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**Intelligence-Led Policing: An Improvement for Law Enforcement and
the Community**

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ABSTRACT

Police agencies are looking to move away from the traditional view of law enforcement where departments rely on the reactive approach to policing. Many different policing models have been introduced to police departments in the United States to accomplish this task. A new strategy called intelligence-led policing looks to improve the use of criminal intelligence in a proactive effort to fight crime and discover threats. Law enforcement decision makers need an improved intelligence product for better planning. Police departments should implement the intelligence-led policing model in order to better serve their communities. A new strategy in law enforcement is needed due to the complexity of crime and the impact of terrorism in the United States. Intelligence-led policing would improve the sharing of intelligence within a department and between other law enforcement agencies. It would also improve a police department's use of resources. Kelling and Bratton stated, "Intelligence-led policing is crime fighting that is guided by effective intelligence gathering and analysis – and it has the potential to be the most important law enforcement innovation of the twenty-first century" (p.5).

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INTRODUCTION

A new strategy in law enforcement is intelligence-led policing. Information and data that moves through the process of analysis can become an intelligence product for a police agency. A popular definition of intelligence-led policing includes “the collection and analysis of information related to crime and conditions that contribute to crime, resulting in an actionable intelligence product intended to aid law enforcement...” (Carter & Carter, 2009, p. 12). Intelligence-led policing is certainly not the first model to address the need to move away from the traditional view of law enforcement. The new model seeks to improve on current law enforcement strategies with an emphasis on the analysis of information and the creation of an intelligence product (Carter, Phillips, & Gayadeen, 2014). Intelligence-led policing is “a strategic, future-oriented, and targeted approach to crime control, focusing upon the identification, analysis, and management of persisting and developing problems and risks” (De Lint, 2006, pg.1-6).

The origins for intelligence-led policing can be found in the UK during the late 1900s (Ratcliffe, 2008). Law enforcement leaders searched for a new strategy to address increasing levels of crime that was becoming increasingly complex. In addition, they were called to consider budget restraints, which meant fewer resources. A 1993 Audit Commission in the UK questioned the direction of law enforcement and clearly advised those agencies to focus on known offenders instead of general crimes (Carter, 2013). A new philosophy was developed which involved focusing effort and resources into a proactive response to their problems. From the commission’s points, a British National Intelligence Model was developed which dealt with the ongoing level of crime and provided a specific plan to be followed. The plan included the targeting of

offenders, management of dense crime areas, investigation of serial crimes, and the use of crime prevention (Carter, 2013). These issues along with the new strategy launched the policing model of intelligence-led policing.

In the US, traditional enforcement led many departments to rely on the reactive approach to policing. Police units responded to reported crimes where arrests were made or investigations were initiated. It was not possible to combat increasing levels of crime by continually hiring more police officers. This standard model of policing was found to be ineffective (Ratcliffe & Guidetti, 2007). The complexity of crime in the US continues to increase and with it the need for change. Law enforcement in the US went on to implement other models of policing such as community policing, CompStat, and problem-oriented policing. Community policing prioritized community relations and provided an avenue of citizen involvement in law enforcement. CompStat saw the use of statistics and the establishment of increased accountability among police commanders. Problem-oriented policing introduced the innovation of using crime analysis to assist with operations and planning (Ratcliffe, 2008). These differing models had their strengths and in many ways helped open the door for the consideration of intelligence-led policing. In the years following its start in the UK, intelligence-led policing found its way into consideration for law enforcement in the US. It is factual that the events of 9/11 and the beginning of the Homeland Security era increased the level of conversation and use of the new model (Ratcliffe, 2008). The need for various law enforcement agencies to compile intelligence information and share it with each other was highlighted during this time period. The intelligence-led policing model is a developing concept in the United States. The US version looks to identify threats in

addition to crime reduction (Carter, 2013). It will be for the approximately 18,000 agencies in the US to determine if the new model will continue to gain acceptance.

Intelligence-led policing has continued to develop and gain understanding in the United States. Intelligence-led policing is a philosophy where criminal intelligence is provided to law enforcement decision makers for use in strategy and planning. It is important that the process of crime intelligence follow a process. A department must then ensure its collection of data and crime information is extensive (Bureau of Justice Assistance, [BJA], 2005). The computer age and records management systems have supported this need. Beyond police records, departments will need to ensure the varied sources of information from surveillance, informants, and the public is collected (Ratcliffe, 2008). The information is then processed to eliminate false or useless information. Analysis can then be used to find meaning in the information. A Bureau of Justice Assistance (2005) article stated that “analysis includes synthesizing data, developing inferences or conclusions, and making recommendations for action based on the data and inferences” (p. 7). From this point, the information and data is an intelligence product for departments to disseminate and use in decision-making. The philosophy is intended to provide the decision makers with intelligence to assist in planning, strategic planning, and crime prevention (BJA, 2005).

