented problem-solving methods to tackle crime, fear, and disorder. She has found that this rewarding, though demanding, work has given her a grasp of the challenges and requirements involved in transforming the organizational culture and priorities of the police to focus on public safety. Among these challenges, she believes, is the ever-present tension between dealing with today's reality and tomorrow's world. "How we deal with the former greatly influences the second, so we have to think carefully about what we do."

Looking at the present and thinking ahead, the author sees fundamental problems in trying to transform policing without looking at the wider justice system. She recognizes a link between the need for problem-oriented community policing and the need for a justice system that can complement this philosophy. This recognition was born out of a trial experiment, one of a number of steps toward a coherent vision for change. In 1993, working with her city's multiagency partnership—the Youth Crime Strategy Group in Milton Keynes, England—she and her partners found that existing practices and structures tended to obscure problems and that resource deployment for crime prevention and for offender diversion was minimal. The group also shared concerns about offenders not knowing the consequences of their behavior and about crime victims' needs being often sidelined.

Around the same time, she introduced a victim-offender mediation scheme, facilitated by police officers and involving retailers (victims of shop theft), offenders, and their families—and began taking cases away from the courts. While victim-offender mediation was not new, this was the first time the police in the United Kingdom adopted this approach to reported crime. The innovation had surprising results: it opened the doors for new learning about how crime could be prevented and how lay people could play a part in responding to crime under the supervision of statutory agencies such as the police.

Following the implementation of the scheme, the author became familiar with the literature on *restorative justice* and met John Braithwaite and Terry O'Connell (who introduced the Wagga Wagga model of family group conferencing in New South Wales, Australia). Since 1994, she has read widely on restorative justice, and the subject was a major focus of her Harkness Fellowship studies in the United States during 1995–96. In that year and since, she has consulted with a large number of practitioners from around the world (Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and North America). She has spoken at conferences on restorative justice, including one organized by the U.S. Department of Justice. She has undertaken specialized professional training, including the course run by Real Justice© in Pennsylvania on family group conferencing and Dr. Mark Umbreit's basic and advanced courses on victim-offender mediation at the Center for Restorative Justice & Mediation, University of Minnesota. She has met and maintained contact with Howard Zehr, author of the classic book *Changing Lenses*, and Kay Pranis, the first statewide restorative justice coordinator to be appointed in the United States and a brilliant expert in the field.

Demonstrating how small innovations can lead to significant change, an independent evaluation

by the British Home Office of the multiagency experiment in Milton Keynes showed that there were significant drops in recidivism rates and high satisfaction levels among victims. The idea spread to tackling other offenses committed by adults and youths. That experiment helped to change the attitudes toward crime of many people—those in politics, the media, the business sector, and criminal justice agencies, including police officers rooted in post facto detection and investigation of crime. In the fall of 1998, the Labour Government introduced legislation in Parliament on restorative justice in relation to youth crime. This experience helped convince the author that challenging conventional assumptions sometimes pays off, and that looking ahead to the future always helps.



## Abstract

*Community policing* has become a significant feature of modern policing, yet its meaning and implementation vary depending on where you are and with whom you speak. The future of community policing could be vulnerable to any sudden increase in the crime rate (provoking a renewed emphasis on the traditional model of professional policing) or the removal of funding support.

Although there may be disagreement on how far community policing has come, and its fragility, one thing is clear: the challenges of the 21st century—violence, intercultural conflict, social and economic injustice, resource shortages, substance abuse—require us to think broadly and even more creatively about the future.

To begin breathing life into a new vision for sustaining and advancing positive change, policing needs to be examined in light of (1) how crime is defined, and (2) its tie to a justice system that frustrates victims, alienates whole communities, and fuels skyrocketing financial and moral costs of punishment. Current developments in *community and restorative justice* are helping to shape ideas and thinking about what policing and the administration of justice could look like in the year 2019. Twenty years is probably about right to achieve more widespread understanding that current problems and paradoxes are often of our own making—and to learn that the methods we are using to offer protection and safety are reinforcing divisions in society, thus exacerbating the conditions that promote crime, fear, and disorder.

The emerging paradigm of restorative justice might seem so alien, so naive, and so impractical that we miss the opportunity for a fundamental reappraisal of the values on which policing and justice should be founded. But starting with small changes, as suggested in this report, can make an enormous difference in how we think, speak, practice, and promote the meaning of community policing.

To begin with, we must learn to see crime in broader terms than the legal definitions and to acknowledge that crime harms people. We must learn that we can transcend conventional thinking about, and practice of, justice. We must give ourselves a chance to find out that we can relate differently to others if we focus on strengths and goodwill, not fear and punishment.

The police have a critical role to play in supporting change through taking stock of the current situation and thinking about the future. Their exposure to restorative justice could signal a commitment to long-term change that promotes peacekeeping and the prevention of crime. While no one denies the desirability of these strategies, they have proved difficult to implement. Restorative justice offers inspiration of the kind that makes both peacekeeping and prevention realistically achievable. After all, they have always been the core of the ethos of community policing. By 2019, they could be the core of community policing *practice*, thereby truly redefining the meaning of policing.

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Community Policing,

**COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

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Introduction



## Introduction

The aim of this report is to clarify the links among three important reform movements: community policing (including problem-solving policing), community justice, and restorative justice.<sup>1</sup> Clarifying the links is essential to the purpose of identifying connections and paradoxes with a view to developing a more coherent response to the critical issues of crime and public safety in a free society. Lessons learned from experiments with new strategies and tactics for dealing with law and order problems should be embraced as much as possible, even though this can be difficult with so much change occurring simultaneously. Community policing, more widespread than the other developments and arguably with a longer history, is open to immensely confusing interpretations as to precisely what has been and is being achieved. A similar confusion is emerging with community justice and restorative justice. Yet their achievements and potential are so rich that we need to build clarity and common understandings.

The relationships between these innovations require examination to plan for the future. Among the goals of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is “to help develop an infrastructure to support and sustain community policing after Federal funding has ended.” It is hoped that this report, and its accompanying guidelines, will make a contribution to achieving that goal. Infrastructures require a context, so that decisions can be made that are consistent with strengthening opportunities and minimizing threats—in this instance, with respect to the *overarching goal of delivering safety in a democracy*. Community policing, community justice, and restorative justice all touch upon this mission in varying degrees, depending on their implementation. Could the contribution not be strengthened if they were made to form a single paradigm? Is a single paradigm realistic? What have we got now?

Experiments with *community policing* since the 1970s are widely regarded as having contributed to a welcome maturation of law enforcement organizations. After years of organizational distance from their communities, the police are taking stock of their position in society and in relation to citizens. Strong police-public relationships make for mutual respect, confidence, and improved information flow. Community policing also has significant potential for handling the challenges presented by the changing nature of crime. Crime can no longer be thought of only in terms of isolated incidents of victimization. Crime has come to represent a series of phenomena, including school violence and youth delinquency, the growth of the teen “super-predator,”<sup>2</sup> white-collar crime, gang and group violence, drug turf wars, stalking, gun trafficking, domestic and child abuse, road rage, hate crimes—all wreaking havoc across U.S. society. Crime has also become a catchall word covering a broader range of problems that are seen to threaten the social order, including the homeless, the mentally ill, quality-of-life infringements, teenage mothers, and urban poverty.

Local communities are increasingly recognized as the primary source—and recipient—of these breakdowns in law and order. Crime is intracommunity and requires local solutions; these facts make a case for attentive policing that is sensitive to the dynamics within different neighborhoods and groups and is geared to community safety. In many areas, communities are now viewed as partners in tackling crime as well as customers of police services. Police leaders are acknowledging that the police can no longer be the omniscient force for dealing



with crime, fear, disorder, and public safety. The police are seen as needing to work with communities, sharing responsibility and being creative in applying joint resources to recurring problems and to advancing community well-being.

Finding the appropriate framework for this collaboration is proving difficult in the face of traditional public dependence on the police, on the one hand, and rapidly changing social conditions (including crime), on the other. Controlling crime and maintaining order are widely seen—by the police and public alike—as police functions. The police are recognized as being organized and equipped to fulfill these functions. Communities seem to be chaotic, to have deeply entrenched problems, and to require professional help to mobilize and organize resources. Communities may be seen as having the capacity for self-strengthening and self-building, if given strong service institutions, including the police. A tension exists between the calls for more police and the recognition that communities need to be regenerated.

