

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

COMMUNITY ORIENTED, PROBLEM SOLVING POLICING
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to explore community based problem oriented policing and its implications for criminal investigations. Community, neighborhood or problem oriented policing has caused practitioners to take long hard looks at the patrol officer and management positions. In order to develop strategies to deal with chronic problems officers roles are being expanded, as well as that of police managers. Systems also are changing, but what about the detective? How is the criminal investigators role different in community policing? A specific intent of this paper is to provoke thought and stimulate interest in changing this professions traditional ideas about the criminal investigator.

Throughout this country police agencies of all sizes are re-thinking methods of service delivery. The entire profession is undergoing what some call a "quiet revolution". There are three reasons why these changes are taking place¹.

1. Citizen disenchantment with police services.
2. Research conducted during the 1970's.
3. Frustration with the traditional role of the police.

Many police agencies have taken critical internal looks at their operations and asked themselves "how can we better serve our communities?". Although police departments have given different names to the change taking place in the police profession, the results are the same. More and more police agencies are adopting a community oriented, problem solving

approach to dealing with crime and social problems. Agencies attempting to modify their operations to overcome frustrations and negative research are turning to processes that:

- promote increased community interaction,
- social/crime problem identification and resolutions,
- role changes at the operational and management levels to facilitate these changes.

According to George Kelling:²

Citizens are disenchanted with police tactics that keep police remote and distant. Working and middle class communities of all races are demanding increased collaboration with police in determination of police priorities in their neighborhoods. Many merchants and affluent citizens have turned to private security for service and protection. Police are losing its market share to private security.

Research about preventative patrol, rapid response to calls for service and investigative work have all been discouraging. Research into criminal investigation effectiveness suggest that detective units have been poorly administered and not very effective.

The patrol officer has been frustrated with his/her traditional role in policing. Patrol has been what officers do until they become detectives or are promoted. High status for police practitioners went to detectives. Getting busted to patrol has been a constant threat to police managers or detectives who fail to perform by some standard of judgement. It is doubtful that failing patrol officers ever get threatened with being busted to the detective unit.

Just as police officers, managers and support functions must change within a police department to accomplish community/problem oriented policing,

so must the role of the criminal investigator. Police departments during the last few decades have become highly centralized and specialized in attempts to combat the rising crime problems. Criminal investigators have become very specialized. Most departments are structured so that investigators are crime specialists and area generalists. To properly consider future change and the impact of community policing on criminal investigations it is necessary to look back and consider the evolution of criminal investigations since the turn of the century in order to understand why change is currently necessary.

History

Political Era (1900-1930)

The Political Era can best be described as a time when organizational structures were loose and management was minimal. Peacekeeping was the primary orientation. Corruption was wide spread, managers were amateurish and most police organizations were politically vulnerable.³

Detectives around the turn of the century enjoyed considerable autonomy. "The political machines which ran the cities often ran the police departments. Detectives not only mixed with the criminal element but sometimes regulated criminal enterprise for the benefit of the local politicians and themselves."⁴ Police officers and detectives were more loyal to politicians than to their departments and the community. Major reforms lead to the creation of Civil Service Systems to take politics and corruption out of police work by the end of the "Roaring Twenties".⁵

Professional Era (1930-1970)

During this time period the central mission was crime control. Centralized organizational structures were predominate. Responsibilities become highly specialized. There was a heavy emphasis on technology and organizations were semi-military in nature. Discipline of officers became a major issue during this era and anti-corruption/politics initiatives began.

Police departments became more technically sophisticated in investigating crime.

One of the first empirical studies of criminal investigations came from the professional era. In 1965, the Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice Report contained findings from a study conducted by the Institute of Defense Analysis in conjunction with the Los Angeles Police Department.

The Commissions Task Force Report indicates that 25 percent of all crimes reported to the police resulted "in arrest or other clearances".⁶ Of those cleared, seventy-five percent were cleared by arrest, 90 percent made by patrol officers. The most important factor in clearance was determined to be whether or not a suspect was named in the initial report. If the suspect was neither known to the victim nor arrested at the scene of the crime the chances of him being arrested are slim.⁷

Program Policing (1970's)

During this era policing became more reactive to issues, more highly specialized and programmatic. We saw an increase in directed activities and the development of areas of expertise. Short term tactical decisions were developed to deal with problems during this era. Further studies of criminal investigations were conducted.

A 1970 study by the New York City Rand Institute found that a substantial amount of detectives times were wasted on the investigation of cases that could not be solved. The conclusion was that cases should be selected for follow-up investigation based on the likelihood of possible solution.⁸

In 1972 the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) received a grant from the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to develop criteria from an analysis of burglary cases for six police agencies in Alameda County, California. The purpose of the study was to determine the predictability of whether or not a particular burglary case would be solved if assigned. Results indicated that the model correctly predicted from 67 to 90 percent of the investigative outcomes. The SRI Report demonstrated that if basic information on burglary cases was collected from the witness or victim within one hour of the time of the incident, the potential for successful case solution was increased by 50 percent. According to Greenberg and Wasserman:⁹

All criminal cases do not have an equal potential for solution; a large number of cases solve themselves when particular investigative elements are present; in the absence of these elements certain cases should be screened out of the investigative process. These conclusions lie in direct contrast to traditional investigative strategy which supports active investigations, to varying degrees of almost all criminal cases.

