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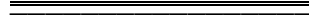
Modern Law Enforcement and the Service Oriented Approach

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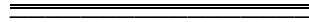
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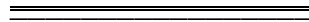
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Abstract

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the law enforcement profession has experienced many events that have changed the entire culture of policing. From the Rodney King incident in the early 1990's to the more recent incident in Ferguson, MO., policing and law enforcement as a whole have come under much scrutiny in the public eye. This scrutiny has led to a deeper look into the internal workings and training within the law enforcement culture and a study into how to better equip, train, and supervise law enforcement officers. From the ask, tell, make model, community oriented policing, problem oriented policing and data driven policing models to in car cameras, body cameras, and new less than lethal tools available on the use of force continuum, the rate of officers being indicted for excessive use of force are dropping, as well as use of deadly force by police nationwide. This is due in large part to another shift in police culture that is slowly growing in popularity and adaptation. The service quality oriented approach to policing. Through this model, the "serve" aspect of the police motto "to protect and serve" is the focus and a more transparent, approachable, and accountable police force is fostered. Law enforcement agencies should embrace the service-quality-oriented approach to policing because it reduces crime, fear, and disorder, and increases satisfaction and legitimacy among citizens.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional police models have been in the forefront of most police field training programs for the past several decades. Field training officers (FTO's) have trained new recruits in the same fashion and by the same standards they were trained and this trend has continued since the late 1960's and 70's (Kindy, 2015). Law enforcement agencies throughout the nation has declared a "war on drugs" and promised to "get tough on crime" which changed the culture of police from the helpful officer that spoke to people from the 1940's and 50's, to the hyper-aggressive, heavily armed officer that was trained the "*ask, tell, make"* (ATM) approach (Kindy, 2015). In the ATM module, officers are trained to ask for cooperation from a suspect, then transition to tell the suspect to cooperate, and then finally make the suspect cooperate with force.

Many times, officers opted to leave out the "ask" part of this theory and advance directly to the "tell" aspect (Kindy, 2015). This type of hands-on training was contagious throughout the ranks in the 70's through the 2000's. Controversial use of force incidents occurred and were widely broadcasted throughout the media. The first most widely publicized act of this type occurred in California in the early 1990's. The Rodney King incident in Los Angeles in March of 1991 was one of the first that had nationwide coverage ("Police brutality caught on video," 2010). After the Rodney King incident, and the four officers involved were acquitted of any charges in March of 1992, riots began. "Street violence, looting and fires broke out in inner-city Los Angeles within hours of the verdicts. The Mayor called for the California National Guard to restore order and declared a local emergency" (Mydans, 1992, para 7).

After the negative connotation of the events surrounding the Rodney King incident, several agencies sought out to alter their training style. A form of service-quality-based policing began to catch nationwide attention and take hold and the community oriented policing (COPS) model seemed to be a shift in the right direction (Kindy, 2015). COPS is a policing model that focuses on fighting crime and reducing crime rates while forming and maintaining a cooperative interaction with the public (Kindy, 2015).

Officials at the federal level began to notice the COPS philosophy and embraced it greatly. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 allowed for over 8 billion dollars in funding to law enforcement agencies throughout the nation over the next 5 years. This funding was to hire officers and implement the COPS program to these agencies (*Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*). The bill had four goals in Title I which covered the COPS program.

Goals one and two were focused on increasing the numbers of officers deployed throughout the nation and assuring that these officers were trained. Assurances were needed that the officers were employing a plan to foster a closer relationship between the officers and the community. These officers also needed to involve the community in an atmosphere of interaction and problem solving between the citizens and the officers. Goals three and four were directed at encouraging newer innovation philosophies in policing as well as to aid in the development of new technology to assist law enforcement to reduce overall crime and its consequences (Roth & Ryan, 2000).

While the program started off fairly weak, the transition of departments employing the COPS philosophy into their organizations grew exponentially over the next few

years. While only 20% of surveyed agencies in the United States reported having implemented a Community Oriented Policing program into their departments in 1994, that number grew to 58% in 1997 and to 68% by 2003 (Lawrence & McCarthy, 2013). The implementation of the COPS program through *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994* eventually put more than 185,000 officers in communities all over the United States, and each department that received grant funds for one or more of these officers were provided with training and guidelines on implementing the COPS module into their departments (Roth & Ryan, 2000). A semi-shift away from traditional police training had begun, and a significant drop in crime was experienced almost nationwide after the implementation of *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*. Statistics showed the new COPS policing model was as effective as anyone had hoped, and use of force incidents had dropped (Roth & Ryan, 2000).

The bombing of the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City on September 11, 2001 affected the Nation in an intense way. The heightened state of awareness was felt all over the nation by emergency responders and civilians alike. Law enforcement officers were no exception (Kindy, 2015). This heightened state of awareness led to a hyper-vigilant type of mentality throughout the ranks. A more aggressive style of policing overcame the COPS philosophy and much of the quality service groundwork that was done in the field of law enforcement was lost (Kindy, 2015). The ATM philosophy flourished during this time, and media reports of police use of force increased greatly.