This tension has played out throughout the recent history of police reform. The nature of community policing remains ambiguous. It is not clear, for example, whether community policing is a means to an end or an end in itself. Though police-community partnering, problem solving, and crime reduction efforts in communities are widely recognized characteristics, there is arguably no consensus on the overall mission of community policing. Its ethos emphasizes the importance of local delivery, yet for what overall purpose? Is community policing primarily about effective crime control by the police, supported by partnership work with communities? Is the goal about building community trust and confidence in the professional police? Or, is the goal to strengthen communities to create natural resistance to crime, promoting self-policing by communities? Is community policing more about reforming professional policing or changing the role of the public? Progress is not readily determinable without a common interpretation of community policing. That said, something powerful is going on, and policing is undergoing significant change. Across the nation, the concept of community policing has provoked a steep learning curve for law enforcement agencies and communities about their relationships, the capacity for working together, and the value of collaboration. Yet the lessons themselves are not clear, and the joint journey is without a clear, common destination.

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Crime Act) is widely recognized as a significant milestone in community policing. It was intended by President Clinton and Attorney General Reno as the “changing of policing.” The legislation provided the funding vehicle for an additional 100,000 police officers to boost law enforcement efforts in a climate of nationwide anxiety about crime. The Act gave the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (OCOPS) the task of supporting a major drive toward rooting community policing in solid foundations to become the prevailing orthodoxy in American law enforcement. Perhaps an accurate analysis of the Crime Act is that it represents an acknowledgment that the concept and the implementation of community policing are complex and demanding, deserving of an orchestrated effort at both local and Federal levels. The complexity is increased by other key developments.

Any consensus on the future of community policing requires thoughtful consideration of those other developments. At the same time that community policing efforts have been stamping their mark, a parallel movement of equal significance has been unfolding. *Community justice*, having attracted neither Federal legislative change nor significant media attention, has followed a more silent path. Like community policing, community justice stems from the recognition in policing that crime impacts communities. At the heart of current community justice developments lies the notion that justice ought not to be so abstract or compartmentalized as to ignore the needs and expectations of the community. As Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson has said, “Responsiveness by the formal system to public fears about crime is deemed vital for regaining public confidence and to enhance relationships between professional and lay communities in the world of law and order.”<sup>3</sup>

Community justice, too, is conceptually complex and has the potential to change fundamentally the way justice is delivered without a clear, overall goal. Like its policing counterpart, community justice is construed to mean many different things, ranging from the criminal justice system merely sharing information and consulting with the community, to building the community’s capacity for decisionmaking, thereby transforming the relationship between the public and the formal justice system. The overall mission is obscured by varying aims and priorities, with the label liberally applied. What is certain, however, is that the level of experiment will bring influence to bear on policing, both locally and nationally.

Coinciding with these two movements are additional experiments that are fundamentally changing peoples’ horizons about what is possible—and making consensus about the future difficult to achieve. *Restorative justice* has promoted power sharing and conflict resolution and is expanding the meaning of justice beyond the activities of the courts and the judges. Justice is now being achieved through new opportunities for lay people to gain and act on a broad understanding of how crime can be resolved and prevented. The system of justice is being transformed to offer to communities, including both its victims and offenders, processes for strengthening caring relationships and developing the sense of *connectedness*—both of which are regarded as vital for deterring criminal conduct. Restorative justice involves the resolution of conflict through community building after crime and disorder problems have been identified, and it paves the way for meaningful dialogue about the conditions that promote criminal behavior and how such conditions can be altered.

Developments in each of these areas have been significant during the 1990s and are influencing the thinking of many policymakers, practitioners, and communities across the United States. A consensus on the ramifications and potential of these changes, combined or separate, has yet to unfold, however. There is widespread agreement that policing and the justice system should be responsive to local communities. There is consensus that their functions should include partnership collaboration, enhanced resource management, victim service, problem solving, and broad consultation. Their overall goals are seen to be promoting social order and resolving crime. But how can it be determined whether these are being delivered appropriately—unless attention is paid to the fundamental issue of accountability in a democracy?



A question one might ask is: Should local experiments largely dictate what is construed as progress, or do we need national benchmarks to help gauge the attainment of public safety and justice that strengthen, not weaken, the functioning of a healthy democracy? What would those benchmarks be? The volume of crime? Levels of fear? The number of police? The number of people incarcerated? Recidivism rates? Or, should the standards relate to measuring the changing nature of crime, the recovery of victims, the care of offenders, the level of citizen participation, changes in public policy that contribute to crime prevention?

The vast array of programs and initiatives indicate a search for some kind of vision for the future, but the vision is unclear. A strategy for bringing about change is also vague, other than a prevailing sense that the notion of community is one whose time has come. Yet surely, benchmarks are needed not only for local conditions but to define the kind of society we want.

In 1977, Herman Goldstein provided insights about policing in a democracy that continue to vex public institutions in law and order today.<sup>4</sup> Among his comments were thoughts on decentralized services and on the ambiguity of public accountability, given the domination of political and other vested interests. A vision for the future is still obscure due to the tension between local determination of priorities and the national importance of the functioning of a healthy democracy. The obscure picture can in part be attributed to the reluctance to impose standards when local ownership and local autonomy are respected principles.

The picture is further clouded by the imprints of a seemingly intractable controversy about the best way to deal with crime. From local sheriffs imposing chains and pink underwear on inmates<sup>5</sup>—symbolizing a “get tough on crime” attitude—to those who advocate talking about crime in terms of “children and families,”<sup>6</sup> the backdrop is a society in which crime is hotly controversial. Deep lines are drawn between offenders and victims; between neighborhoods and communities that are perceived to be safe and those that are not; and between people who are free and those who are imprisoned. Finessing a coherent strategy given this reality demands a unique kind of leadership that recognizes what needs to be done locally and what must happen on the national stage.

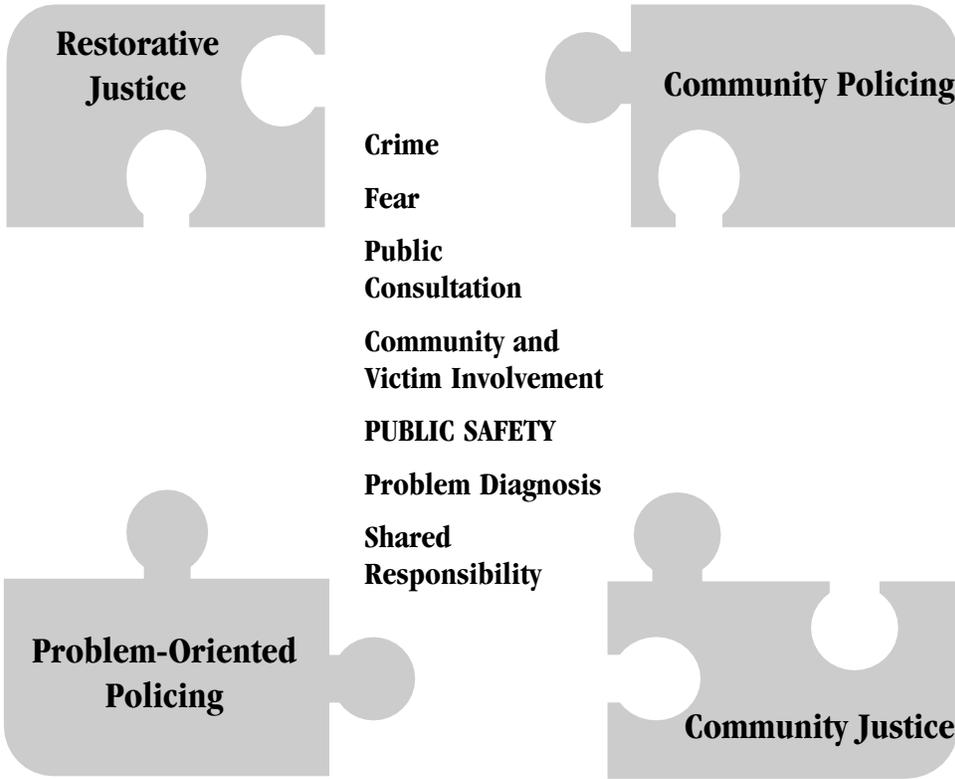
Meanwhile, the absence of a single vision supported by a framework to facilitate change at different levels has its consequences. The campaigns against crime at local and national levels, not surprisingly, have brought about a mixed climate. Although the United States is renowned for its reliance on incarceration and the death penalty, many of the current initiatives stress the importance of conflict resolution, the erosion of social divides, and community building. There is clamor for coercive crime control measures as much as there are calls for more efforts in prevention, early intervention, and problem solving.

The rhetoric acknowledging that crime control is ineffective without community ownership and engagement is pervasive. Yet, the traditional enforcement model of arrest, prosecution, and punishment by professional criminal justice agencies seems as

strong as ever. The need to strengthen the state's justice apparatus competes with the recognition that informal crime controls are critical and in need of development. Resources pulling in different directions are creating a stalemate. Emerging from these paradoxes is the need to recognize that a balance must be struck between local determination and national strategy. Figure 1 indicates the mix of problems, needs, and strategies that must be weighed in formulating a coherent strategy to meet both local and national goals.