The model's accuracy rate in predicting investigative outcomes was found to be more than 90 percent in Peoria and 91 percent in Minnesota agencies. When tested in Oakland in 1975 the system used correctly predicted the outcome of follow-up investigations in 90 percent of the robbery cases. This achieved both of the objectives established for the research, (1) to ease the burden of investigators reviewing a high volume

of felony crime reports that have a low probability of successful clearance, (2) to determine the elements of information leading to offender identification and case solution by investigative personnel.

The most ambitious effort to assess case screening procedures involved the Police Executive Research Forums Research replication of the SRI Burglary Decision Model.¹⁰ Initiated in 1978 this effort involved 26 police agencies that were members of PERF. After analyzing 12,000 burglary cases it was determined that the prototype developed by SRI was very accurate in predicting the outcome of investigative effort 85 percent of the time.

In 1975 the Rand Corporations Study of The Criminal Investigative Process sought to describe "Investigative Organization and Practices" including how detectives spent their time and how crimes were solved.¹¹ Based on analysis of data collected, the findings revealed the work of detectives to be very different from that perspective projected by those who would glamorize investigative work. The Rand Study found that:

- Differences in investigative training, staffing workload and procedures appear to have no appreciable effect on crime, arrest, or clearance rates.
- The method by which police investigators are organized cannot be related to variations in crime, arrest, and clearance rates.
- Substantially more than half of all serious reported crimes receive no more than superficial attention from investigators.

- An investigator's time is largely consumed in review reports, documenting files, and attempting to locate and interview victims on cases that experience shows will not be solved.
- The single most important determinant of whether or not a case will be solved is the information the victim supplies to the immediate responding patrol officer. If information that uniquely identifies the perpetrator is not presented at the time the crime is reported the perpetrator, by and large will not be subsequently identified.
- Of those that are ultimately cleared but in which the perpetrator is not identified at the time of the initial report, almost all are cleared as a result of routine police procedures requiring no imaginative exercise of investigative experience and skill.
- Most Police Departments collect more physical evidence than can be productively processed.
- Latent fingerprints provide the only basis for identifying a suspect.
- In relatively few departments do investigators consistently and thoroughly document the key evidentiary facts that reasonably assure that the prosecutor can obtain a conviction on the most serious applicable charges.
- Failure to document thoroughly may contribute to a higher case dismissal rate and weaken the prosecutors plea bargaining position.
- Victims desire to be notified officially as to whether or not the police have solved their case.
- Investigative strike forces have a significant potential to increase arrest rates for a few difficult target offenses.

"The effectiveness of criminal investigation would not be unduly lessened if approximately half of the investigative effort were eliminated or shifted to

more productive uses."¹² Rand Researchers suggested nine proposed reforms for improved investigative productivity:

- Reduce follow-up investigation on all cases except those involving the most serious offenses.
- Assign generalist-investigators (who would handle the obvious leads in routine cases) to the local operations commander.
- Establish a Major Offenders Unit to investigate serious crimes.
- Assign serious-offense investigations to closely supervised teams, rather than to individual investigators.
- Strengthen evidence-processing capabilities.
- Increase the use of information processing systems in lieu of investigators.
- Employ strike forces selectively and judiciously
- Place post-arrest (i.e., suspect in custody) investigations under the authority of the prosecutor.
- Initiate programs designed to impress on the citizen the crucial role he plays in crime solution.

While these studies were being conducted, other cities were experimenting with procedural and management techniques to improve criminal investigations. These agencies shared a number of common concerns that reinforced recommendations from Rand and SRI, including the following:¹³

Increased patrol officer involvement in investigative functions.

Increased patrol officer and detective cooperation.

Utilization of some form of early case closure.

Increased cooperation between police and prosecutor.

Studies of "Team Policing" began in the late 1970's. The studies produced mixed results including¹⁴:

Team areas (decentralized) made a greater percentage of arrests for larcenies, burglaries and robberies than non-team (centralized);

Team areas showed a greater number of on-scene arrests and follow-up investigation arrests than non-team areas;

Team investigators gathered more information during follow-up investigations and seemed to use this information better than non-team investigators;

Team policing produced a higher clearance by arrest rate than either a fully or partly centralized approach;

There were no differences between team and non-team areas in terms of the ability to obtain descriptions of suspects from witnesses during preliminary investigations; and

There were no differences between the team and non-team areas in terms of arrests that resulted in prosecutions.

