CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THE ROLE OF THE POLICE IN CRIME PREVENTION

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Abstract: The authors examine the role of the police in crime prevention in the Canadian context, based on in-depth interviews with police officers in six police agencies across the country. They explore core policing functions and consider the role of the police in crime prevention. They discuss three recent studies of crime prevention practices in Canada, and focus in particular on Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD). The authors conclude that social development issues are not often seen as part of a core policing function. They argue that the police are in a unique position with respect to CPSD since they are well positioned to facilitate an integrated, multi-agency response to social problems. An alternative role for the police is discussed which would consolidate their law enforcement and crime prevention roles through the facilitation of an integrated problem solving approach based on partnerships with other service agencies.

A number of recent studies have examined the role of Canadian police agencies in crime prevention including programs and activities aimed at youth. In this article, we consider several types of crime prevention and then present a brief overview of recent Canadian research describing the role of the police in crime prevention. We then discuss the results of our own research on this subject that is based on interviews with police officers at different ranks, from six police agencies across the country. We conclude by considering the role that the police *could* play in crime prevention and how this might influence the future of policing in this country.

Crime Prevention Strategies

It is clear that the police in Canada have a long history of involvement in crime prevention activities (Vallée, 2010). Beginning with initial efforts at preventing previous offenders from reoffending, police involvement in crime prevention today encompasses a wide array of programs and activities. Sherman et al. (1997) identify the following as major varieties of crime prevention:

1. Numbers of Police
2. Rapid Response
3. Random Patrols
4. Directed Patrols
5. Reactive Arrests
6. Proactive Arrests
7. Community Policing

7a. Neighbourhood Watch
7b. Community-based Intelligence
7c. Police information about crime
7d. Police Legitimacy
8. Problem-oriented Policing
8a. Criminogenic commodities
8b. Converging Offenders and Victims

Many of these reflect routine police practices such as Random Patrols. Defined in this way, almost *everything* the police do could be considered crime prevention. In this article, we take a different approach. We are concerned with activities that have specifically defined and explicit crime prevention objectives. Defined in this way, the only explicit crime prevention program included in the above list is Neighbourhood Watch. The rest of the activities contribute to or represent traditional policing practices. Even Community Policing can be considered as an approach to policing rather than a crime prevention strategy. Thus, whether the quality and quantity of police-community contacts affects the level of crime in a community is the type of empirical question that Sherman and his colleagues are interested in. For our purposes, however, police-community relations are not primarily intended as a means of undertaking crime prevention. Rather, they represent a broader approach to the way policing services are designed and delivered.

The types of explicit crime prevention activities we have in mind include: (a) situational crime prevention strategies, of which target hardening and environmental design are important examples; (b) community crime prevention strategies, of which Neighbourhood Watch is an important example; and (c) Crime Prevention through Social Development, of which after-school programs and other recreational programs are examples.

Situational Crime Prevention Strategies

Situational crime prevention strategies are based on a concern with the immediate context within which crimes occur. They attempt to reduce the opportunity for crime, make the proceeds of crime less appealing, or make committing a crime potentially more expensive than it is worth. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, a common situational crime prevention strategy involves “target hardening” which is based on protecting the intended targets of crime through such measures as installing new and more effective locks. Other examples include social marketing campaigns to remind people to lock their cars, not to leave valuables in clear view, and not leave their keys in the ignition.

Situational strategies also promote increased surveillance to deter potential criminals. Installing Closed Circuit Television cameras reflects this surveillance component of situational crime prevention. The objective is to deter criminals by increasing the likelihood that they will be caught and prosecuted.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is another popular approach that incorporates situational crime prevention principles. In this case, efforts to reduce opportunities for crime are considered with respect to design features of the built

environment. Sightlines, lighting, access/egress points, and places to hide are all taken into account and altered to make the environment less attractive to would-be criminals. Notions of "defensible space" inform this approach and "safety audits" are performed to assess both public and private spaces for crime prevention purposes.

Other examples of situational crime prevention include: vehicle protection strategies (such as steering wheel locks, alarm systems, and vehicle tracking systems); Operation Identification in which private property is marked with the owner's identification to make it more difficult for thieves to sell, thereby making the property less attractive to steal; and Crime Stoppers which provides an anonymous "tip line" and rewards for information. Each of these examples of situational crime prevention requires a great deal of police involvement. In many cases, the police are the key players in programs such as Operation Identification and Crime Stoppers. They are typically involved in establishing them, mobilizing community support, and providing the administration, training, and information required to keep them going. It is doubtful whether these types of programs could operate in the absence of direct police involvement and ongoing support.