Local delivery and local initiatives are to be encouraged in policing and justice, but the public's understanding and assessment of these services should not rest on what happens or does not happen on the local stage alone. The public should have a sense of what benchmarks are important for the overall mission of policing and the administration of justice. Benchmarks reflect the fundamental values, style, performance standards, and criteria on which to assess service providers, irrespective of the need and desirability of local delivery. These, it seems, remain missing.

Figure 1. Is There a Fit to Support a Coherent Strategy?



It is dangerous to assume they will emerge from experiment alone—or that experiments will not counter each other to sustain the stalemate. The absence of an agreed mission makes the future uncertain. Major changes are happening in policing and justice: community policing, community justice, and restorative justice all represent significant efforts to reduce crime and fear, enhance community engagement, and generate safety and order. But the challenge remains: how to harness these forces for change to a coherent vision that reduces the reliance on force and strengthens the meaning of democracy.

What this means for policing needs to be examined—and examined in the broad terms proffered by Herman Goldstein 20 years ago, looking now to the next 20 years.

Community Policing,

**COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

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Theme of the Report: Promoting a Shared  
Responsibility for Controlling, Fear, and Disorder



## Theme of the Report: Promoting a Shared Responsibility for Controlling Crime, Fear, and Disorder

A coherent response to crime and public safety requires a strategy that balances the acknowledgment of the importance of local evolution with a recognition that local change must be based on broad principles if national concerns are to be addressed. Crime occurs within communities and therefore demands local solutions. But crime, fear, and disorder occupy the national stage, making a case for identifying and reaching a consensus on the key elements of transforming America to a safer society. These key elements must include clarified roles for professional policing as well as for citizens—or else confusion prevails. Already the police wrestle with this dichotomy between local and national; whatever the image they portray through local activities, they are burdened with a broader image of what the police are like, shaped by national events and by the media. The flip side of this is a public that cannot be sure of what kind of police service they are likely to receive. Moreover, the public is torn between local and national messages about its own role in policing—hardly conducive to empowering citizens to assume their responsibilities without reliance on local leadership.

Developing a strategy with these realities demands sensitivity to the *micro* picture as well as to the *macro* gallery of pictures that shape people's views on what is happening, and what needs to happen. The locus of the micro picture must be local communities. The role, style, and overall purpose should be sufficiently generic, however, for relevancy across the board, to ensure police accountability for ethical, effective, and equitable standards, independent of the currents of local politics. The purpose of policing should be the same everywhere and adhere to standards that promote, not weaken, democracy—locally and nationally. Priorities may need to be locally determined, resource allocations driven by community consultation, and relationships shaped by interpersonal dialogue. Priorities, however, must be addressed within a broader context of what it means to *police*, based on values that support a clear distinction between *healthy* and *poor* policing in a democracy. The former has an eye on the future, as well as the here and now. The latter focuses only on what seems expedient at the time.

The theme here is that policing is more than what the professional police do or do not do. And policing is predominantly neither local nor national. Policing is aptly described as “an instrument of democracy itself, an instrument by and through which the pressing concerns of all can be heard, their safety guaranteed, their crises addressed, their conflicts interrupted and resolved.”<sup>17</sup> Democracy is confined neither



to local nor to national domains but demands pragmatic attention to the whole of society. Policing, in other words, is everybody's business and for everybody. While a professional police effort will always be a necessity, the professional police also have an obligation to advance the meaning of policing in a democracy.

*The main hypothesis underpinning this report, therefore, is that the police's job is not only about enforcement, but also about helping to create a safer self-policing society in the context of democracy. This means promoting a shared responsibility for controlling crime, fear, and disorder through arrangements that strengthen citizen engagement in policing.*

There have been significant changes, but coherent change is necessary. The recent declines in crime do not prove the existence of a clear strategy. The drop in crime is related to many factors, such as low unemployment, demographic changes, and community-based prevention programs—as well as smarter law enforcement and innovative programs. Indeed, the decline is hardly the result of inattention by professional authorities, who have increased arrests, prosecutions, the use of imprisonment, and the availability of treatment programs. How to sustain the current decline in crime remains contentious. While problem-solving methods, community strengthening, focused use of resources, and improved services are generally agreed to be desirable, no clarity exists on what works best. Developing a common understanding of what crime control measures—and ways of promoting social order—would support rather than weaken democracy should be the critical starting point.

Advocates of increased government intervention argue that the police themselves can reduce crime by focusing activities sharply on high-risk areas, times, and offenders. Reactive crime control by the justice system, by keeping in prison those offenders deemed at risk of committing further crime, is seen as necessary to protect the public. This general “crime fighting” and punitive thrust of crime control policy is widely accepted, albeit with resignation; even those who vociferously support incarceration do not argue that prisons are successful institutions for transforming offender behavior.

Others, who call for less government intervention, maintain that the police and the justice system can do little more than contain the problem in the face of the causes of crime: economic, social and family structures, mental illness, substance dependency, and exposure to violence.<sup>8</sup> Social regulation, treatment, prevention, community engagement, and problem-solving interventions are among their list of necessary responses to the predictable consequences of modern stresses. Those who call for less reliance on arrest and punishment, however, have yet to convince the public that alternative approaches to crime fighting will work to protect society and deliver public safety.

The public's resistance reflects the perceived importance of tough-on-crime measures as a sanctuary in the face of the acute consequences of crime. This type of crime fight-

ing is, for many people, a pragmatic response to the intractable and disturbing problem of crime. Few deny the links between criminal activity and the myriad of social issues that can contribute to dysfunctional and antisocial behavior. In principle, at least, people support the wisdom of extending policing beyond the activities of the professional police. Yet there is no such thing as a quick inoculation that corrects circumstances and activities that are criminogenic. Time is an enemy, too! The public has little patience waiting for alternatives to work.

The consequence of this stalemate is, arguably, why most crime problems remain intractable, because the popular view on crime control could be said to offer only temporary reprieve. The opportunities for learning different and viable cures are largely denied in the clamor for quick relief. The conundrum is compounded by the existence of a mainly passive public which—frustrated with the crime problem—asks for more of the same measures, and by professional service providers who are largely comfortable exercising their traditional roles. Aside from public opinion and practitioner reluctance to change, the stalemate between the two divides on crime control policy can be attributed to another factor—government reluctance to admit that the state cannot maintain law and order by itself: “The predicament for government today is that they see . . . the need to withdraw or at least qualify their claim to be the primary and effective provider of security and crime control, but they also see . . . that the political costs of such a move are likely to be disastrous.”<sup>9</sup>

The debate should be a familiar one. More than 30 years ago, a Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice delivered its report with a vision for an “effective, reliable, and decent” criminal justice system, combined with a commitment to social justice. The Commission understood that crime control could jeopardize individual freedom and promote the use of too much state authority unless tempered by the creation of social arrangements for preventing crime through strengthened families, better schools, proper housing, enlarged employment opportunities, and improved health services. The Commission rejected the notion that controlling crime is solely the task of the police, the courts, and correction agencies: “Individual citizens, civic and business organizations, religious institutions, and all levels of government must take responsibility . . . .”<sup>10</sup>

Irrespective of current differences in viewpoints about what makes for effective crime control, no one is likely to dissent seriously from the messages of the Commission back in 1967 by asserting that the police and the courts could eliminate crime by themselves. Still, there are obstacles to implementing long-recognized wisdom and to developing the groundwork necessary for social justice to become a reality. A commitment to social justice requires a powerful vehicle for shifting public dependence on the formal systems of crime control. The formal system, meanwhile, is under enormous pressure to demonstrate its own effectiveness, leaving little energy for developing something radically different from the traditional model of professional enforcement and controls.



All the while our society dances a schizophrenic dance between... the understandable fear that fuels the demand for more prisons and... a growing recognition that our criminal justice system is not working for us and will not be remedied by doing more of the same old things.<sup>11</sup>

The result has been a perpetual, unresolved debate about what works in controlling crime. While the police have undoubtedly made significant strides in working collaboratively with other agencies and with communities to deliver safer streets through more focused policing, and while exciting community-oriented justice innovations are beginning to emerge, questions and expectations about what else the system should, or could, be doing have continued to loom large. Though improvements in policing and criminal justice delivery are welcome developments, and there is scope for further innovation, one might ask the question: What will it take to break the existing impasse and bring about a focus on how building *informal* social controls could supplement those of the formal system?