A response to remedy the "investigative inefficiencies" outlined in the Rand and SRI Reports resulted in the development of a national program to help law enforcement agencies more effectively manage criminal investigations. Although representatives from the agencies involved in Managing the Criminal Investigation process indicated the program was successful, analysis of findings were less encouraging. While the initial test of MCI

failed to produce more than it promised, it did provide a milestone for future development.¹⁵ Greenberg and Wasserman indicate that the implementation of MCI be viewed as an ongoing process. They suggest several "Conditions for Success" in implementing MCI. They are:

- Commitment from Top Management
- Training
- Call Screening System
- Data System and Analysis
- Cost Considerations

An important component of MCI included expanding the responsibilities of patrol officers in the investigative process. This change from tradition required patrol officers to perform more comprehensive "initial investigations". It also included latitude to seek "early case closures" through following leads obtained during the initial investigation throughout the arrest, or telling the victim that further investigation was unlikely in the event of no meaningful evidence.

The 1970's ended with detectives feeling threatened because of managements interest to better account for the detectives time and activities, develop a case screening process and the expansion of the police officers role to perform some follow-up investigations.

In 1979 Herman Goldstein introduced "Problem-Oriented Policing", identifying those locations and or individuals who generate a high volume

of calls for service or repetitive calls and developing proactive strategies to eliminate the problem.¹⁶

Problem Oriented Policing (1980's)

The 1980's have seen many police agencies attempting to develop processes, to deal with increasing problems in our neighborhoods, and to rethink the method of service delivery to accomplish this mission. Police officers role were expanded and community interaction was promoted. Causes to problems were more closely analyzed and positive changes were seen in departmental processes and systems. In 1980 a continued closer look at criminal investigations occurred, with the Police Executive Research Forum initiating a two year comprehensive study to determine how much the preliminary and follow-up investigation contributed to the solution of burglary and robbery cases.¹⁷ The research challenged previous research that questioned the role of the detective and the value of follow-up investigations. The research suggests the work of both patrol officers and detectives are equally important toward the solution of cases.

In 1987 Rossman identified things departments can do to improve the quality of investigations. They are:¹⁸

- An emphasis by an agency's top manager that improving the quality of investigations be established as a high-priority goal.
- Using measures of investigative quality in selection, assignment, rotation system, work load management, paperwork reduction and improved report preparation.

- Improved feedback from the prosecutor and the courts.
- The transmission of the police managements commitment to quality investigation throughout the department.

In 1987, the Houston Police Department conducted an Executive Session to consider the integration of investigative operations into Neighborhood Policing. The report of that executive session prepared by Bill Bieck and Timothy Ottmeier, under the direction of Chief Lee P. Brown offers a very comprehensive look at criminal investigations from a historical, immediate, and futuristic perspective. The report suggest that consideration be given to the development of Interactive Service Units, a decentralized team of officers and investigators working closely with local communities and a group of investigative crime analysts, to solve community problems.¹⁹

Community Oriented Policing (1990's)

At the present time the police profession continues to struggle to identify alternative methods of service delivery. Agencies more and more are turning to community policing as opposed to conventional policing models used the past few decades. Major cities are changing organizational systems to support this change. Performance evaluation, training and communications systems, as well as the role of criminal investigators are changing. The remainder of this report will address the implications of change as it applies to criminal investigations and community oriented/problem solving policing.

Why We Need to Change

Departmental segregation has by now become an almost predictable problem of community policing. In some communities specialized units handle "community policing" activities. They may be attached to decentralized commands, but they "do their own thing" and are not made a part of patrol or criminal investigation activities. They may devote all their time to crime prevention activities not patrol emergency response or crime problems. On the other hand if community policing is given to operational units to carry out such as patrol operation, community policing may be neglected in favor of traditional activities. For community policing to be successful thinking executives have to figure out how to integrate the crime prevention initiatives of community policing with the investigative, crime control activities of traditional policing. Community policing makes a difference when it is something everyone does, when it represents a philosophy of police service, not when it is carried out by a group of specialists in a designated command.²⁰

The entire agency, patrol, investigations and all support services must share the same departmental values of policing to effectively carry out the police mission in any city.

When change occurs in the philosophical approach to the delivery of police services in one part of the department it automatically effects other operational functions and support services of all other units. A major change in patrol operations. effects criminal investigations and the communications division, and vice versa. Therefore when a police agency decides to commit itself to community policing it should do so department wide and not limit the change to a special group or patrol operations.

