



## Chapter 3

### Relating Problem-Oriented Policing to Other Movements in Police Reform and Crime Prevention

The various schools of thought on modern police reform, as well as several parallel or complementary movements and theories, have significance for the problem-oriented policing movement.<sup>104</sup> Some of these movements compete with problem-oriented policing for acceptance as a general model for improving policing, while others have nicely complemented problem-oriented policing, drawing from disciplines other than policing. I will briefly discuss the most significant of these movements and theories, and their relationship to problem-oriented policing.

#### Team Policing

Team policing, a loose collection of ideas about how the police might more effectively serve the public, is, in hindsight, seen as the precursor to contemporary community policing methods.<sup>105</sup> Several key people, like Patrick Murphy, who advocated team policing methods also would later advocate community policing. Many U.S. police agencies tested and implemented team policing in its various forms in the 1970s and 1980s, though its true origins are reportedly traceable to Aberdeen, Scotland, in the 1940s (Sherman, Milton and Kelly 1973). A number of large and medium-sized police agencies can today attribute geographic decentralization of their operations to team policing initiatives. The decentralization of *authority*, however, which was central to team policing's underlying theories, proved more threatening to many police executives, and did not survive as well as *geographic* decentralization.

Few people today have declared team policing either an unqualified success or an unqualified failure (Walker 1993). There is general consensus today that team policing might have been a bit ahead of its time, but that many of its premises were and remain sound, and that it had sufficient appeal both to the community and to rank-and-file police officers. Indeed, several core features of team policing, such as stability of geographic assignment, unity of command, interaction between police and community, geographic decentralization of police operations, despecialization of police services, greater responsiveness to community concerns, some decentralization of internal decision-making, and at least some shared decision-making with the community, are in place in many of today's police agencies. Even when these features fall short of what some might consider optimal, most police managers generally consider them desirable almost 30 years after the advent of team policing.

<sup>104</sup>These ideas, including problem-oriented policing, are variously referred to as movements, philosophies, models, paradigms, strategies, theories, programs, schools of thought, etc. Just what they should be called isn't certain, nor is it that important, but Goldstein clearly intended that problem-oriented policing be understood as something more comprehensive than a program, though nothing so grandiose as a philosophy. One observer interpreted Goldstein's writings as calling for an "existential" framework in policing. Whether they do or not, Goldstein never conceived of problem-oriented policing in such philosophical terms.

<sup>105</sup>One scholar (Brodeur 1998a:vii) suggests that the concept of problem-oriented policing actually originated in the team policing initiatives of the early 1970s. This is not quite true, although there is a connection. As evidence of this connection, Brodeur cites a reference to the term "problem-oriented" in Sherman, Milton and Kelly's 1973 report on team policing (p. 16). Sherman was describing the team policing pilot project in the Dayton, Ohio, Police Department. It turns out, according to Herman Goldstein, that before starting the team policing project, several Dayton police officials attended seminars at the University of Wisconsin Law School. During those seminars, University of Wisconsin police scholars like Goldstein and Frank Remington were introducing the notion of a problem-oriented focus to policing, a notion that grew out of their work on the American Bar Foundation surveys of criminal justice from the 1950s. Goldstein had not yet formulated his full-fledged concept of problem-oriented policing, but it is clear the seeds of the idea have a long history and remain entirely associated with Goldstein's work. Brodeur traces the links between Goldstein's earlier work and his subsequent work in problem-oriented policing in Chapter 2 of the publication (Brodeur 1998b).



## Community Policing

The term *community policing* began to appear in the professional literature around the mid-1970s. Pioneering police departments, like the Santa Ana Police Department, used the knowledge acquired from team policing experiments to expand some of the elements more broadly into the department's routine operations and into how the police solicited active community participation in preventing crime (Sherwood 1977).<sup>106</sup>

Much has since been written about the relationship of community policing to problem-oriented policing.<sup>107</sup> It is beyond the scope of this writing to explore all the distinctions and similarities, except to summarize some arguments Goldstein made about the distinctions.<sup>108</sup>