POSITION

Police departments should implement the intelligence-led policing model in order to better serve their communities. The primary reasons for implementing intelligence-led policing are the complexity of crime and the impact of terrorism in the United States. A second reason to implement intelligence-led policing is that it was developed as a

means to share information within a department and between other law enforcement agencies participating in the sharing of intelligence. A final reason for implementation is that intelligence-led policing can improve a police department's ability to address all levels of crime and improve the use of resources in their area.

The implementation of the intelligence-led policing model is necessary because of the complexity of crime and the presence of threats including terrorism in the United States. In the past, law enforcement agencies have not had a significant ability to develop intelligence information or provide such training (Carter & Carter, 2009). The successful terrorist attacks against the United States of America on September 11, 2001, marked a point in history where US law enforcement can reference the necessity for improved intelligence capabilities for all agencies no matter what level (Jensen, Regens & Griffin, 2013). The Bureau of Justice Assistance documented it best when their report on intelligence-led policing recorded the statement "Law enforcement administrators can no longer afford to respond to contemporary and future problems with the 'solutions' of yesterday" (BJA, 2005, p. 2). The complexity of crime is vast and includes such common investigations as burglary and robbery, which now routinely overlap through multiple jurisdictions. Additional crimes, including identity theft and human trafficking, cross not only jurisdictions but also states and countries. Intelligence-led policing can help identify, track, and share criminal intelligence within an agency or among agencies. This model can also discover threats that might be facing an agency and its community. Depending on the threat, it could easily effect multiple communities or the entire nation. Threats can include organized crime groups dealing in the traffic of guns and drugs, or violence from extremist groups (Carter & Carter,

2009). The analysis of information can produce useful intelligence for law enforcement. Intelligence showing conditions for threats in a certain area or specific concerns for action. This initial information can provide facts on the presence of crime or threat of terrorism (Carter & Carter, 2009, p.317). In order to combat the increasingly complex nature of crime and real world threats to our communities, police agencies must achieve better use of our criminal intelligence product through intelligence-led policing.

A second reason to implement intelligence-led policing is that it was developed as a means to share information between law enforcement agencies participating in the sharing of intelligence (Carter & Carter, 2009). Author Ratcliffe (2008) commented in his book that “not only is policing beginning to think more strategically, but intelligence-led policing has also become the lynchpin to merge national security aims with local policing objectives” (p. 213). Through the movement towards intelligence-led policing, police agencies are making an intel investment into their departments. Other signs of information sharing are seen in the formation of Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS). By 2004, over 7,000 agencies or agency branches were members of the nationwide RISS network (BJA, 2005, p.5). Fusion centers have been formed in many states with more in development. Fusion centers provide intelligence to participating law enforcement agencies from their data analysis. Some departments choose to utilize liaison officers or invest in joint task forces in order to share and receive intelligence (Ratcliffe, 2008). A culture of information sharing is necessary to protect the United States and its communities (BJA, 2005). Intelligence-led policing is a means to the process of sharing.

Last of all, the implementation of intelligence-led policing can improve a police department's ability to address all levels of crime and improve the use of resources in their area. The analysis of a department's information and creation of usable intelligence can impact a wide spectrum of crimes or threats (Carter, 2013). Although this paper has highlighted those complex crimes and threats such as terrorism, a department can see benefit from this model in the production of intelligence on other crimes and threats. Other crimes would include burglary, vehicle theft, robbery and sexual assault. Threats may include intel on a planned protest, active shooter, or actions at a local event. There will definitely be various needs and issues depending on the size and location of the department (Carter, 2013). Decision makers are a definite recipient of the analyst's efforts in providing intel, but much of the initial information comes from the investigator on a case, the patrol officer checking beat, or the concerned citizen who contacts police dispatch (Ratcliffe, 2008). As the reported information is analyzed and interpreted, it can be provided to decision makers with possible strategies for a solution. Solutions could take numerous forms depending on the intelligence.

In the UK, the intelligence information was used to develop a plan. The plan included the targeting of offenders, management of dense crime areas, investigation of serial crimes, and the use of crime prevention (Carter, 2013). This type of planning in the US would provide agencies with a direct route to get the most from their police resources. Intel might identify a specific area where targeted directive patrol would be the appropriate resource. Intel can open the door to locations of possible drug sales or destinations of human trafficking. Anytime a higher level of the criminal organization

can be located and disrupted the better the impact. The use of intelligence in forming solutions will directly correlate to the best use of resources and a higher chance of reducing the noted level of a specific crime for that department. Law enforcement can only achieve a certain amount through the traditional police model of response, arrest, and prosecution (Ratcliffe, 2008). Decisions based on accurate intelligence can lead to the reduction, disruption, and prevention of crime. In doing so, the community sees the benefit with lower crime rates and a better use of police resources than the never-ending cycle of traditional policing.