As John McKnight writes, “Our problem is weak communities, made ever more impotent by our strong service systems... it is the ability of citizens to care that creates strong communities and able democracies.”<sup>12</sup>

Informal social controls are not widely acknowledged or much talked about, yet they have a critical contribution to make in promoting law-abiding behavior. They include social disapproval and interpersonal influence; a frown or words of encouragement from someone you care about; close ties within a family, at work, at school, and among friends; communities that share values about responsibility, respect, and care; parents who take time to teach or to play with their children; and volunteer mentors who assist those who are vulnerable in some way.

*Informal social controls are also a necessary precursor to the development of social justice: interpersonal contact can be a powerful tool for promoting the recognition of needs and for promoting well-being. These are the levers for changing the focus from reacting to symptoms to building a common stake in investing wisely for the future.*

Without such levers, public opinion about crime runs the risk of polarizing society, a problem that is avoidable if communities are encouraged to see for themselves how they can contribute to crime control. Why are the authorities not tapping more into these forces of social regulation?

There is good reason to be skeptical of the power and capacity of such regulatory arrangements. Not all communities or groups provide positive influences for their members. We can think of dysfunctional families, street gangs, crime syndicates, and neighborhoods where criminal activity is rife, if not encouraged. Civic engagement and volunteerism may not be enough to overcome other realities. Many communities do not possess the know-how for self-policing. Some forms of civic participation are driven more by fear than a wish to promote the common good; gated communities and private citizen patrols, for example, can hardly be said to advance cohesion in

society. When social activities are more about self-interest than about community life that supports communitarian goals, the health of democracy is distorted to serve only isolated interests, excluding the welfare of others.

It is important to seek human arrangements where there is emphasis on self-help, self-regulation, and cooperation in support of the public and common good. The authorities have a critical role to play in such efforts. Leadership is needed to nurture these possibilities and to create mechanisms for leveraging social capital to promote connectedness and caring—the essence of crime prevention and social justice. It is appropriate to support citizens taking responsibility for social control, but it is wrong to assume that all citizen groups can be self-governing. Cultivating responsibility requires the authorities to be sensitive to the capacity and motivation of different communities.

It is equally important for the government, the police, and the justice system to recognize that they do not have a monopoly on creating and maintaining security. A strong criminal justice system and a visible police presence are important in shaping social order, but they should not be depended upon exclusively. A free society can be threatened by an over-reliance on tough enforcement, punishment, and prison as the primary means for establishing order and safety. The key lies in balancing the formal system of control with informal means of regulation so there can be a coproduction of public safety. As Clifford Shearing has said:

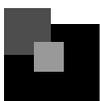
The police do not own policing.<sup>13</sup>

Even where there is no skepticism about community involvement, and no desire to monopolize policing, the implementation of Goldstein’s sound theory for supporting a free society seems difficult to accomplish, bringing an additional obstacle. Notwithstanding an emphasis on partnerships, joint responsibility, and power and information sharing, the public largely remains a sleeping giant in relation to controlling crime. This passivity, arguably, is largely what drives the tough-on-crime policies and practices of the formal system, because lack of engagement promotes fear and diminishes understanding. This situation perpetuates both the illusion that the state, rather than civil society, is responsible for social order and the tug-of-war between formal and informal crime controls (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Tug-of-War Between Crime Control Approaches

What Makes for Effective Crime Control?	
Professional Response Only	Citizen Participation
Dependence on Formal System	Shared Responsibility
Repressive Measures	Empowerment
Punishment	Problem Solving
Reactive	Forward-Looking
Rules/Legal Justice	People/Social Justice
Control	Consensus

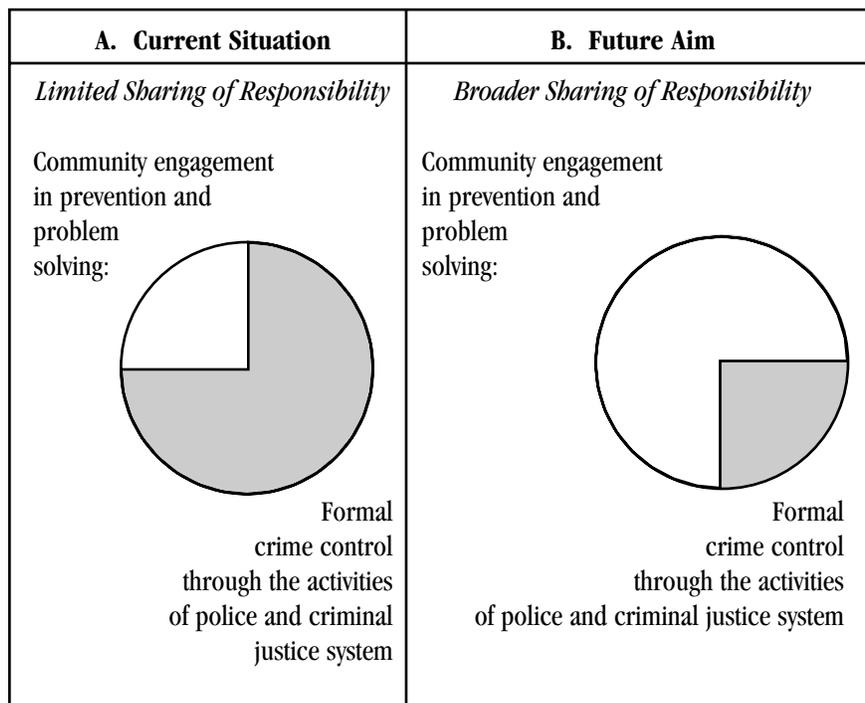
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The current situation, therefore, is essentially one of relying on the professional system of policing and justice, despite the wise messages of the Presidential Commission in 1967. Concerns about crime and the fear of crime have been powerful forces working on Federal, state, and local government, provoking massive increases in expenditures over the past decade. Still, the achievement of public safety seems an overwhelming challenge confronting the United States as it approaches the third millennium A.D. Criminal justice professionals (including the police) and policymakers face a range of pressures wider and deeper than ever. They are coping with changes in the way the formal system of crime control operates as well as having to think about their responsibilities for promoting less formal controls as a necessary precursor to reducing crime.

Reforming the professional system of policing and justice without paying attention to the conundrum created by low public participation (demands for more police, more criminal justice, and more prisons without a commitment to social justice) is the consequence of limited vision. Public safety demands a coherent, strategic plan balancing punishment (a rational choice in response to public alarm) with informal controls, prevention, and problem solving. Figure 3 indicates the current situation and the goal regarding community involvement.

Figure 3. A Plan Is Needed To Get From A to B



Finessing a strategy is of pressing importance and should not be left until a time when public opinion might orchestrate itself to shift. The paradox is that the authorities will have to develop the strategy and promote the commitment to social justice while continuing to operate and to preserve much of the criminal justice system.

Planning for the future in law and order must rest on a strategy to mobilize communities toward understanding and tackling crime—to ensure a better balance between traditional enforcement and informal controls. Crime and public safety are not the sole preserve of government and of formal justice systems; they are everybody's business.

The main theme of this report, therefore, is that sustaining and advancing community policing will in large part depend upon achieving broad consensus on the fundamental importance of community engagement, not merely community-based professional policing and justice efforts. The exciting experiments going on now need to be placed on a solid footing to ensure that we build a strong framework for further innovation that supports the mission. Such a framework should define the scope of activities as well as the values on which activities shall be based. The framework should support and guide both local and national efforts and professional and lay citizen efforts toward a balanced approach to delivering public safety.

This report starts with an appraisal of current developments in community policing and community justice; and it proposes a number of key themes that are working in support of a strategy for a balanced approach appropriate to a democracy. Also examined are practices and factors that must be limited if reforms are to reach their full potential to contribute to the advancement of a safe democracy. In this category are the persistent over-reliance on the criminal justice system to address public safety and the influential dynamics of what can be best described as “the crime problem.”

The developments in restorative justice over recent years are providing insights and experience that should help to influence and change the interpretation of community policing and of community justice. Restorative justice offers a fundamental shift in thinking about the crime problem and about new values on which to build improvements in the future. In particular, the involvement of police in restorative justice should be seen as a natural progression from the current problem-solving partnerships built under the auspices of community policing. The hypothesis of this report will be tested by exploring new tools for the police to use in working collaboratively with the public to resolve and to prevent crime—through restorative justice.





# Part **1**

Community Policing,

**COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

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Part 1. Key Themes in Community Policing



## Part 1. Key Themes in Community Policing

The definition of community policing has had a long journey. Books, articles, videos, conferences, training programs, and mission statements have been dedicated to clarifying the meaning and implications of community policing for well over three decades. Most of these have been for consumption by police, justice professionals, scholars, and policymakers. The public, meanwhile, has had to rely largely on media commentary, the odd police flyer, and whatever direct (although often patchy) involvement they may have had in this evolution of policing. When asked about community policing, citizens often mention neighborhood watch and police patrols, suggesting that citizens do not appreciate fully the sweep of the community policing vision.