Most obviously, according to Goldstein, problem-oriented policing primarily emphasizes the substantive societal problems the police are held principally responsible for addressing; community policing primarily emphasizes having the police engage the community in the policing process. Under problem-oriented policing, how the police and the community engage one another will and should depend on the specific problem they are trying to address, rather than being defined in a broad and abstract sense. Community policing implies that responses to problems will involve some sort of collaborative or cooperative working relationship between the police and the community. Problem-oriented policing allows for this possibility, but does not imply that such arrangements are always necessary or appropriate for addressing every problem.<sup>109</sup> Carefully analyzing problems before developing new response strategies is given greater weight and importance under problem-oriented policing than under community policing. Problem-oriented policing specifically promotes using alternatives to the formal criminal justice system, redefining the nature of the police's relationship to this and other systems; community policing does not explicitly address this relationship. Community policing strongly emphasizes organizing and mobilizing the community, almost to the point that doing so becomes a central function of the police; problem-oriented policing advocates such efforts only if they are warranted in the specific context of addressing a particular problem. Under community policing, certain features of police organizational structure and policy, like geographic decentralization and continuity in officer assignments to neighborhoods, are deemed essential; under problem-oriented policing, many of these features are seen as helpful, but not essential—problem-oriented policing can be done under a variety of organizational arrangements. Community policing emphasizes that the police share more decision-making authority with the community;

<sup>106</sup>The Flint, Mich., Police Department's Foot Patrol Experiment, begun in 1979, was instrumental in the subsequent formation of the National Neighborhood Foot Patrol Center (later renamed the National Center for Community Policing), housed at Michigan State University. Founded and led by Professor Robert Trojanowicz, this center became a prominent source of community policing training, publications and advocacy.

<sup>107</sup>For discussions of the distinctions between community policing and problem-oriented policing, see Brodeur (1998b), Skolnick and Bayley (1988), Toch and Grant (1991, Chap. 11), and Greene and Mastrofski (1988).

<sup>108</sup>See Goldstein (1985b, 1990a:21-27) for his explanation of the distinctions between problem-oriented and community policing.

<sup>109</sup>The Chicago Police Department has invested heavily in developing and delivering training programs to community groups, instructing them in problem-solving methods. The department has reportedly trained over 12,000 residents in a two-year span (Hartnett and Skogan 1999). Getting community members to understand the principles of problem-solving no doubt has some merit, but it is no substitute for the sort of problem analysis Goldstein advocates that police and trained researchers conduct. Moreover, from my own experiences developing and delivering problem-solving training to St. Louis community groups, doing so is a large undertaking that does not yield significant or immediate improvements in the quantity or quality of problem-oriented initiatives.



problem-oriented policing seeks to preserve more ultimate decision-making authority for the police, even while encouraging the police to solicit input from outside the department. Problem-oriented policing emphasizes officers' intellectual and analytical skills; community policing emphasizes their interpersonal skills. Finally, community policing expands the police's role to advance large and ambitious social objectives, such as promoting peaceful coexistence, enhancing neighborhood quality of life, promoting racial and ethnic harmony, and strengthening democratic community governance; problem-oriented policing is more cautious, emphasizing that the police are more limited in their capacity to achieve these goals than many people imagine, and guards against unrealistic expectations of the police (Goldstein 1992).<sup>110</sup> These selected general comparisons are summarized in Table 10.

<sup>110</sup>Some scholars and observers who have merged the concepts of community and problem-oriented policing erroneously ascribe the more ambitious goals of community policing to problem-oriented policing, as well (see, for example, Alpert and Moore 1998).

Table 10  
Selected Comparisons Between Problem-Oriented Policing and Community Policing Principles

Principle	Problem-Oriented Policing	Community Policing
Primary emphasis	Substantive social problems within police mandate	Engaging the community in the policing process
When police and community collaborate	Determined on a problem by problem basis	Always or nearly always
Emphasis on problem analysis	Highest priority given to thorough analysis	Encouraged, but less important than community collaboration
Preference for responses	Strong preference that alternatives to criminal law enforcement be explored	Preference for collaborative responses with community
Role for police in organizing and mobilizing community	Advocated only if warranted within the context of the specific problem being addressed	Emphasizes strong role for police
Importance of geographic decentralization of police and continuity of officer assignment to community	Preferred, but not essential	Essential
Degree to which police share decision-making authority with community	Strongly encourages input from community while preserving ultimate decision-making authority to police	Emphasizes sharing decision-making authority with community
Emphasis on officers' skills	Emphasizes intellectual and analytical skills	Emphasizes interpersonal skills
View of the role or mandate of police	Encourages broad, but not unlimited role for police, stresses limited capacities of police and guards against creating unrealistic expectations of police	Encourages expansive role for police to achieve ambitious social objectives