The traditional police response to a crime brought to its attention has been to send a patrol officer to take a report and conduct an initial investigation in an effort to identify offenders and apprehend them if they are known or close at hand. A crime report is generated and forwarded to a detective division for a follow up investigation. Over the years patrol and investigative operations have developed independently from each other under separate management systems.²¹

In most police departments operational resources have dwindled while needs for service have increased. For instance in Houston, Texas during the past five years calls for service dispatched have increased 70% while the department has lost approximately 500 officers.²² In most departments many officers spend an entire shift going from one call to another. At the same time, increased volumes of cases requiring investigation has placed investigative resources under increasing pressure. According to Peter Doone, Chief Inspector with the New Zealand Police:

"The results has been a system of prioritizing both patrol and investigative functions to the stage where response times for low priority calls for service are measured in hours and sometimes days, while the chances of a burglary or car theft offence without obvious leads receiving significant investigative attention are remote. A system developed and implemented in the 1950's and 1960's is creaking under the strain of the crime problems the the 1980's"

Chief Inspector Doone suggests two symptoms in particular illustrate this trend. First, an increasing polarity between the patrol and investigative functions within police department. Doone says patrol officers and their managers are frequently critical of the performance of detectives whom

they see as elitist, secretive and ineffective in solving crime. Perceptions of detectives working predominantly day shift, generally free from supervision and showing few obvious signs of productive activity exacerbate these feelings.²³ The second symptom is the trend in the use of clearance rates. Doone suggest that high volume offences which receive cursory attention have a low solvability rate. Lower volume, more serious offenses receive more investigative effort and have a significantly higher chance of being solved. A major influence on the effectiveness of clearance rates is management and direction of investigations and the methods by which investigations are conducted.

Traditional deployment of detectives within departments has been to establish a large centralized unit responsible for investigating a comparatively small number of the most serious crimes and some specialized classes of crime city wide.²⁴

Some decentralized units deployed at divisional stations investigate the less important crimes. Day to day contact with patrol officers is limited. This structure and development independent of patrol has not assisted attempts to penetrate the commonly perceived mystique of detective work. According to Greenberg and Wasserman:²⁵

Quite simply, the findings suggest that the value of the patrol officer in the initial investigation has been underestimated: the value of the detective in follow up activities has been overestimated; and the role of each can be redefined in a way that can improve the allocation of resources devoted to investigative activities.

Research pertaining to criminal investigations is clear, much investigative effort has been put into cases which have inherently low probability of being solved. Research further suggests that the detective function has been poorly directed and managed.

Research has shown that unless leads to the identity of the perpetrator are available at the time the crime is reported, the chances of solving it are slim. This is not always the case. Police managers can cite sufficient cases where despite the lack of leads at the offset, an effectively led team investigation can and does result in the identification and apprehension of the offender.²⁶

J. E. Eck, 1987, in an unpublished paper addressing Canadian Police Chiefs stated:²⁷

"Generally we find in our detectives branch some of our most talented people. I can't think of a single police agency in which someone is promoted to the detective branch because they are incompetent. They are usually there because they've been very good at something. So if detective units are not performing, it's not due to lack of talent or trained personnel. It's probably because of a lack of something else. How do we capture that talent? How do we get them to do something more worthwhile if indeed research is correct?"

What we need to do is break our wine jugs and allow our pumpkins to grow. Chris Braiden, Assistant Chief, Edmonton Police Department likes to tell the story of an old farmer who had a pumpkin patch.²⁸ He went out in the spring of the year and noticed a little pumpkin growing on the vine. He idly kicked it into the neck of a wine jug that was lying nearby. He

thought no more about it until he returned to the patch in the autumn of the year and, lo and behold, the pumpkin had grown up to the full size of the wine jug and taken on its shape. He took it home when sometime later his son, a school teacher, saw it and asked to take it to school. The school teacher wanted to show it to his students, so they could see what happens to them when they allow their minds and ultimately their lives to be molded by either people or things around them. The point of this story is simple. We need to bust our perceptual wine jug of traditional thinking about criminal investigations. We need to allow our selves to grow conceptually to consider alternative methods of managing the criminal investigative process. Future police department organizational models must be structured so that all units share in community interaction, problem identification and resolutions.

Implications For Change

When police departments act rather than just talk about community policing they tend to do four things²⁹:

- Organize community based crime prevention
- Reorient patrol activities to emphasize nonemergency servicing.
- Increase accountability to local communities.
- Decentralize command.

Added to this list should be the integration of all department operational functions and the reorganization of support units as necessary to accomplish community problem resolutions.

A review of the history of investigations and related research thus far reveals several implications and/or ideas that should be evaluated when considering community based problem oriented policing and the role of the criminal investigator. They are:

- Community interaction/citizen involvement
- Social/crime problem resolution
- Operational role changes
- Improved management of investigations, case screening, identification of solvability factors, case review and tracking analysis of crime trends
- Decentralization

- Generalist investigators
- Expanded role of police officers
- Team policing

Some cities have in the past, and presently are making attempts to integrate criminal investigators more directly into the community and to improve the operational linkage with patrolmen. Two cities in particular have attempted to completely re-organize their entire departments to accomplish decentralization, team policing and community problem identification and resolution. They are Dallas, Texas in the early 1970's and Houston, Texas in the late 1980's. There is much to be learned from the experiences gained in both cities. The interesting fact of the matter is that Dallas and Houston although approaching things differently confronted the exact list of issues referred to above. Both cities developed strategies to improve community interaction, identify and resolve community problems, change police officer and investigators roles, decentralize, and develop a team approach to policing. A review of both cities strategies and problems working through these issues will assist in developing future implementation efforts. Additional considerations of merging patrol and investigative operations, and a look at implications for organizational designs will assist in developing a perspective on community based, problem oriented policing and its implications for criminal investigators.