Among law enforcement professionals themselves, one obstacle to establishing a comprehensive understanding of community policing lies in the fact that policing is not a simple business with a neatly defined single goal. Policing is widely regarded as being about crime control (*enforcement*) as well as maintaining order (*peacekeeping*). The police are seen as accountable to individual citizens, to the law, and to the courts. They are also the most visible representative of authority and are a function of government. These goals and lines of accountability can directly conflict with one another. If law enforcement is used in ways that create public resentment, for example, the notion of *policing by consent* is jeopardized. Maintaining order can produce deep divides among the authorities—including the police—and whole sections of the public. With these potential clashes, the complexity of the business of policing can rigorously test any concept, and community policing is no exception.

Defining community policing is also problematic because policing is not only about the broad issues of law and order today. It entails thinking about the future, which requires constant appraisal of risks and opportunities. For this reason alone, the definition of community policing is dynamic, because policing throws up constant questions about its purpose and outcomes.

### The Tradition Model of Professional Policing

I am convinced that contemporary policing is more a product of what cop-pers want it to be, rather than what it is supposed to be.

—Chris Braiden, former Chief of Police in Edmonton, Canada

How community policing as a concept is challenging police agencies and citizens is difficult to assess without some understanding of the traditional model of professional policing that has dominated law and order since the 1930s. The police were characterized by an emphasis on political independence and distance from the community (thereby avoiding the risk of corruption), crime control (by making arrests under the criminal law), and maintaining order (through street patrols and rapid response to 911). Citizens, not yet accustomed to the idea that they formed discrete *communities*, were happy to call the police as individuals when they



wished to report a crime or seek services. Effective crime control was of paramount importance, primarily through the use of law enforcement, with a loose attention to fairness and to community support. The police existed to maintain law and order through a combination of semimilitarism and accountability to the justice system. Public support was generally taken for granted; this was the *thin blue line* carrying out its job in the face of competing demands, rising crime, and public dependence on the police.

This traditional model defined the functions and structure of police organizations, the selection and training of recruits, and the rewards system. Although the potential conflict between the goals of law enforcement and the maintenance of order might have been understood, there was ample crime to justify the popular belief that law enforcement against crime was the overriding *raison d'être* for policing. There was also an underlying convenience to the emphasis on enforcement. The public expected the police to effectively control crime, and the police had clear methods and systems for detecting and investigating reported criminal conduct.

This professional model also connected the police to the criminal justice system; the police depended on the system as the system depended on them. The criminal justice system was the focus of much police work through post facto criminal investigations and warrant execution. Crime prevention was seen as social engineering, beyond the scope of policing. Policing was largely seen as quite straightforward, notwithstanding the potential conflicts between its goals.

The reality, however, is that officers have always handled a broad range of problems other than crime and that they do much more than enforce the law. Although the capacity of the police in relation to crime has been seen as unlimited, there are tangible limits to what the police can do within the law, to their resources, and to levels of public support. Police depend upon the public to report crime or to produce witnesses. A significant amount of crime happens in homes and private places. Police cannot hope to be omnipresent, regardless of the greater visibility and capacity that extra policing provides. Also, for all kinds of reasons, relatively few cases reported to the police enter the criminal justice system. The prevention and control of crime are not the preserve of the professional police if so much crime happens outside their view, or never comes to their attention.

The traditional model of professional policing has nonetheless been an enduring paradigm. Many officers were able to see the shortcomings of traditional practices, not least because of the loss of public confidence and trust after those methods failed to reduce crime and fear. But others believed these problems came about because of shortages of resources available for crime fighting (or the constraints of other parts of the criminal justice system), not because of their relationship with what they perceived to be a fickle, and often irresponsible, public. The status of neighborhood cops, a new innovation to build bridges with a public tired of police insensitivity, took a long time to establish in police departments. With crime investigation, squad work, and rapid response auto patrols seen as necessary, community policing seemed, to some at least, superfluous and unaffordable.

## Diverse Interpretations of Collaboration

Against this backdrop, the nature of community policing could be said to be evolving from recognizing the limitations of traditional approaches to looking ahead to future requirements. In one survey of police chiefs, 42 percent said they were engaged in community policing, although the threshold for what they thought represented the new ethos was apparently quite low.<sup>14</sup> Some saw community policing as meaning little more than an acknowledgment that general *public support* for the police and their activities is desirable. Opening the police department to the public and the media or establishing civilian review boards are seen by some as critical contributions to breaking down distrust and misunderstanding.

Others have called for a stronger emphasis on *accountability to the community*; police are entrusted with important public resources, including the power to exercise authority and force. How these resources are applied should be influenced by community priorities as well as by standards of fairness, integrity, and adherence to values. Consultation meetings with the community and other agencies together with public feedback are, in many areas, shaping police strategy, style of delivery, and resource planning.

While to some community policing means *community liaison*, to others it means *organizational change* that promotes decentralization, flexible work patterns, and new alliances. Police departments have embarked on developing dedicated neighborhood patrols, devolving responsibility down the hierarchical chain. Geographic lines of accountability for delivering effective and responsive policing has prompted attention to local problems, which are identified through external collaboration and management information systems. Police officers are more likely to spend their time at community meetings, coaching young people, coordinating neighborhood or business watch groups, and in liaison with other agencies to identify crime and disorder problems, rather than relying on reported crime and calls for service to steer their work.

In more recent years, some police chiefs have worked hard toward *mobilizing citizens* to engage in police activities traditionally seen as the preserve of professionalism. Rejecting the idea that the police alone can respond to crime and disorder, theirs is a commitment to the concept of participatory democracy in which ordinary citizens are seen as capable of making a contribution. Enlisting community volunteers to work alongside police officers is no longer unusual, as in San Diego, where civilians are helping police conduct criminal observations. In active partnerships, police and community work together on issues of concern. The Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety (CANS) project is the largest, but not the only, initiative to train the community in fulfilling its role in community policing.

If there is a common denominator in the definitions of community policing, it is the need for local sensitivity. But there is no agreement on what local collaboration should be aiming toward: stronger lines of accountability, joint liaison, citizen mobi-



lization, or self-policing by the community. In 1997, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, perhaps recognizing these unresolved tensions in the interpretation of community policing, issued guidance on the key elements that need to be considered by police departments wishing to embrace its ethos. Community policing was defined as “a policing philosophy designed to reduce crime and disorder in communities by fostering trust, respect, and collaboration between police officers and citizens.”<sup>15</sup> This definition was supported by a number of identifiable hallmarks aimed at securing a common understanding of the meaning of community policing. The hallmarks included the following:

- Partnership building (among the police, citizens, and other institutions)
- Problem-solving approaches to crime and disorder
- Emphasis on proactive crime control (including crime prevention)
- Developing police organizations responsive to community concerns
- Recognizing that public concerns other than crime may be important for promoting trust (such as public fear of crime and dealing with nuisances)

These hallmarks suggest that more than local sensitivity is required: active collaboration between the public and the police is also required to tackle crime and other community problems. Still, there remains a tension between those who see collaboration solely as a means to improve professional policing and those who see a different, broader requirement.

Some see a more active kind of collaboration as essential in an era when crime levels have largely destroyed the myth that the police should focus on crime and justice problems alone. These proponents of community policing have suggested that public trust requires more than effective crime control and the maintenance of order through traditional law-and-order policing. The police, with other public institutions, need to be attentive and responsive to ever-changing social conditions, the scale of societal anxiety about public safety, and the fear of lawlessness. Social conditions that cause anxiety include crime, disorder, and the fear of crime, but are not confined to these. They also touch upon the wider *community health* issues that are perceived to be relevant to the prevalence of crime and disorder, e.g., drug and alcohol dependency, school truancy, slum housing, abandoned spaces, mental illness, and child neglect. A different, more active kind of collaborative effort hinges on partnering with others from education, medicine, housing, business, the churches, and other areas to address ongoing threats to public well-being through long-term planning of public policy and expenditure. Table 1 indicates the changing interpretation of collaboration, from the traditional policing model to the community policing model.