“The practice of problem-solving seems to have stalled, partly because it has not been sufficiently distinguished from its frequent companion (community policing), and has therefore been viewed by many police agencies as a question of professional style for beat-level officers, and not a central challenge for the departmental management structure. Some problems that the police must address don't lend themselves to the sort of community partnership responses envisioned by community policing, and for those kinds of problems, problem-solving has been less well-developed. Those problems nonetheless are amenable to problem-solving interventions.”

– Malcolm Sparrow

From the perspective of those committed to problem-oriented policing as a framework for police reform, the community policing movement has been a mixed blessing. On the positive side, the general idea of community policing has been enormously popular with the general public and, consequently, with elected officials. More specifically, the promise to the public of more access to the police, more police presence in the community, and greater police responsiveness to community concerns largely accounts for community policing's popular appeal. This popularity has translated into substantial financial and authoritative support for a wide range of programs, policies, training, and research, some of which has also benefited the problem-oriented policing movement. As noted above, to the extent that problem-solving has become at least a central feature of most conceptualizations of community policing, problem-oriented policing has benefited from greater attention to this analytical aspect of police work. Community policing's emphasis on improving the general relationship of the police to the community at large, to minority communities and to organized community groups has undoubtedly helped the police be more effective in their efforts to address particular community problems in a problem-oriented framework. This is no small achievement of the community policing movement.

On the negative side, the most politically popular features of community policing have not been the behind-the-scenes analyses of community problems, but the more visible programs that put police officers in all kinds of unconventional settings—on foot and bicycles, in classrooms, in community meetings, at youth recreation functions, etc.—and that have police officers providing unconventional services to the public, such as educating, mentoring and relating to youth. The attraction to these aspects of community policing has drawn some financial and authoritative support away from the analytical aspects of problem-oriented policing. The popularity of community policing has helped problem-oriented policing gain a degree of attention it might otherwise not have so quickly, but has reduced it to the level of a simplified analytical process for guiding police activities. The challenge for problem-oriented policing advocates will be to maintain support for the further development of the concept's less visible, but more critical, elements.

### **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**

Criminologist C. Ray Jeffery first articulated the concept of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) in 1971. Along with Jane Jacobs (1961) and Oscar Newman (1972), Jeffery recognized the importance of urban planning, building design and landscape

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architecture in controlling and preventing crime and disorder (National Crime Prevention Council 1997). CPTED is increasingly becoming essential knowledge and practice. A growing number of police agencies are developing in-house expertise in CPTED, and using that expertise to influence the design and use of land, buildings and other public spaces so that they are less prone to crime. CPTED, while existing as an independent method for analyzing and addressing crime problems closely tied to a geographic setting, has supported the movement toward problem-oriented policing (Saville 1999).

Conversely, problem-oriented policing has reinforced the concept of CPTED. It has allowed police officers and others who make design decisions to view crime control from an entirely new perspective other than law enforcement. It has let them see, in tangible ways, a whole range of methods to prevent, or at least reduce, crime. Once exposed to the CPTED principles and methods, many police officers find themselves more open to understanding problem-oriented policing's broader implications. Many police agencies now train officers in CPTED and have them sit on local planning review boards.