The Dallas Experience

The report of "The Dallas Experience Organizational Reform" written by Wycoff and Kelling³⁰ describes in detail the implementation problems and complications that arose when the Dallas Police Department attempted decentralization of criminal investigation and problem oriented policing in the 1970's. Dallas attempted to decentralize administrative and strategic decision making to levels more closely in touch with community and neighborhood needs, and policing by teams of officers trained to serve as generalist patrol officers who would also be enabled to acquire specialist skills such as investigation and conflict management.³¹ The neighborhood police team was to form the basic policing unit in Dallas. The project started in 1971, by 1973 resistance had become so great within the department that the program was discontinued.

Implementating the changes within the Dallas Police Department in the 1970's was a difficult task for a variety of reasons.³²

- Many of the existing men on the force represented the traditional view and method of policing.
- The existing police structure was set up to reward conformance and innovation conjured up a serious "failure" threat.
- All surrounding institutions that supported the department were not geared for change and might have in fact inhibited it.

- Skills needed to produce the vast change desired were not present in the department in sufficient abundance to affect the goal desired.

For those who have evaluated the Dallas Experience some believed the concepts were not given a true test, others believe the implementation failure was evidence that radical approach to organizational change was unacceptable.

Wycoff and Kelling believes the Dallas Experience serves as one proof among many that good causes cannot ensure their own victories.³³ They suggest more systematic attention be paid to the process of implementation. Program developers and managers sometimes do not recognize the critical importance of the implementation process. Walter Williams concludes:

Nothing comes across more strongly than the great naivete about implementation. We have got to learn that the implementation period for complex social problems is not a brief interlude between a bright idea and opening the door for service.³⁴

During the implementation phase of the Dallas plan there seemed to be at least four main pockets of resistance within the department.³⁵

- People at any level or in any function who sincerely disagreed with the Chiefs model of policing.
- Supervisors who feared their positions would be eliminated if the organization structure were flattened.
- Officers (primarily in specialized units) who feared decentralization would reduce the status and prerequisites of their jobs.

- Those people, some in high positions, who either felt vengeful because they had not been promoted by the Chief or who had some hope of replacing him if he should fail.

A general assessment was that some supervisors feared their positions would be eliminated and therefore misrepresented communications to the rank and file. A lack of clearly defined program goals and plans created problems for both the implementors and program evaluators in Dallas. According to Wycoff and Kelling:³⁶

Personnel reform tends to be volatile in any organization because it affects the conditions of an individuals work. In Dallas the existence of some units and organizational levels was threatened. Special units such as criminal investigations were to be decentralized to district stations, where they would be subsumed under the same command structure as patrol and several other units. This move might have eliminated the special operating style and status, as well as command positions of this unit.

The plan to flatten the departments organizational hierarchy seemed to pose a direct threat to lieutenants whose numbers were to be reduced, if not eliminated, and to officers below the rank who aspired to climbing the organizational ladders and already perceived the available promotions as to few in number. Many of the officers had reason to feel a vested interest in the existing structure and were in a position to attempt to sabotage any efforts to change it.

Communications seemed to be a major problem with the Dallas Experience. Many of the ideas were presented as goals without a clear deflation of their operational nature. This tended to be confusing. Attempts to communicate through the chain of command were destined to failure because some supervisors, who were key links in the communication process felt threatened by the plan. The chain of command did not provide reliable information, the chain of command also did not clearly communicate the substance of the program to the

rank and file. Because the officers were getting mixed messages from assistant and deputy chiefs there was a need for the chief to establish a more direct means of communication with the officers. Aware of their jealousy and power to sabotage, the assistant chiefs were reluctant to delegate responsibility to the officers and consequently centralized many decisions which ordinarily should have been made at lower levels of the organization.

Another problem in Dallas was that the department leaders had little experience with planning and managing innovation. They used the trial and error method under conditions of substantial pressure. Also there was jealousy of "outsiders" hired by the department to assist in implementation. There was also some implementors who were members of the resisters. Some tried to carry out programs they did not believe in, others quietly attempted to sabotage programs for the same reasons.

The message to be learned from the Dallas Experience is that an agency should seriously plan for the implementation of radical organization reform. In Dallas, efforts were made to begin making programs operational before they were fully designed. Dallas spent several months developing the conceptual details of the program and very little time planning for implementation. The Dallas program was a good example in which good ideas were not given a significant test, because of poor or nonexistent planning for implementation.