Over the next few decades, police training leaned less and less on conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques and more focus on vigilance and use of force

for survival (Balko, 2014). Between July 2014 and April of 2015, there were four high profile cases of police use of force that plagued the media. The incidents involving Eric Garner in New York City, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Ohio, and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland. All resulted in public outrage claiming police brutality, racism, excessive use of force, and an overall failure in police culture and training (Balko, 2014) In each incident, there were no officers prosecuted or indicted for any wrongdoing (Balko, 2014). The public outrage escalated even more after each decision not to prosecute the officers involved in each of these tragedies (Balko, 2014).

In the above cases, the outcomes were displeasing and a tragedy (Balko, 2014). Although the end result in all incidents were found to be a legal, justifiable use of force by law enforcement, it was questioned if it was the only option (Balko, 2014). While the public outcry was excessive use of force by officers, the issue was not officers breaking the rules, it is the rules themselves that were the problem (Balko, 2014). The shift back to what had started in the 90's was necessary. Law enforcement agencies should embrace the service-quality-oriented approach to policing to better serve their communities.

POSITION

Law enforcement agencies should embrace the service-quality-oriented approach to policing because it reduces crime, fear, and disorder, and increases satisfaction and legitimacy among citizens. While law enforcement business is policing, jurisdictions have customers and community service is the product. Law enforcement agencies provide a plethora of services to their communities, and those communities

are consumers of the services we provide. In addition, within the communities that are served is a broad range of different groups that require a varying range of diverse services from law enforcement. Any city or county law enforcement agency across the United States generally provide services to at least four different groups within their jurisdiction ("Community Policing," 2006).

First of all, departments serve the citizens of their respective communities. Most all mission statements of law enforcement agencies across the nation will have some type of reference to service included in it. The service to the community entails serving the children, to the elderly, and large corporations in a jurisdiction down to the mom and pop shops. The second group that law enforcement officers serve is the violators within its community. The primary duty of officers is to protect and serve. Whether protecting and serving entails the issuance of a citation for a minor infraction, or the arrest of a murder suspect, the handling of the act should be orchestrated with professionalism and courtesy as much as is feasible ("Community Policing," 2006).

The third group that officers within a department serves is neighboring and other criminal justice agencies such as local, state and federal agencies in law enforcement. Also, adult and child protective services, probation offices, mental health services, prosecutors and courts alike. It is commonplace for agencies to assist each other routinely whether it be sharing of information, investigations, transport of prisoners, or training. The last, but certainly not least of the groups that officers of a department serve, is each other. Officers within a department must be service-oriented to assist each other with all things from a life or death situation, to covering shifts for one another. The most profound family bond is made in the field of law enforcement, and all

staff need to understand this concept. This goes throughout all units within a department. They are customers of each other, and should serve each other accordingly ("Community Policing," 2006).

A study conducted in 2014 systematically reviewed existing research on community service-oriented-policing to identify its effects on crime, disorder, fear, citizen satisfaction, and police legitimacy (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett, 2014). In the study, it was found that community service policing strategies reduced citizens' perception of disorderly conduct and significantly raised overall citizen approval. 65 independent assessments were used to measure outcomes prior to and post community service-oriented-policing implementation. The assessments revealed 27 instances where community service-oriented-policing directly and indirectly led to a 5% to 10% greater odds of reduced crime. 16 of the 65 experiments indicated that community service-oriented-policing was in direct correlation with a 24% increase in the odds of citizens perceiving improvements in the reduction of disorderly conduct. 23 of the appraisals measured citizen overall satisfaction with local law enforcement, and they revealed that community service-oriented-policing programs were effective just under 80% of the cases tested. Furthermore, citizens in communities tested were almost 40% more likely to be satisfied with the work of the police under the community service-oriented-policing philosophy (Gill et al, 2014).

Another study was done in 2003 that studied the effects of the service-based community policing model in relation to citizen's fear of crime. The study concentrated on 12 cities; Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Missouri; Knoxville, Tennessee; Los Angeles, California; Madison, Wisconsin; New York City, New York; San Diego,

California; Savannah, Georgia; Spokane, Washington; Springfield, Massachusetts; Tucson, Arizona; and Washington, D.C. The study revealed that, in the 12 cities that were involved in this assessment, citizens expressed a much greater satisfaction with law enforcement after the community service-oriented model of policing was implemented than before (Scheider, Rowell, & Bezdikian, 2003).

Another affirmative purpose for implementing the service-quality-oriented approach to policing is that the long term effect of the implementation of this philosophy results in an increase in the communities' property values. According to Levitt (as cited in Pope & Pope, 2012), during the 1990's and after the implementation of the *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*, homicide rates fell by 43%, violent crimes fell by 34%, and property crimes fell by 29%. During this same time, citizens saw a property value increase of between 7% and 19% (Pope & Pope, 2012). A similar study done on over 2800 house sales in the Jacksonville, Florida area showed that house prices in areas in which were considered high crime areas sold for approximately 5% less than a comparable house in the region but located in an area of Jacksonville that had a lower crime rate (Lynch & Rasmussen, 2001).