### **Situational Crime Prevention**

Situational crime prevention is perhaps the single most important intellectual development that reinforces and informs the problem-oriented policing movement (Tilley 1999). Its early articulation precedes Goldstein's articulation of problem-oriented policing. The two concepts developed independently, and then began to influence one another. Situational crime prevention is a relatively new branch of criminology, originating in England, that also has built and expanded on the concepts of CPTED and defensible space.<sup>111</sup> Ron Clarke (1993)<sup>112</sup> succinctly described it as an approach to crime prevention that “is directed at highly specific forms of crime and involves the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent a way as possible so as to increase the effort and risks of crime, and reduce the rewards as perceived by a wide range of offenders.” More simply put, it refocuses crime prevention away from deterrence and rehabilitation-based efforts to change offenders' underlying attitudes and behaviors, and toward more situation-specific methods of convincing offenders that committing a particular crime in a particular place at a particular time is not worthwhile.

The ideas of situational crime prevention theorists like Ronald Clarke and Marcus Felson (see Clarke and Felson 1993, and Felson 1994) have significantly influenced a number of police scholars, who in turn are communicating the concepts to police practitioners. Many of the core elements of situational crime prevention parallel the core

<sup>111</sup>At least in the United Kingdom, the concepts of “crime prevention” and “situational crime prevention” are seen as related but distinct, with the former seen as the more comprehensive.

<sup>112</sup>For a brief and highly comprehensible review of the theories underlying situational crime prevention, see Felson and Clarke (1998). See, also, Clarke (1993).



elements of problem-oriented policing. Herman Goldstein and Ron Clarke have formed a sort of intellectual partnership, advancing the development of problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention, respectively, while drawing heavily on one another's ideas (see Goldstein 1990a and Clarke 1998). In one respect, problem-oriented policing is the broader concept, not limited to crime problems, but also concerned with the full range of social disorder problems the police must address. In another sense, situational crime prevention is the broader concept, not limited to police actions, but concerned with the actions of any entity capable of preventing crime. Given the high degree of congruence of these two concepts, and the cross-fertilization of ideas, it is reasonable to assume that the two concepts will continue to fuse. Ideally, this fusion will continue to bring the scholars and practitioners of crime prevention closer to the scholars and practitioners of policing.

Situational crime prevention has its theoretical roots in criminology. It starts from an intellectual interest in how to get offenders to curtail their crime. It is derived mainly from two theories of crime—routine activity theory and rational choice theory.<sup>113</sup> Problem-oriented policing, on the other hand, has its roots in public administration and political science. It starts from an intellectual interest in how to get the police to be more effective in carrying out their functions in democratic societies. Problem-oriented policing as a distinct model of police reform evolved out of Herman Goldstein's early involvement in the American Bar Foundation Survey of Criminal Justice of the 1950s. Thus, in one sense problem-oriented policing is only 20 years old, but its intellectual heritage is several decades older. The findings and conclusions that emerged from the survey provided much of the intellectual foundation for problem-oriented policing (see Goldstein 1993b).

Problem-oriented policing has at times been criticized for lacking a criminological theory for its foundation. This criticism presumes that a theory for improving police service must first set forth a theory for preventing crime. This, however, is a far more ambitious, and perhaps unrealistic, goal to which problem-oriented policing never aspired. Moreover, any proposal to improve the quality of policing must address the full range of police tasks and responsibilities, and not merely the control of serious crime.

Problem-oriented policing is best understood as a framework for organizing the police and their activities so that the police are better positioned to learn how to prevent crime and disorder, and to apply that knowledge. It has no explicit preference for one criminological theory over others.<sup>114</sup> It seeks to leave the police open to understanding various criminological theories, and experimenting with

<sup>113</sup>Routine activity theory holds that predatory crime requires a convergence in time and space of a likely offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian against crime. The rational choice perspective holds that offenders make rational choices to commit crimes, even if their information is imperfect or their calculations flawed. A related theory, crime pattern theory, looks at how people interact with the physical environment in terms of nodes, paths and edges (where they go, what routes they take, and the intersections of familiar surroundings of different groups of people) (Felson and Clarke 1998).