Although Dallas did not succeed in all that was attempted toward decentralization and community team development, Wycoff and Kelling believe that managers and supervisors at all levels gained experience, skills

and wisdom, and that officers are more accustomed to new ideas and practices.

Ken Haben, a sergeant with the Dallas Police Department recently stated that Dallas functions in a modified version of decentralization. Currently Dallas has partially decentralized some investigators to substations, but they continue to be managed by centralized managers. These burglary and theft detectives responsible for reactive responsibilities, work closely with decentralized detectives responsible for proactive enforcement and surveillance of burglary activities. Haben believes that burglary and theft investigations could be more effectively managed if the investigation resources were completely decentralized.³⁷

The Westside Story

The Houston Police Department, in 1987, opened the first of several decentralized Command Stations. A decision was made to decentralize criminal investigations along with other functions. At this same time Houston also implemented "Neighborhood Oriented Policing". The Houston "NOP" philosophy promotes community interaction, problem identification, planning and organizing resources to solve and prevent crime and social problems.

The integration of the Houston Police Department's Westside Patrol and investigative operations was not easy. As a matter of fact Houston is struggling with the same issues that Dallas Texas confronted during the late 1970's when that department attempted decentralization, team policing and role changes on the part of investigators.

Initially the Westside patrol operations function received most of the attention and decentralized investigators operated identical to that of their centralized counter parts. Over a three year period the Westside Criminal investigators evolved from crime specialist and area generalist to area specialist and crime generalist. The Westside Investigators have geographical areas of responsibilities. Those areas coincide with patrol officers beats and neighborhood assignments. Patrolmen and investigators were initially managed by separate lieutenants, but currently are managed by the same lieutenant, who is responsible for a police district, its crime problems and both patrol and investigative personnel. It is intended that

the patrol officers, detectives, patrol sergeants and crime analysts will develop into teams of interactive service units.³⁸ Working as team members with the same area of responsibility and concern for crime problems in that area, patrolmen and detectives interacting with concerned citizens will have a positive impact on the resolution of community problems.

Decentralization is gradually occurring in Houston as command stations are constructed. When the fifth and final command station is constructed Houston's complete decentralization plan is expected to be accomplished.

Houston has not avoided the implementation issues identified in the Dallas Experience. Houston also has had difficulty implementing decentralization of the criminal investigative function and support units because of the same reasons identified in The Dallas Experience. All operation and support functions initially were to be decentralized and placed under the jurisdiction of the Westside Command Station not just criminal investigations. Although personnel have been assigned to the jail, property room, crime lab and vehicle maintenance at Westside, they continue to be managed by centralized commanders who are very reluctant to release control.

The similarities between what Dallas attempted in the 1970's and what Houston is slowly managing to accomplish in the late 1980's is decentralization, team policing by integrating patrol and investigative operations, improving community interaction, and community problem

resolution. The difference in implementation approaches of the two cities is that Dallas attempted a revolutionary approach while Houston is attempting an evolutionary process. Both approaches have pro's and con's but Houston appears to be slowly accomplishing the things that Dallas bravely attempted to bring to the police profession in the 1970's.

A very important decision police managers will make is to approach the implementation of change from the revolutionary or evolutionary perspective. There are significant dangers in each. An attempt at evolution in the wrong environment carries the risk new policies and directions will be swamped by intransigence and prejudice and not be allowed the opportunity to prove their merits. Conversely attempts at revolution where it is unnecessary involve the risk that many potential allies of the new model can become disillusioned and demotivated by precipitate actions. There is also considerable danger through inaction.

Merging Patrol and Investigative Operations

Patrol operations of most department still remain centralized. They also tend to focus on specific time frames (shifts) rather than defined areas. The common denominator of both investigation and patrol operations is that they react to incidents, either calls for service or investigations after the fact. Random patrol and random investigation cause random results.

Patrol and investigative operations tend to work largely as separate entities under different management systems. Instead of consolidating resources and approaching policing as one issue, each has selected a part of the whole and have attempted to deal with it independently.

One of the most critical intra-agency relationships in a police department is that of the investigative and patrol functions. To operate efficiently, each function should be highly dependent on the other. Yet this is often one of the most strained points of exchange within law enforcement agencies.³⁹

The patrolmen functions in an uncertain hostile atmosphere with the ambitious, often unpopular, mandate to maintain order. The detective, however, usually enjoys higher prestige and higher pay, more interesting work and more freedom, and has a better sense of what is expected of him. When one reflects upon these difference it does not seem strange that conflicts may arise between operational units.⁴⁰

Traditionally patrol units have been given responsibility only for preliminary investigations or complete responsibility for investigation of "minor" offenses. At some point prior to the conclusion, responsibility for investigation of serious crimes is handed off to the investigative specialist. The patrolman feels he is left with only routine and mundane investigations, while the detective investigates the interesting or spectacular cases. The patrol officer relegated to the role of "report taker" may see little personal incentive to conduct a thorough and meticulous preliminary investigation or to forward any information not specifically required by procedure for the ultimate closure and will receive no credit for a subsequent arrest made by the detective bureau.⁴¹