COUNTER POSITION

It has been documented that the intelligence-led policing approach delivers procedures and frameworks which tend to put the intelligence analyst in a place to identify the problem and initiate the solution by directing officers who need only follow their direction (Alach, 2011). The criticism clearly indicates a concern that the analyst position has an overly dominant role in the model. The intelligence-led policing model does connect the constant flow of information through the analyst and the selection of targets for the decision maker. In this new philosophy, on-going plans are compiled and influenced by the crime analyst (Ratcliffe & Guidetti, 2007). The crime analyst plays a significant part in this model of policing. However, the idea of intelligence-led policing is that the decision makers determine the plan and assign priorities to the community's needs (Ratcliffe, 2008). The analysis of information is a necessary step in the intelligence-led policing model. This model needs constant involvement from numerous people to include analysts. Detectives, officers, civilian employees and the public play a continual role in addition to what is commonly a group of crime analysts who review

departmental information in the act of securing intelligence. The crime analyst position will continue to develop if a department adopts the intelligence-led policing strategy. In the new policing strategy, decisions are being made at different levels but it ensures that the ultimate direction flows from management.

Another documented concern with a new strategy such as intelligence-led policing is that those police cultures within a department will not accept the change (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 2012). Deukmedjian and De Lint (2007) stated mid-level managers were hesitant to embrace a new direction in policing due to a perceived loss of ownership. However, mid-level managers are important to the strategy of intelligence-led policing and will be an obvious part of the information flow. They will often see information being passed on for analysis. As with any supervisor, mid-level management will have a role in receiving direction and putting intel into use. Although this intelligence based model will have critics, those involved in the process should encounter the benefits if the system is given a chance to work. Mid-level managers are not prevented from being the decision maker and could find themselves making decisions based on intelligence and recommendations received. In a FBI National Academy study, mid-level managers from law enforcement agreed that an investment in crime analysis would be better served than one involving patrol or investigations (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 2012).

Intelligence-led policing has been introduced into US law enforcement, but it is unknown to what extent it has been adopted. There are departments that have evaluated the strategy, but no study has measured the number of agencies that have incorporated the model into their operations (Schaible & Sheffield, 2011). Intelligence-

led policing is described as a popular topic for police organizational change around the world. It has been said, “the usefulness of formal intelligence-led policing is questionable at best. There is no hard evidence that it has led to improvements in police effectiveness anywhere” (Alach, 2011, p. 94). With the number of law enforcement agencies in the United States, it will take time to further evaluate to what extent the strategy has been embraced and put into use. Other models of policing have been established in the US with varying views of success or failure. Ratcliffe (2008) stated, “The early developmental stages of intelligence-led policing for many police agencies will involve organizational changes and cultural shifts that are not well captured by quantitative data” (p. 211). The important consideration for the continued acceptance of intelligence-led policing is the continued need for improved intelligence to combat crime and better protect communities.

RECOMMENDATION

Kelling and Bratton (2006) stated, “Intelligence-led policing is crime fighting that is guided by effective intelligence gathering and analysis – and it has the potential to be the most important law enforcement innovation of the twenty-first century” (p. 5). This model has joined others in the goal of equipping agencies with a working strategy in comparison to the struggling effectiveness of the respond and arrest tactics of traditional policing. Intelligence-led policing seeks to better utilize intelligence information with the goal of crime reduction, crime disruption, and crime prevention (Ratcliffe, 2008).

The implementation of intelligence-led policing is necessary because of the complexity of crime and the impact of terrorism in the United States. Crime is an organized effort more than ever and routinely crosses jurisdictions. Terrorism has been

the wakeup call to a law enforcement system with many parts but little communication. Intelligence-led policing is a welcomed answer to the need for communication in that it is a means to share information between law enforcement agencies. Finally, intelligence-led policing is not just about communication and the war against terrorism. It is a model to improve a police department's ability to address all levels of crime and improve the use of resources in their area. This same system can address local crime sprees at the same time it monitors for possible threats.

It has been discussed that intelligence-led policing may encounter issues after being adopted by a department (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 2012). Issues such as the reluctance by mid-level management to embrace this strategy are problems based on the over-invested use of the crime analyst. Problems will be associated with any new model of policing. These specific issues are easily extinguished by feedback from law enforcement and by the clarification of roles involved in the intelligence-led policing model. A final comment involved the current inability to track the adoption of the new strategy by agencies across the nation. However, the need to better communicate intelligence will fuel the interest of these agencies. Research on the progress of this model will come in time.

All law enforcement agencies have a duty to improve the intelligence operations of their community and the nation. Departments across the nation have embraced different policing strategies for varying reasons. With the need for better intelligence information, there is a clear need for police departments to embrace this strategy and adapt their operations to support this new model. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (2005) stated, "Law enforcement administrators can no longer afford to respond to

contemporary and future problems with the 'solutions' of yesterday" (p.viii). Police departments should implement the intelligence-led policing model in order to better serve their communities.

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