<sup>114</sup>Some writers seek to align problem-oriented policing with their own favored criminological theories, but usually distort the concept in the process. Fyfe et al. (1997) assert that problem-oriented policing supports a "social conditions theory" of crime in which economic deprivation is seen as a primary cause of crime. They do so by arguing that the police should educate and inspire others to improve social conditions. Whether or not Goldstein would agree with this proposition, his concept of problem-oriented policing is not so explicitly linked to this theory of crime.



practical applications of those theories to determine what works best under what circumstances. This is not to say that problem-oriented policing proponents do not have favored criminological theories. Indeed, among the reasons there has been so much cross-fertilization of ideas between problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention is that problem-oriented proponents have found merit in the theories underlying situational crime prevention, and police practitioners find the situational crime prevention studies relevant to their own work. But if those theories were ultimately proven wrong, it is unlikely that problem-oriented policing advocates would similarly conclude that the problem-oriented approach was also wrong. It would merely add to the knowledge base from which police practitioners could draw to guide their strategic decisions.

<sup>115</sup>The Police Foundation is currently studying the elements of Compstat and how the concept is being implemented in police agencies across the U.S.

### **Crime Analysis and Compstat**

Many police agencies have systematically analyzed reported crime data for a number of reasons—to identify potential suspects in specific crimes, to spot geographic and temporal crime trends, and to generally report crime and account for police responses to it. However, crime analysis, as it has conventionally been practiced, is quite different from problem analysis in several respects. Crime analysis focused on Part I Index crimes; problem analysis extends to any and all forms of crime and disorder. Crime analysis was used principally to identify offenders or predict the next crime in a pattern. Problem analysis is used to bring about more permanent reductions in the levels or severity of problems. Crime analysis concentrated on police activities to address crime. Problem analysis explores the whole community's response to the problem. Some agencies now have their crime analysts engaged in broader problem analysis, though mainly by providing, on request, statistical reports and analyses to those line officers leading problem-solving initiatives.

Currently, one of the most prominent and popularized crime analysis methods is one patterned after the New York City Police Department's Compstat method (Giuliani and Safir n.d.). Increasingly, as news of the New York method spreads, police agencies are replicating Compstat.<sup>115</sup> In essence, Compstat is a crime analysis method by which computerized crime statistics are analyzed and presented to operational commanders, who are then responsible for developing operational tactics to respond to emerging crime patterns. The degree to which this basic method is consistent with problem-oriented policing depends entirely on the details of how it is practiced.

When statistics related only to reported Part I crimes are analyzed, the method has little in common with problem-oriented policing.



“Mapping, however, is actually a bit of a red herring. It can even be unhelpful. I worry that people are becoming obsessed with maps and their pretty colors, without thinking much about what information they contain or what can be learned from them. The technology itself becomes what is fascinating, rather than the knowledge to be gained from it. So technology can at times inhibit the development of problem-oriented policing, because it stops people from thinking.”

– Gloria Laycock

Problem-oriented policing specifically calls for a broad inquiry into many types of community problems demanding police attention. It also calls for analyzing multiple sources of information to develop a fuller understanding of each problem. Where a Compstat-style method results in commanders' selecting from among a limited and conventional set of responses to address problems, such as extra patrol or increased enforcement, it also departs radically from a problem-oriented methodology. Problem-oriented policing calls for a broad and uninhibited search for responses to particular problems, placing special emphasis on responses that minimize the need for the police to use force and large-scale arrest campaigns. A Compstat-style method can foster a hostile atmosphere, more like an inquisition than an inquiry; in this sense, it also differs from problem-oriented policing. Problem-oriented policing, while stressing accountability, also places a high priority on the free exchange of ideas, an exchange that is difficult to achieve in a tension-filled and rigidly hierarchical setting. Finally, a Compstat-style method relies exclusively on police analysis of data and results in decisions made exclusively by the police; in this sense, it also does not resemble problem-oriented policing. Problem-oriented policing puts a high premium on communication, consultation and collaboration with entities outside the police department at all stages of the planning process.

Ideally, a Compstat-style method would be entirely consistent with problem-oriented policing. As one way to identify specific problems, a computer-generated pattern of crimes would be only the beginning of a more in-depth and broader analysis of the nature of the problems, their underlying conditions and the limits of current responses. For example, if computerized systems recognized a sudden spate of incidents classified as robberies in a police precinct, this information would not be used merely to mobilize conventional police responses like stakeouts and extra patrol, but instead might launch a closer analysis of the incidents that could reveal several discrete forms of problems, all related to the crime of robbery, each calling for a different set of responses.