A lack of common identity may result in a "we versus they" relationship between the groups. This relationship clearly is not conducive to close cooperation and exchange of information needed for combined crime reduction efforts.⁴² According to Joseph J. Staft:

A means of establishing strong personal and operational relationships between patrol and investigative personnel is the adoption of a team policing model. The term "team policing" means combining the patrol and investigative functions within one geographically based organizational unit.⁴³

No longer can investigative and patrol operations function in separate vacuums. Both entities are vitally important in our criminal justice system. The challenge for police managers is to identify new organizational models to accomplish the integration of patrol and investigative function in a decentralized mode, working with citizens in neighborhoods to solve and prevent crime problems.

Implications for Organizational Design

There are several approaches to consider when designing or redesigning organizations. Three broad styles will be reviewed taking the patrol officer and investigators roles into consideration. We will look at the classical, human relations, and revisionist styles or organizational designs, and a specific model recommended by Peter Doone, Chief Inspector with the New Zealand Police.⁴⁴

Organizations, whose division of labor are structured according to a classical approach are based on purpose, process, clientele, place and time. Examples of police subunits organized on the basis of purpose of function are investigative bureaus, homicide, robbery, burglary, vice squads and traffic enforcement units. Difficulties arise when purposes overlap too conflict. A patrol unit and a specialized investigative unit may be jointly charged with responsibility for the same task. This type of co-responsibility for the same results negates the advantage of specialization by purpose. It may result in the two units working at cross-purpose, refusing to share critical goals and duplicating efforts. Competition becomes dysfunctional and cooperation and communication between the patrol and investigative units are impaired.

Organization by process is most advantageous for grouping skills which require a high degree of technology or long periods of training and experience to gain proficiency, such as helicopter pilots, canine handlers and identification specialist. Process specialization permits attainment of

the highest levels of proficiency in technical skills. The downside is that coordination problems are increased each time a new specialized process is added onto the organizational structure.

Certain police functions are grouped according to the clientele they serve, such as a juvenile unit. The clientele based unit must depend on cooperation of the process specialist for assistance.

Due to differences in orientation, goals and values of the specialist he may experience difficulty in communicating with other members of the department. Uniformed field patrol officers may not identify with the specialized officers and may not feel a fraternal obligation to share street acquired knowledge with the specialist. Specialized investigators also withhold information from patrolmen.

Division of work by geographical area occurs in almost all police departments. Most are divided into patrol districts or precincts. Precincts may or may not have their own investigative personnel. According to Staff communications and cooperation can be improved between patrol officers and investigators assigned within the same geographical boundaries without competing against each other. Both patrol and investigative officers may feel a common responsibility for providing service if assigned the same geographical area. A uniformed beat officer may possess enormous amounts of information about an area within his beat boundaries, but if a detective has responsibility for investigating cases throughout the city, it is

likely that the investigator will fail to solicit information from the officer which might assist his investigation.

While much of the investigators work must be performed during "business hours" when witnesses, victims, and records are available, some consideration must be given to the need for the investigator to communicate with the officer who made the original report and did the initial investigation.

A police agency which is solely dependent on the classical form of organization limits development of critically needed channels for lateral communications between patrol officers and investigative specialist. As each specialized subunit is created, additional communication problems develop. Subunits are likely to become preoccupied with their own objectives instead of working toward the agency's overall goals.

The human relations school suggests that the influence of the group is stronger than organizational rewards encouraging exchange of information. In an effort to improve patrol-investigative communications, the administrator should consider ways to alter group norms and attitudes, depend on informal as well as formal leadership to encourage cooperation, and not rely exclusively on formal organizational channels to process information.

The modern or revisionist school of organization attempts to combine the classical and human relations schools. Revisionist recognize that various

types of social groups interact and may or may not cooperate or share the same values. In general, they recognize that organizational theory must take into account such factors as purpose, goal, status, power differentials, and hierarchy.⁴⁵

The Lawrence and Lorsh theory of organizational design is known as Differentiation-Integration (D&I) model.⁴⁶ The concept of differentiation can perhaps be explained by comparing the operational differences of a patrol unit and an investigative unit. Patrol is more structured, standardized by formal roles and procedures and is responsible for enforcement activities within strictly defined beat boundaries. The investigative unit has informal methods of operation, are free to travel or react spontaneously to follow the course of investigations to assemble information and build cases over a long period of time.⁴⁷

The problem of achieving integration between differentiated units becomes crucial. Each group evolves its own task-related characteristics and different points of view which complicate the coordination process. This often generates serious intergroup problems symptomized by destructive competition, secretiveness and hostility. The integration process must cope with these issues to achieve unity of effort.⁴⁸

When units are highly differentiated it is more difficult to achieve integration than when the individuals have similar ways of thinking and behaving. If there is a requirement for close cooperation, emphasis must be placed on the problem of achieving high integration.⁴⁹

