Police Role in the Community

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Chapter 1
Defining Community Policing

• Emerged in the 1980s and 90s.
• There is no one single definition.
• It is a philosophy that promotes organization strategies.
• Supports systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address immediate conditions.
• It is a collaborative effort between the police & community.
Four principles

- Community engagement
- Problem solving
- Organizational transformation
- Crime prevention involving the police and the community.
Basic themes

• Police-community partnerships
• Proactive, problem-solving approach to the police function.
The Evolution of Policing

• The British Contribution:
  – Mid-eighteenth century England experienced significant social change.
  – London was under siege.
    • Criminality was rampant.
    • Punishment was disproportionate.
  – The *Bow Street Runners*
    • Henry Fielding – magistrate of Bow Street.
    • Noted the disproportional punishment.
    • Argued for a reform of the criminal code to deal with crime to focus on the origins of crime.
Sir Robert Peel

• In the early nineteenth century Sir Robert Peel, a member of British Parliament, recommended a full-time, professional police force be established in London.
• There were strong political and social objections.
• Fearful of the development of a strong, centralized police organization.
Harsh Law

• At the time there were over 200 crimes that a person could be hanged for.
• The fear was that the police would enforce the law resulting in high levels of punishment.
• It would take seven years before Peel was successful in presenting a bill to Parliament.
The Metropolitan Police

• The British Parliament passed the *Metropolitan Police Act of 1829*.

• The principal objective of this law was
  – **The prevention of crime**
  – Peel argued that success in reducing crime was stopping it before it was committed, not through apprehension after the fact.

• The constable on patrol.
  – A uniformed officer.
  – Each with an individual number that was visible.
Peel’s Principals of Policing

• Basic mission is to prevent crime and disorder.
• Ability to perform police duties is dependant on public approval.
• Police must secure willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of law.
• The use of force by police proportionately diminishes degree of public cooperation.
• The use of physical force to the extent necessary.
• The police are the public, and the public are the police.
• The police should not usurp the power of the judiciary.
• The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder.
The Early American Experience

• 1833 – a part-time force in Philadelphia.
• 1844 – NY Legislature established a full-time preventive police force in NYC.
• Lack of similarity to the Metropolitan Police in London.
  – Localized control at the city level.
  – Early political patronage on selecting personnel was an acceptable practice.
  – Positions were awarded based on personal relationships, not qualifications.
• 1852 – New Orleans and Cincinnati
• 1854 – Boston and Philadelphia
• 1857 – Baltimore and Newark
• 1880 – virtually every major US city established a police force.
• Establishment of police forces often followed conflict and disorder in a city.
• Between 1840-1870 there were a significant number of civil disturbances in many US cities.
The Three Eras of US Policing

• Throughout US history there has been three major paradigm shifts in the evolution of policing.
  – The Political Era
  – The Reform Era
  – The Community Era
The Political Era

• Began with the origins of early American police organizations in the 1840s.
• Major cities and local townships developed police agencies in response to social disorder.
• Extended into the first quarter of the twentieth century.
• Policing was closely tied to local politics.
Patronage

• Police officers were from the communities they worked in.

• Highly decentralized system based on local autonomy.

• The chief was a political appointment with a vested interest in maintaining the political status quo.
  – Patronage or spoils system.

• National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement – appointed by President Hoover in 1929.
  – The Wickersham Commission
The Wickersham Commission

- Named after the chair, George Wickersham, a former U.S. attorney general.
- Published a series of reports in 1931 that was highly critical of police practices.
  - Report 11 was titled *Lawlessness in Law Enforcement*
    - Described problems with brutality – the third degree, illegal detention, refusal to allow suspects access to counsel.
  - Report 14 was titled *The Police*
    - Examined police leadership, administration, inefficiency and corruption.
The Reform Era

• From the 1930s to the 80s
• Also referred to as the *progressive era.*
• An emphasis on preventive automobile patrol and rapid response to calls for service.
• Key figures
  – August Vollmer
  – O.W. Wilson
  – Raymond Fosdick
• The move was toward professionalism.
• The *thin blue line* emerged.
Closer analysis