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

One of the chief complaints and barriers in implementing the service-oriented approach to policing is gaining officer buy-in and participation. Many times officers are very skeptical at adopting the philosophy. Officers often times look at the program as turning their duties into that of a "social worker with a badge" (Bobinsky, 1994). The concept of law enforcement officers looking at citizens as their customers is not a

popular idea, and not what most officers consider a concept of policing ("Community Policing," 2006).

Breaking the mindset of the traditional police role is not only beneficial, it is necessary. Through the service-oriented-policing model, officers become more closely involved with the citizens, which foster a more-cooperative constituency. Rather than being a social worker, officers are doing the job they have always done, just with more efficiency and effectivity. The public is more apt to confide in the officers, and information is more freely given to them on crimes that have occurred, as well as information on possible crimes that may be occurring that officers can proactively approach to prevent before they happen (Bobinsky, 1994).

Another barrier that could be construed to prohibit the effective deployment of the service-oriented approach to policing is cost (Bobinsky, 1994). Invoking an entirely new model and philosophy of policing throughout the department requires immense training and additional staff. The service-oriented approach will require officers to be much more pliable in their daily duties, doing things that they are not accustomed to doing under old policies and guidelines. There are not always enough officers to take off of a beat to assign to different neighborhoods for a few shifts to get to know the citizens on a personal level.

Calls still come in, and, under this service-oriented-policing approach, calls will increase (Bobinsky, 1994). While the studies show that the calls initially increase during the first implementation of the service-oriented-policing program, the crime rate does not (Bobinsky, 1994). Furthermore, in most cases, additional hired staff would be pleasing, but not always necessary. In San Jose, California in the 1990's, Chief Joseph

McNamara led his city to be named the safest city in America (Balko, 2014). Chief McNamara was an early proponent of community service-oriented-policing, and implemented it in his department in the 1980's.

In addition, effective community service-oriented-policing can actually reduce the amount of work required by officers to yield better results. In 2014, it was reported that since 2011, New York City stop and frisk events by New York Police Department (NYPD) officers have dropped by 94%, but there has been no change in the crime rate during that period (Bump, 2014). In addition to these rebuttals, as stated before, effective community policing implementation and the reduction of fear and crime as a result creates gains in real estate values, which results in overall fiscal prosperity over time for the community (Pope & Pope, 2012).

RECOMMENDATION

The benefits of police agencies embracing and implementing the service-quality-oriented approach to policing greatly outweighs the counter arguments. Over the last few decades, the traditional law enforcement model has shown to be more impersonal, less effective and more costly (Greene, 2000). Law enforcement organizations have increased liability due to continued use of force issues, and the continued lack of training in de-escalation techniques.

Beginning in the 1970's, law enforcement academies have taught a warrior-style mindset (Kindy, 2015). Police departments have then sent officers into the field with a use of force identity of that of a warrior. Officers go into each call with that mindset, which is a "conquer and win" type of mindset. Many times, that attitude only escalates things farther, which results in a use of force that may be justified, but might not have

been necessary (Kindy, 2015). Research has shown that the service-oriented-policing models are successful at reducing crime while improving police legitimacy within the community and gaining public support (Katz, Webb, & Schaefer, 2001).

Property value increase can be a great selling point for the implementation of a service-oriented approach to policing (Pope & Pope, 2012). The effects of quality law enforcement in a community cannot be simply be measured in the reduction in crime rate alone. An across-the-board study shows that efficacy in policing reduces crime rates, raises the economy, and elevates property values in the community in which it serves (Scheider, Spence, & Mansourian, 2012). These benefits can be seen by the implementation of a service-oriented approach to policing in most any populous. While the timeframe and rate of adjustment varied from neighborhood to neighborhood, studies showed positive change throughout the range. (Scheider, Spence, & Mansourian, 2012). In addition, a study done in New York City showed that commercial property values decreased significantly throughout the tested areas based on the amount of crimes reported versus the value being substantially higher for similar commercial properties in areas with lesser reported crime (Lens & Meltzer, 2016)

Gaining officer buy-in and participation can be difficult when implementing a service-oriented approach to policing. Many officers balk at the mention of implementing the service-quality-based model of policing within departments. It is widely believed by street level officers and front line supervisors that the program is a politically driven program that takes the place of much more important training in the academy. Many officers assert that the kinder and gentler methods that service-oriented-policing teaches causes officers to get hurt and/or killed (Borrello, 1998). In contrast, statistics

have shown that the less aggressive service-oriented approach to policing is actually safer and results in less use of force reports by officers when compared to the traditional methods (Kindy, 2015).

The cost of implementing a service-quality-based policing model is a change in the entire mindset of modern policing, and can be done with minimal extra capital than departments currently function on (McKee, 2001). Surveys have been created that allow law enforcement agencies to implement the program without the financial discomfort of having to hire professional researchers or auditors (McKee, 2001). These surveys scale the effectiveness of the implemented program on vital success factors within the community such as citizen quality of contact with police, community perceptions of crime and disorder, individuals' personal fear, and overall community cohesion as a result of the program (McKee, 2001). Overall, a shift in the methodology and philosophy of the modern day policing model is in order. Thus, law enforcement agencies nationwide should begin to foster and implement a service-quality-oriented approach to policing.

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