Table 1. Changing Interpretation of Collaboration: Traditional Policing Model to Community Policing Model

<b>Policing Model/Activity (Continuum)</b>	<b>Characteristics (Progression From Traditional to Community Policing Model)</b>	<b>Collaboration (Evolution From Traditional to Community Policing Model)</b>
Traditional policing model	Crime control, 911, calls for service	“Them versus us”
Consultation on department activities	Through the media, civilian review	Public support encouraged
Organizational structuring toward local-based policing	Community engagement in problem identification	Information sharing
Partnership activity	Community participation in tackling crime and disorder problems	Volunteers, pooling resources, joint training
Long-term priorities identified	Shared participation in tackling broader “community health” issues	Interagency partnerships working for agreed outcomes
Community policing model	Understanding of contribution toward preventing/tackling crime, fear, and disorder	Community working with police support

From this newer perspective, law enforcement is seen as but one component of a necessarily broader crime prevention strategy in which order and public safety are achieved through informal social controls in the context of community. Where this view prevails, community policing has motivated police departments to become more approachable to the public through community outreach and engaging the public in activities traditionally seen as the preserve of professionals. For example, police officers are working with schools, youth services, and recreational clubs to provide educational support to young people vulnerable to exposure to drugs, bullying, alcohol, and gangs. In the community policing environment, police will tackle specific problems seen to threaten the economic health of an area. They will work closely with specific groups identified as especially vulnerable to problems, e.g., local businesses, victims’ groups, the elderly, shopkeepers, and road users. Police leaders are sitting with their counterparts in city hall, public agencies, and the corporate sector to work out ways of promoting vibrant, safer communities with a range of services and assets to support community building and citizen empowerment.

This concept of community policing encompasses more than promoting harmonious police-public relationships. It includes both a focus on controlling crime and maintaining order where local neighborhoods are being adversely affected—and flexibility about working on perceived longer term priorities that touch on the well-being of communities. The thrust of problem solving in this climate is a nonadversarial approach, working toward resolving conflict through a shared understanding of the problems. While the traditional goals of controlling crime and maintaining order might not have changed, the relationship of the police with the community has been given a new status. The police are still accountable to the law, to individuals, and to the courts. But they are also accountable to the community, and for how they promote and support mutual responsibility for achieving safe and healthy communities.

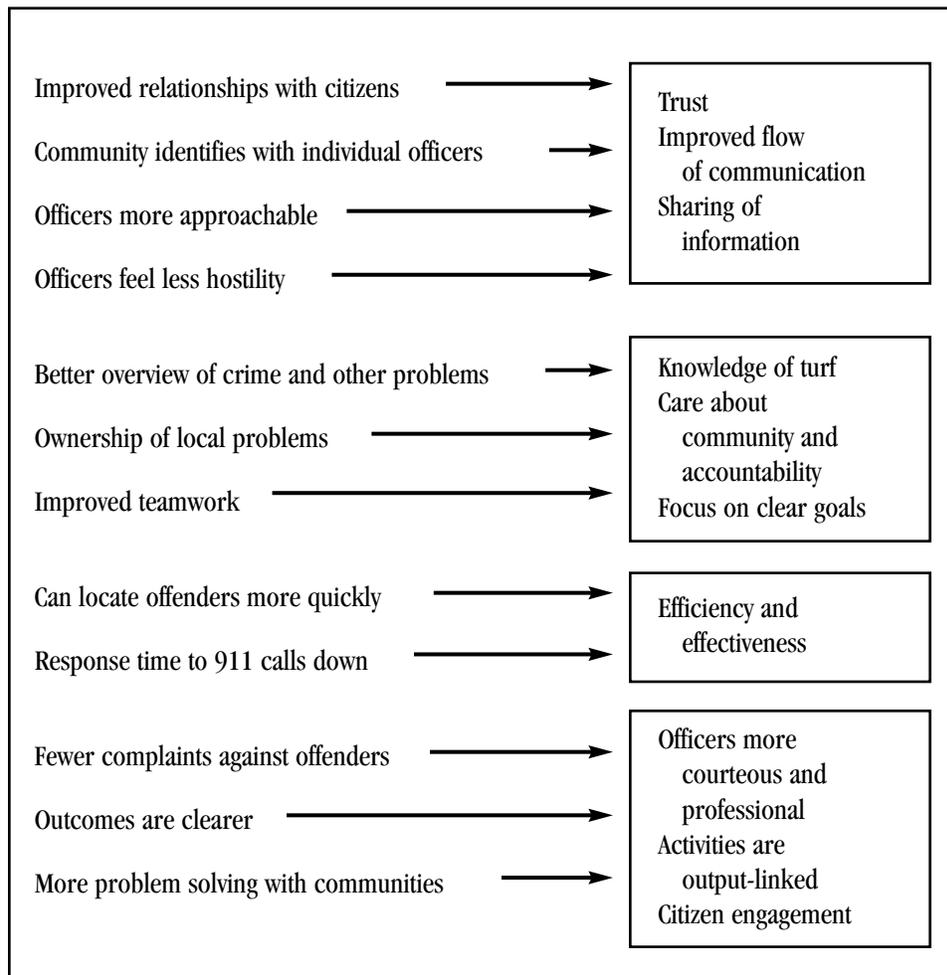
### Collaboration for Problem-Oriented Policing

The evolving interpretation of community policing has been helped greatly by experiments with problem-oriented policing (POP). Traditional policing, faced with rising crime and disorder, would tend to use more patrols, more squads, and more investigations to maintain the rule of law. Arrests and stop/searches would be increased, as would police overtime. This reactive strategy became known as *fire brigade policing* in some quarters, and by the 1970s police chiefs began realizing it would never be enough to meet the demand for safer streets. Traditional policing might be able to respond to crime faster and more systematically, but this effort was unsustainable in the face of resource constraints and the volume of the incidence of crime. A significant proportion of crime occurs out of public view; catching offenders in the act is more rare than one would hope; and victims and witnesses, by definition, report crime after the fact. Increasing the speed or resources with which police respond to incidents has only limited impact. Retrospective crime investigations solve relatively few crimes because they lack vital information or have insufficient evidence. They also fail to prevent crime and to address the myriad reasons why crime happens.

Traditionally, therefore, police departments were too frequently overwhelmed by rising demands and limited resource flexibility. The criminal justice system dealt with only a small proportion of the total number of crimes. The “revolving door” of offenders processed by the system was an intractable problem. This situation started to impact public confidence, and, arguably, the confidence of the police in themselves. The traditional model of professional policing came under increasing pressure and threat with the changing scope of crime and public alarm.

In 1979, Herman Goldstein published an article, “Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach,” in which he asserted that many seemingly separate incidents actually stemmed from common underlying conditions and were part of a broader pattern.<sup>16</sup> To deal more effectively (and efficiently) with the volume of incidents confronting the police, they would need to identify underlying factors and address these—and not necessarily by way of enforcement. Other tools were available. And with this provocative suggestion, a quiet revolution was born: policing became more reflective, more analytical, more about information gathering, and increasingly about problem solving. Figure 4 indicates benefits of community policing as perceived by police officers who had worked with the new model for a year.

Figure 4. Perceived Benefits From Community Policing



SOURCE: As identified by police officers who had worked with community policing for a year in Milton Keynes, United Kingdom. Personal communication.

Twenty years after Goldstein's article appeared, when law and order breaks down, the police increasingly are recognizing that they face two separate challenges: dealing with the immediate situation (called "stopping the bleeding") and working to establish long-term community safety. Law enforcement may be a necessary tool in the short term. Arrests may have to be made, and public order tactics might be needed to establish calm; but the police also need to reach out to the community and to other agencies to identify underlying problems. Law enforcement and high police visibility alone do not sustain calm. Reacting to an incident without attempting to discover the contributory problems is seen as putting out a fire without trying to learn how to prevent other fires. And working apart from those who might be able to identify the causes, or take preemptive steps in the future, only fuels public reliance on the police to put out the next fire.

## Promoting Crime Prevention Through Problem-Oriented Policing

Traditionally, focusing almost exclusively on incidents and crime events kept the objectives for police activity relatively clear. Analyzing them as part of a broader pattern involves a change of goals and a requirement to pool resources to achieve those goals. The theory behind problem-oriented policing opens up challenges for traditional methods of law enforcement and crime control. With problem-oriented policing, the focus shifts away from narrow measurements of crime statistics. While considerable efforts may be directed to pattern analysis, *hot spot* identification, and distinguishing between actual and reported levels of crime, attempts are also made to understand why crime is happening. Questions are raised about why the crime is occurring: Why in this location? Why this behavior? What impact is being made on people and the environment?

*With a problem-oriented approach, the focus expands from legal definitions of crime and disorder to include broader social and economic issues. The police no longer focus solely on the investigation of serious crime but must also take an active interest in issues identified by pattern analysis. This inevitably involves a radical departure from defining problems according to criminal laws.* A single robbery, for example, might justify police focusing on the detection and prosecution of the offender; but a series of robberies demands attention to community feelings, situational factors such as lighting or street layout, and economic impact. The overall mission stretches beyond reactive crime control to include fear reduction, crime prevention, community building, and developing resistance against threats to the health and well-being of the community.