• Under Vollmer
  – the first college police program was developed at UC Berkley
  – Radios in police cars
  – Fingerprint/handwriting classification systems
  – MO files
  – Motorcycle patrols

• Wilson
  – Advocated preventive patrol

• There was the move to disassociate the police from local politics.
The Professional Model

• Police were seen as crime fighter.
• They were the professionals
• Society allowed greater autonomy
• The police were expected to be impartial enforcers of the law.
  – The police began to relate to citizens in professionally neutral and distant terms (Kelling & Moore, 1991).
• The mobile police car further distanced the police from the public.
The 1960s

- The professional model of policing began to crumble as the country was in the midst of social change.
  - The police would often be center stage in much of the turbulence that was occurring.

- A dichotomy emerged – *Us vs. Them*
Breakdown

• Social problems are a change agent
• The Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the Due Process Revolution, and many other issues challenged the status quo.
• The effectiveness of the police was being questioned.
  – Crime was rising
  – Fear of crime kept pace
  – Differential treatment of minorities
Change on the Horizon

• Policing was under intense scrutiny.
  – The culture
  – Styles of policing

• It was determined that police
  – Were more apt to handle incidents and problems informally;
  – The mission of policing was losing to the personalities;
  – Arrests were being used for purposes not associated with lawful detention
  – Individual police discretion was routinely used
The Dirty Harry Syndrome

• The ends justify the means.
  – Success was measured in
    • Numbers
    • Time
  – This focus neglected the underlying premise: the work.
Examining Police Services

• President's Commission on Law enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967-68)
  – Safe Streets Act and Law Enforcement Assistance Administration provided funding for police-related programs.

• National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder (1967)
  – Examined patterns of disorder and prescribed federal, state and local response.

• Commission on Campus Unrest

• National Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973)
  – Attempted to develop standards for crime control
The Courts

• Several US Supreme Court decisions decided by the Warren Court had a direct impact on police practice and procedures.
  – *Mapp v. Ohio*
  – *Gideon v. Wainwright*
  – *Escebedo v. Illinois*
  – *Miranda v. Arizona*
Other challenges

• The reactive nature of the police response to crime was challenged with the classic study on police effectiveness;
  – The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Study found that increasing or decreasing preventive patrol had no significant effect on crime.
Advent of community policing

• By the 1980s the “war on crime” metaphor was enlisting new help; the community.

• The roots of this new paradigm can be traced to the Kerner Commission (1968) that examined civil disorder in the US condemning racism and calling for aid to African-American communities to avert further racial polarization and violence.
Democratic policing

• This new era ushered in an approach that is designed to foster mutual trust between the community and the police that serve and protect them.

• Mentel (2008) outlines core principles that help guide fair and democratic policing:
  – Engage the community to create/maintain trust
  – Maintain rights to privacy while protecting national security
  – Account for diversity when developing strategies
  – Commit to integrity and combating biased policing
  – Build relationships with the media
  – Encourage openness and innovation through technological and strategic advancement
Reactive v. Proactive

• Reactive policing is a traditional form of responding to calls for service.

• Significantly strengthened through the 9-1-1 system

• Proactive policing anticipates problems and seeks solutions to solve them.
Features of CP

• Several major features
  – Regular contact between officers and citizens
  – Department-wide philosophy
  – Department-wide acceptance
  – Internal/external influence and respect for officers
  – Well-defined police role including both reactive and proactive measures
  – Officers act as a catalyst and leader for change in neighborhoods to reduce fear, disorder, crime, and decay
  – Officers are viewed as having a stake in the community
  – When intervention is necessary, informal social control is the first choice
  – Citizens are encouraged to solve many of their own problems
The essential elements of CP

• There are three essential elements:
  – Partnerships
  – Problem-solving
  – Organizational change

• Cordner (1999) suggests that there are four dimensions:
  – Philosophical
    • More a philosophy than programmatic
  – Strategic
    • The means to put CP into practice
  – Tactical
    • Translates the former into concrete programs and practices
  – Organizational
Chapter Points

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