This should not be understood as an attack on the Compstat method. For many police agencies, this method is a significant advancement in the use of crime data to inform operational decisions. Problem-oriented policing, however, is a considerably more sophisticated and involved approach to handling police business than a Compstat method simplistically practiced.

### **Hot-Spot Policing and Crime Mapping**

Over the last decade, many police scholars and practitioners have developed theories and applications for understanding crime and



disorder in terms of geographic patterns. This has been in part fostered by research that shows that reported crime and disorder tend not to be evenly distributed across the landscape, but concentrated significantly in certain areas. Researchers have since developed many tools to allow the police to map these concentrations, to better understand crime and disorder and direct their resources in response. The basic idea is hardly new in policing, though the technology has made such mapping infinitely more possible and potentially useful. Its practical utility depends as much on how the data are organized, what questions are asked about the data, and what conclusions are drawn from the data as it does the volume of data and computing power and sophistication. Because of the new computer mapping technology, crime mapping has reached new levels of prominence in many police operations. It is becoming a specialized field in policing.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>116</sup>The National Institute of Justice established the Crime Mapping Research Center in 1997, and the Police Foundation recently established the Computer Mapping Laboratory. For further reading on crime mapping and its implications for crime prevention, see Weisburd and McEwen (1998), and for its implications for policing, see Harries (1990) and Greene (1998b). See, also, La Vigne and Wartell (1998), Reuland (1997), and Block, Dabdoub and Fregly (1995).

Crime mapping and its links to crime prevention can strongly support problem-oriented policing (La Vigne 1999; La Vigne and Wartell 1999; Taxman and McEwen 1998). Crime mapping is enabling police practitioners and researchers to think about crime and disorder and their relationship to other geographic phenomena in ways that were previously unimagined or impractical. Problem-oriented policing specifically calls for, among other things, an analysis of police incidents in terms of location as a potentially useful way to aggregate incidents into clusters. A spatial incident pattern can help stimulate a better understanding of the underlying causes of certain community problems. Crime mapping also fits well with situational crime prevention, in which understanding crime in the specific context of its location is critical. For example, crime maps might reveal a pattern of storage-facility burglaries, and that revelation might then prompt a closer analysis of those facilities' physical layout and management. Seldom will crime mapping alone suffice as problem analysis, but it is a potentially useful analytical tool.

The spatial and temporal concentration of crime and disorder has led some scholars to propose what they call "hot-spot policing." Hot-spot policing, in essence, requires that the police concentrate their attention and resources on places where and times when there is a significantly high volume of demand for police services. At this basic level of understanding, the idea also is compatible with problem-oriented policing.

Crime mapping and hot-spot policing, however, are not comprehensive approaches to policing, as is problem-oriented policing. Using mapping as an exclusive means to identify and analyze community problems would leave many problems hidden, and artificially limit the analysis of even those problems with some spatial patterns. Many problems the police must contend with do not lend



<sup>117</sup>The address from where an incident is reported is easily confused with the address where the incident occurred. Consequently, the locations of public pay phones often appear to be “hot spots” of activity merely because many people use such phones to report incidents to the police. Many other incidents are attributed to nonspecific addresses, such as those occurring in large open spaces like parks and wooded areas. Computer-aided dispatch data require careful interpretation in order to reach valid conclusions.

<sup>118</sup>Recently published research indicated there is no strong evidence that either social or physical incivilities in a neighborhood significantly affect residents' fear of crime, neighborhood decline or incidence of crime. The researchers concluded that “study results warn against problem-oriented policing or community-oriented policing efforts that concentrate too heavily on fixing physical problems as a way to revitalize a neighborhood or reduce residents' fear. Neighborhood status and low crime are more important than ‘broken windows’ in a neighborhood for long-term stability and low fear” (Taylor 1999).

<sup>119</sup>A number of writers and observers have asserted a connection between the broken windows and zero tolerance concepts, but George Kelling, one of the originators of the broken windows theory, does not endorse it (Rosen 1999, Goldstein 1999). Nonetheless, politicians and lay observers often view broken windows and zero tolerance as the same concept, and furthermore, both are often held out as an alternative to community policing (see Massing 1998).