The police-public relationship also changes. Problem-oriented policing gives community policing clearer meaning—as the rhetoric of collaboration is transformed into the practical necessity of involving the community and other organizations in the identification and resolution of problems that contribute to crime and disorder. *Problem-oriented policing not only emphasizes collaboration, but also challenges the assumption that any one person or agency knows what the problems are, understands their solution, and has the capacity to resolve them.* Problem-oriented policing challenges the traditional monopoly of professional policing, because appropriate decisionmaking cannot take place without securing the best information available from various nonpolice sources. The community is less likely to remain passive, and the police no longer occupy a hierarchical position. In effect, police and community become partners in efforts to tackle community priorities.

The framework for this collaborative dialogue should encourage cooperation, allow for learning, and be conducive to developing understanding about what crime means for communities. *Problem identification is not merely an outcome of collaboration; the process is critical to building a sense of joint responsibility and ownership between the police, the community, and other agencies.* The *thin blue line* is thereby thickened by a dynamic partnership between professionals and lay people,

with no one knowing where the energy will lead until priorities are agreed, resources earmarked, and outcomes determined. In this way, the police begin to relinquish their traditional monopolistic hold on crime control. Policing becomes, literally, everybody's business, with a mixture of formal and informal social controls used to tackle the full ramifications of threats to public health and safety.

The ethos of problem solving has affected many aspects of policing. Calls for service, capable of swamping the police and making them work entirely reactively, have been subjected to 311<sup>17</sup> and *graded response strategies*. Volumes of crime reports are handled by automatic field reporting systems and are applied to automapping systems. Having operated independently of the public to carry out law enforcement in the past, police now are constantly looking for ways of becoming more knowledgeable about their turf—beyond who is committing crime; and these efforts are leading to community engagement at many levels. The activities of policing have expanded to include holding public awareness campaigns, tackling repeat victimization, and targeting persistent offenders. The identification of youth and victim needs has led to a panoply of programs affording support to these communities. Gang violence prevention programs, weapon interdiction initiatives, and domestic violence strategies have shifted the focus from applying short-term responses to isolated events to thematic policy development with an eye on the future. Broadly speaking, problem-oriented policing is a dynamic force for changing police culture and practices and for involving citizens in an array of activities that emphasize reducing harm and building community safety.

Problem-oriented policing has also promoted a willingness by the police to experiment with new strategies for working in areas not normally associated with policing. For example, in one city plagued by street order problems associated with casual laborers waiting to find work, the police facilitated the job hiring of immigrants and refugees and eliminated the problem by securing a meeting place where solicitations for work could be made. This effort involved negotiations with community activists, business leaders, city officials, and social services. The city is now free of laborers congregating in different parts of the city for the first time in 25 years, and the result is a win-win situation for everyone: laborers are getting hired more readily, street disorder and crime problems have diminished, and the community environment has changed dramatically.

*Problem-oriented policing changes the passive role of community and other agencies in the control of crime and reduces this disproportionate dependence on the police.* Problem-oriented policing promotes participation, a recognition of the interdependency of community members and organizations, and the importance of social engagement. Competing interests among different stakeholders—and opportunities for conflict prevention—can also begin to emerge. Any future crisis is seen not just as a police problem, but as a problem for everybody, promoting further active engagement.



The ethos of problem-oriented policing is also being applied by non-police agencies; in New Orleans, for example, Tulane University and the housing authority have worked with communities to revivify drug-infested housing projects. Through information sharing they developed a consensus about existing problems in those areas that needed attention by the authorities and the support of local residents unwilling to tolerate illegal drug activity. As one local resident commented, “They did not come into a community that didn’t have any assets. They came into a community that needed their technical assistance, and we’re just as much an asset to them as they are to us.”<sup>18</sup>

As problem-oriented policing increasingly involves community members in policing, two reforms are emerging. *First, police accountability is shifting from assessments about rapid response rates and crime clear-ups only, to include an appraisal of police attitudes toward, and competence in, partnership activities.* Police use of force in the community, police visibility and accessibility, police sensitivity to local issues, their contribution to the resolution of local problems and tensions, and their perceived effectiveness in taking community concerns seriously have become new measures of success. Police performance is subject to more scrutiny than before both quantitatively (whether perceived problems have been resolved or crime reduced) and qualitatively (how the police conducted themselves in their collaborations with the community). See “Results of Problem-Oriented Policing” (in box) for a list of positive results by which police will increasingly be measured.

### Results of Problem-Oriented Policing

- More informal but purposeful contact between the police and the community
- Greater police sensitivity toward the community
- Changing attitudes toward the police
- Breaking down distrust, building mutual respect
- Information sharing that promotes a shared commitment to agreed outcomes
- Promoting a spirit of cooperation between police, other agencies, and local communities
- Complexity of policing more widely understood
- Re-orientation of policing toward a focus on community well-being
- Planning before action and emphasis on prevention
- Improved resource management by the police and other public agencies
- Community learning about itself
- Broader thinking encouraged
- Long-term planning encouraged
- Accountability measures become more qualitative rather than fixed on crime statistics

*The second reform is the joint participation of police and community in identifying problems and coming up with solutions, which can be an educational process for all concerned and a force for change.* Assumptions about the capacity and willingness to work on public safety issues can be challenged. The community

learns the strengths and weaknesses of the police—and vice versa. With the focus on those issues that threaten community safety, and on opportunities that could bolster community well-being and harmony, all parties learn more about who can do what and who does what. They also learn more about how this knowledge can be used to produce desired outcomes. Breaking down tasks and activities and assigning them where it makes sense can alter assumptions about the appropriateness of the traditional dependence of the community on the police and can change the police view of the community. A natural spin-off is often a sense of goodwill and mutual respect among participants, in whom joint care and responsibility leads to a growth in confidence to tackle other problems.

*The result can be the development of functional communities in which community members reinforce common values, apply their own social capital to engender law-abiding behavior, and resolve conflict through their own problem-solving efforts.* Problem-oriented policing provides a vehicle for community development and self-regulation. The police may even be able to withdraw and focus attention on less able communities. In time, the public and the police develop a new understanding of how each can contribute to preventing, resolving, and reducing crime. The doors start to open for negotiation and for the transformation of the status quo in which crises occur. This kind of energy creates the platform for community-oriented governance as well as a highly participatory citizenship. Problem-oriented policing is shaping policing. It potentially can shape local government, impact relationships throughout entire communities, and change traditional ways of working.

## Unresolved Tensions Between the Traditional Model of Professional Policing and Community Policing

Collaboration with communities and other agencies is beginning to have a significant effect on the activities of the police. What is still uncertain, however—despite the theory of community policing and problem solving—is whether current changes are mainly strengthening the professional police's hand to maintain law and order or whether the changes are also building *self policing* among communities (i.e., shifting toward social crime prevention and informal conflict resolution). Where is the evidence that community policing and problem-oriented policing are facilitating a transition from police owning policing to police sharing the responsibility for crime control? How forward-looking is community policing and to what extent is it merely reacting to history? Is community policing more about a style of working by the professional police (to address past tensions in their relations with the public) or is it transforming the meaning of policing?

It is apparent that there still is no agreement as to how critical community self-regulation is for the future. Notwithstanding a number of coherent *definitions* of community policing—pivoting on the notion of the police and the community working in collaboration—there is no commonality of purpose, hence diverse *interpretations* prevail. As Bailey has commented, what people are doing “is so diverse that it is hard to describe.”<sup>19</sup> What the police are doing may defy description because the police themselves do not always have a clear view of the context in which changes are hap-



pening. Missing is a defined central mission, without which many officers do not know how to describe their activities. Day-to-day contact with communities does not always result in a definable outcome, unless there are clear benchmarks. Such benchmarks should not be defined by local standards alone without reference to broader goals and standards for policing recognized by professionals and citizens alike. Without a coherent national strategy, there are problems as well as paradoxes. What exactly is going on as policing is changing can be amorphous, obscure, even contradictory. Arguably, this is exacerbated by the lack of a defined future-oriented mission for advancing community policing, with clear measures of accountability.

Community policing has undoubtedly brought attention to organizational development, decentralization, promoting public dialogue, fostering officer discretion, and broadening activities to support the clamor for safer communities. Citizens have responded by attending meetings, joining working groups, and supporting joint programs to deal with ongoing problems that beset their neighborhood.

Some police departments, however, are focusing primarily on improving their own capacity for policing, with community organizing largely left to voluntary groups with specific interests. For these departments, community policing is not about community mobilization. While community policing is moving substantially away from being interpreted merely as good public relations, in these departments it is having to muscle itself in with the traditional professional policing model (in which crime control is seen primarily as the preserve of law enforcement agencies, and communities retain a passive role).