There are several ways to improve the communications between patrol and investigative operations. The simplest way is to develop rules, and programs, or the development of a formal hierarchy with specific avenues for communication. The weakness of these systems is that information channels become overloaded. To prevent overloading of hierarchical channels, lateral information channels must be developed. The simplest form of lateral relations is direct contact between two people who share a problem.⁵⁰ This means simply permitting direct contact and dialogue between officers assigned to patrol and those assigned to investigations. All too often, when investigative and patrol units are separated, investigators fail to solicit information actively and patrol officers fail to volunteer it. Thus, no communication takes place. To obtain greater capability for exchanging information between patrolmen and investigators they can be assigned to the same organizational unit, by creating task forces or permanent teams.⁵¹ A task force or team under the direction of a single supervisor is a reasonable consideration for the patrol and investigative functions.

Peter Doone suggests that when thinking of ways to integrate the investigative function with community and problem solving concepts two things need to be considered:

- The tension between centralized management and control of resources versus a decentralized structure.
- The tension between investigators, their place in the organization and what they stand for versus the balance of

the police organization and the community they work within.

He concludes that there is a reasonable consensus that a decentralized mode of operation utilizing community policing and problem solving strategies offers a substantially better way of providing police services.

Peter Doone suggests this can best be accomplished by using a three tier MCI model, recommended by Greenberg and Wasserman in 1979.⁵² The model consists of:

- A Centralized Unit responsible for:

Crime analysis on a region basis to identify crime problems.

Strategic planning and directing of resources for crime problems with more than a local impact.

Provisions of expertise and management resources to help local commanders with special problems.

Investigation of a small number of high impact or politically sensitive offenses.

Auditing function to oversee local investigative tactics and results to ensure proper standards are being maintained.

- Decentralized Units, based in and managed from district stations, with three main functions:

Crime and problem analysis of local problems, and maintain liaison with central, also repeat call analysis to determine why the police are called to some locations more frequently.

Strategic planning and directing of resources to impact local crime and other problems.

A localized audit and control function.

- Decentralized units, based in and managed from defined community areas, with patrol, problem solving and investigative functions.

Handle all calls for service and investigations at local level, plus community interaction. Ideally to consist of mix of investigators and patrol officers working together to solve problems.

Doone believes it is desirable to substantially eliminate the former specialist investigative role in favor of a more generalist role with elements of specialization.

He suggests there needs to be the creation of a New Model of police officer, one who embodies the positive aspects of the investigative role with that of the patrol officer who applies his/her skills in a broader community policing problem solving role. Doone suggests that redefining the officers role provides several opportunities:⁵³

A problem analysis and planning task to include but not limited to crime problems.

A decentralized management role where responsibility is broadened to encompass all problems in an area.

- Enhanced role of the patrol officer to incorporate investigative functions.

A flexible tactical unit which responds to a variety of problems based on diagnosis and planning.

Conclusion

Too little attention has been paid to investigative functions of police departments when discussing community oriented problem solving policing. As the expectations of citizens change so must the police agencies that serve the citizen. When change becomes necessary it is important to allow our minds to grow and not be inhibited by our conventional thought process. The traditional approach to police work has not been effective. Community/problem oriented policing is taking its place. The roles of the patrolmen, supervisors, managers, and yes, the detective are changing. Everyone in a police department must adhere to the values and mission of the department based on community identified needs and should work with citizens to combat crime that occurs and prevent future crime from happening.

Citizens as well as police agencies are dissatisfied with the traditional delivery of police services. Police managers seriously attempting to change are developing departments that promote increased community interactions, and the identification and resolutions of social and crime problems. They are doing this by reorganizing, decentralizing, and changing role responsibilities at both the operational and managerial levels. In addition to decentralizing operations, a much closer working relationship must be developed between the patrol officer and the criminal investigator.

The implications that community based, problem oriented policing has on the detective are many. When we take a look at the history of the criminal investigator, and if we agree with available research and learn from the experiences in Dallas and Houston, then there are several future implications to consider. First, the police officers role should be expanded to allow for more direct investigation in the initial follow up investigations and early case closure process. Second, rather than attempt to investigate every case, only those cases that survive a thorough screening and assignment process should be investigated. Third, crime trends should be analyzed by central and decentralized crime analysts, for assignment to teams of patrol officers and decentralized detectives. Fourth, investigators should be assigned geographical areas of responsibility that coincide with areas assigned to patrol officers. Fifth, detectives should be assigned proactive as well as reactive responsibilities. Just as a patrol officer responds to calls for service and identifies and resolves problems, the detective should investigate crimes and work with patrolmen and citizens to identify and resolve community problems.⁵⁴ The idea is not only to arrest violators but to prevent crime from happening in the first place. The future criminal investigator, rather than being a centralized crime specialist and area generalist will become a decentralized area specialist and crime generalist.

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