<sup>120</sup>The broken windows thesis actually evolved out of some highly specific problem-solving efforts in the New York City subway system, in which George Kelling participated, but over time the concept lost its problem-specific focus. For a critique and refutation of the broken windows thesis, see Sampson (1999) and Harcourt (1998). For a more detailed critique of the principles underlying zero tolerance and “order-maintenance policing,” see Cole (1999). For a critique of the New York City Police Department's zero tolerance strategy, and a comparison with the San Diego Police Department's neighborhood and problem-oriented policing strategies, see Greene (1999). For further discussion of the distinction between zero tolerance and problem-oriented policing, see Cordner (1998). For a critique of the zero tolerance concept and an explicit distinction of it from problem-oriented policing, see Goldstein (1999).

themselves to spatial concentrations, and thus will not show up on any hot-spot maps. Crimes such as credit card fraud, domestic violence or child abuse are prevalent throughout jurisdictions. Overreliance on mapping limits police inquiries to data that can be mapped, and much of the information the police need to get a complete and accurate picture of community problems is not readily captured in data that are mapped. To the extent that those who use computerized maps to analyze problems become fascinated by the technology itself, there is a risk that the reliability of the data underlying the maps will be taken for granted. In fact, a lot of police data relating to the location of crimes and incidents are ripe for misinterpretation.<sup>117</sup>

## Broken Windows and Zero Tolerance

The basic notion underlying what some have called the “broken windows” theory of crime and disorder is that, by having the police and community address the many minor community incivilities and signs of neglect, more serious crimes and disorder will be prevented (Wilson and Kelling 1982, 1989).<sup>118</sup> This idea has spawned as a consequence, intended or not, an idea popularly referred to as “zero tolerance.”<sup>119</sup> Zero tolerance indicates that the police will restrict or eliminate the use of discretion in enforcement, that they will enforce laws as strictly as possible within their means. The idea is also popularly linked with the perceived practices of the New York City Police Department during much of the 1990s.

Whatever merits the broken windows theory and zero tolerance strategy may have, how these ideas have developed in practice has little in common with problem-oriented policing.<sup>120</sup> In so many respects, the idea of zero tolerance is antithetical to problem-oriented policing. If Herman Goldstein has stood for nothing else in his academic career, it is that the police, of necessity and largely for good cause, exercise enormous discretion in choosing which laws to enforce, when, where, and how (Goldstein 1963, 1977, 1990a, 1993b). Problem-oriented policing builds on that premise, drawing into enforcement decisions even greater input from the community, prosecutors and other government officials. Optimally, the refined use of the police's arrest powers and the exploration of the many alternatives to arrest will result in less reliance on criminal sanctions to address crime and disorder. Problem-oriented policing does allow that brief periods of concentrated law enforcement might be entirely appropriate to intervene in and disrupt a pattern of crime or disorder, but rejects the wholesale adoption of anything like “zero tolerance law enforcement” as a standing remedy for most community problems.



## Summary

All these movements in the realm where policing, crime prevention and research intersect, from community policing to zero tolerance, have influenced, and been influenced by, problem-oriented policing. Some of these movements can be said to be variations on themes found in problem-oriented policing, emphasizing one or another element. Much of what is referred to as community policing or community-oriented policing<sup>121</sup> is but a variation on problem-oriented policing themes. Other movements are more properly understood not as rival comprehensive theories of policing, but as specialized trends that, properly used, support a problem-oriented approach. Crime mapping is such an example. Yet other movements, like zero tolerance, while purporting to be a variation on problem-oriented policing, in practice are countermovements that reject problem-oriented policing's most basic premises.

<sup>121</sup>Most uses of the terms *community-oriented policing* and *neighborhood-oriented policing* appeared after Goldstein coined the term *problem-oriented policing*. Goldstein chose this term carefully because he fully intended that the police organize and align their actions (i.e., orient their actions) around the notion of problems. It is less clear whether those who use the terms *community-oriented policing* and *neighborhood-oriented policing* similarly intend that the police should organize and align their actions around communities or neighborhoods, and if so, what that means, exactly. Efforts to understand the literal meaning of these terms help expose these concepts' strengths and deficiencies.