Another example of an imbalance in the police mission is the dedication of police resources to the widespread application of *zero tolerance* tactics, preventing their use to develop community partnerships or interagency cooperation to tackle causes of crime and offending behavior. Reducing crime and providing public reassurance through visible and focused patrols is not a bad strategy unless unrealistic expectations are raised that these efforts can be sustained and are themselves sufficient to control crime. Zero tolerance precludes attention to fundamental problems in the social conditions that are breeding further crime for the future. As long as the police (and the public) see professional policing as the primary response to crime and disorder, the police are under pressure to perform the critical role and to accept ultimate responsibility for public safety, regardless of the relationship enjoyed with the public. Within this framework, while the community may be better informed about crime and police activity, or have more influence on the police, too little is done to encourage active community participation in controlling crime and maintaining order. Thus, the community role is blurred and left to chance.

Although developing amicable relationships with communities is widely accepted as appropriate in these days of decentralization and local accountability, this activity addresses problems of the past more than the challenges of the future. The traditional policing model continues to be pervasive despite its recognized shortcomings. Community beat officers may be commonplace among law enforcement agencies, but mobile response patrols, large criminal investigation departments, and traffic regula-

tion officers still form the bulk of much of modern operational policing, as they did before community policing became the new orthodoxy. As a result, community policing is squeezed in at the margins, if not absorbed by the traditional means of doing business. Even moneys earned for community policing have been used for covert police surveillance, reinforcing the professional role—hardly conducive to the proactive engagement of communities. Should Federal moneys dry up, what would be the first to go?

A strong case can be made that the traditional concept of police crime fighting (i.e., by professional police only) retains an enduring popularity, producing demands for new technology, including computerized 911 systems, crime mapping, self-defense and assault weaponry, videotaping, and communications equipment. Some commentators would go as far as to say, “The police have not shown any signs of abating the paramilitaristic tendencies of old.”<sup>20</sup> In cultural terms at least, policing arguably may not have shifted from a warfare mindset in which the police see themselves as the buffer between an apathetic public and law-and-order breakdown.<sup>19</sup>

Improved police effectiveness and use of technology are a part of but not the whole solution to problems pertaining to crime and fear. Even when this is recognized, the practices evoke the image of an omniscient force rather than spell out the need for active community participation in light of existing or anticipated problems. One might argue that recent, significant investments in these areas are the consequence of a failed strategy (or, more accurately, the absence of a strategy) to achieve co-policing. The failure can be attributed to a confusion of goals and varying interpretations of the ethos of community policing.

Accountability, with this constant and very real tension between goals, is problematic. Should the overriding issue be the extent to which the police are effectively working with the community to encourage the coproduction of public safety? Or, should professional police performance against crime and disorder be paramount? And if it is both, how can these be integrated? The coexistence of community-oriented policing (striving to reduce the social distance between the police and the public) and zero-tolerance policies (which can quickly manifest themselves in deep divisions between the police and the public) is a stark reminder of the confusion.

Exacerbating tensions between the traditional policing model and the community-policing goal of citizen mobilization are unresolved internal issues. How is a police department to operate when it is required to fulfill traditional (and often dangerous) crime-fighting tasks as well as promote a shift toward more citizen participation in policing? Semimilitaristic and hierarchical structures, codes of discipline, directive communication methods, and rigid lines of accountability can have a powerful impact on internal staff attitudes and relations, destroying initiatives toward power sharing, joint problem solving, and mutual responsibility. How internal grievances are dealt with can be adversarial (often as between management and less senior staff) rather than about problem solving. Who is listened to may determine how problems are identified and resolved. This kind of work environment can be the antithesis of the



open dialogue and relationships that are needed with external communities. What works in favor of community policing—information sharing, building trust and support, developing agreed plans, working together, and sharing responsibilities—is undermined by the traditional internal culture; and this more rigid, hierarchical, and closed culture thrives in the absence of a full commitment to a future-oriented mission that aims to strengthen participatory democracy.

Again, the lack of national benchmarks can stifle changes that are occurring in many places. Without shared agreement about the characteristics required of leadership and modern management, community policing is susceptible to the influence of individual personalities. Such agreement is needed to establish the basic foundations for developing the appropriate operating environment and organizational climate for community policing: selection, training, and development of recruits and managers in accordance with the changing philosophy.

### **Conclusion to Part 1: Key Themes in Community Policing**

Community policing has engendered mutual learning and understanding: the police are learning about the community, and vice versa. Police-public partnerships have been instrumental in bridging the gap between lay and professional, service-provider and customer. This is welcome after years of controversy about police-public relationships. But real citizen involvement in planning, designing, *and implementing* strategies for crime control and reduction is still too rare. The irony of recent efforts by police departments with community policing and problem-oriented policing is that they might actually have added to the public's perception that the police can achieve safer communities by themselves, if only given community support. Could things be done differently?

Sustaining the feel-good image of improved relations and lower crime requires deliberate attention to ironing out the uneven implementation and interpretation of community policing. Community policing may have brought about distinct shifts in practice and attitude, but the police culture and the organization of police resources would be largely recognizable to anyone who served in law enforcement 30 years ago. The culture is changing, but not enough to diminish the threat that the traditional policing model may dominate the control of crime and disorder. Police departments may be introducing preventive patrols (to promote a sense of safety), opening dialogue with other agencies (to foster trust and partnering), and conducting crime pattern analysis to reduce crime. But time and expenditures applied to police capacity building compete with community building, thus diluting the potential for more fundamental change.

Community policing should be gathering conventional wisdom on how its ethos should and can be translated into a clear, future-oriented, overall goal; and that goal should promote the notion that policing is more than what the professional police do. Such wisdom should be advanced in ways that secure national agreement about what kind of policing is healthy—and about what detracts from the central mission to overcome boundaries, jurisdictions, personalities, and politics. By now there should be no doubt that the purpose of policing goes beyond what the police themselves do in

relation to crime. Policing is confronted with crime and requires law enforcement efforts, but the larger goal is police-citizen problem solving that supports peacekeeping.

Of course, the implementation of community policing must, by its very nature, be defined locally and depends greatly upon available leadership and managerial skills, particularly in power sharing and in participatory decisionmaking. Some communities are more predisposed than others to working with police. The attitude and support of local government and local businesses can also have a major influence, as can the attitude of police officers. “We’re too busy putting out the fires,” “what have potholes got to do with policing?,” and “the community is apathetic” are common laments among officers challenged by the requirements of community policing.

Local capacity issues, however, would undoubtedly benefit from a national consensus on what community policing should be aiming for. Policing generally is still defined in terms of what the professional police can or should do. This “colonization of policing”<sup>21</sup> means that instead of being viewed as something accomplished by the community, policing is seen as the preserve of “law enforcement” (as if this is all they do!) agencies. Communities often are seen as merely a resource to help the police do policing in their own way; and community policing is seen simply as an agenda for police reform. The dominant role of the police is thereby retained. *Yet community policing ought to be “de-centering the police as the institutional ‘owner’ of policing.”<sup>21</sup> Policing, in other words, needs to be more forward-looking.*

The legacy of the past is still dictating much of the way community policing is being interpreted in some areas. Street patrols, added technology to improve police capacity for being responsive, accessible, and visible, and local-based neighborhood stations may be important steps toward fostering relationships between the police and the community; but the goals of this effort need to be future-oriented, looking toward a new relationship. It is not enough to overcome the decline in public trust and confidence. Police need to shift gears and promote community engagement and participation in law and order problems. If it is accepted that crime, fear, and disorder cannot be contained by police efforts alone, then community policing *must* be about partnerships with the community and *must* be about developing community capacity for self-policing.

This is not suggesting a revolution. The professional police must have the capacity to respond immediately to a crisis, and law enforcement will always play a key role in containing crime. But contemporary policing requires a different emphasis. As Bonnie Bucqueroux writes, “The medical model offers a parallel to law enforcement. In medicine, we have moved from an era in which we expected the experts to save us to one in which we recognize the role that patients must play in their own well-being.”<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps it is not surprising that the public in general and many communities have largely retained the perception that dealing with crime, disorder, and fear are responsibilities primarily for the police. The need and the real potential for collaborative effort between the police and community have not been clearly communicated, nor has the potential for community self-regulation. In this context, public dependence on



the professional police is not surprising. A narrow focus on crime remains the pervasive tide, which is why law enforcement retains primacy over prevention—and the traditional policing model, characterized by command and control and the use of technology, remains strong. Community policing is a powerful vehicle for changing both police and public perceptions; but the engine requires all the cylinders firing toward a clear destination.