Community Crime Prevention Strategies

Community crime prevention, or neighbourhood crime prevention as it is often called, focuses on local identifiable entities such as neighbourhoods even when implemented on a city-wide basis. Community crime prevention can take a variety of forms and include numerous techniques. Examples of community crime prevention include Neighbourhood Watch, neighbourhood advocacy, Citizens On Patrol, and police-community involvement projects. Community crime prevention strategies seek to directly influence the levels of crime and fear of crime by helping to increase social cohesion in neighbourhoods in crisis and to provide them with increased social support and capacity to respond to crime.

Crime Prevention through Social Development

Over the past 15 years, Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) has gained increasing support and popularity in Canada, including within the police community. This approach to crime prevention is premised on going beyond dealing with immediate factors and addressing the root causes of crime. Most proponents of CPSD recognize the need for a balanced approach that includes elements of law enforcement, situational crime prevention, and CPSD. However, they emphasize the importance of addressing root causes including the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to crime. Root causes include such structural variables as poverty, unemployment, and marginalization, as well as a lack of social, recreational, and educational opportunities. Attempts to address these structural variables often require the cooperation of a variety of players in community-based, multi-agency, interdisciplinary responses. Thus, for example, after-school programs that attempt to provide a safe and pro-social environment for young people can reflect a CPSD approach. Such programs can include the participation of community members, community agencies such as the YM/YWCA or the Boys and Girls Club, schools, and the police. The objective is to provide young people with opportunities for safe and healthy recreation

during a time when many of them are unsupervised and at risk of involvement in dangerous or illegal behaviour.

Recent Studies of Crime Prevention in Canada

The overview presented above provides a brief description of various types of crime prevention activity. During the past few years, several research projects examining crime prevention practices in Canada have been completed. Three are of particular relevance here since they provide some insights into the nature and extent of crime prevention activity. Furthermore, they contain information regarding police involvement in crime prevention. These include a study by Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) undertaken for the federal Department of Justice. A second study by Arcand and Cullen (2004) from Arcand and Associates was conducted for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Finally, we review the results of a study conducted by Jamieson and Hart (2003) for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy that was sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre.

The study by Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) was designed to examine crime prevention practices in communities of different sizes and from all regions of the country. For this study, 172 in-depth interviews were conducted in 29 Canadian communities with key informants from a variety of sectors including: community or non-governmental organizations (including community service organizations, women's organizations and shelters, and family-oriented services); governments (primarily municipal); police agencies; schools; health services; Aboriginal organizations; and the private sector.

This study found that communities had community crime prevention, situational, educational, and CPSD crime prevention activities underway. They report that, "while there were many different types of CPSD activities identified, most involved some form of education such as the school based VIP program or crime prevention seminars and workshops for seniors, the business community and other community groups" (Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates, 2000, p. 23). The study goes on to note that the police are the major participant and sponsor of crime prevention activity in Canada:

> The police were identified as delivering the most programs in 24 of the 29 communities in the study sample. They were, by far, the most prominent group involved in crime prevention activity in the communities we canvassed. Besides being directly involved in providing various types of crime prevention activities, the police often initiated community actions. They were also supportive of the efforts of others in their communities involved in preventing crime. (p. 25)

Even in situations where they didn't deliver most programs, the police were closely involved with the groups or agencies that did. The respondents in this study also reported that in some communities, police officers had started programs for youth including youth centres. They also pointed out that police officers often volunteered their time and resources to help ensure the success of these youth centres.

Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) make it clear that the police in Canada are actively involved in situational, community, and CPSD. Some questions remain, however, about the specific role of the police in Crime Prevention through Social Development. For example, to what extent do police crime prevention activities help to address the underlying structural factors that are related to the root causes of crime? Specifically, how do their actions address structural variables like poverty, unemployment, racism, sexism, and other forms of inequality?

Questions can also be raised about the status of educational programs. For example, can educational programs that raise awareness of particular crime threats or which encourage the adoption of pro-social attitudes and behaviour be considered examples of CPSD, or do they represent a separate type of crime prevention activity? The point for us hinges on the extent to which these programs or activities address the underlying, structural causes of crime. From our perspective, while educational programs may be important and useful, it is often difficult to see any link between them and some of the root causes of crime described above such as poverty or unemployment.

The Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) study showed that the most common types of CPSD programs or activities in which the police participate are those designed to increase the opportunities for appropriate social and recreational participation such as after-school programs or late night recreational programs for youth such as Night Hoops. The example mentioned above of police officers establishing youth centres and volunteering to help run them represents activity that, for the most part, takes place outside of work hours. Typically, the police are not in the business of operating youth centres and related programs as part of their day-to-day operations. Instead, police agencies are more likely to leave the operation of youth centres to community groups or agencies while they provide some resources and support.

The issue that remains is articulating the role of the police in CPSD. Enhancing social or recreational opportunities available in a community does add to the stock of resources which community members can use. In this sense, these programs are examples of social development. The question is really the nature of police involvement in these and related social development programs. For example, are the police actively involved in designing, developing and, most importantly, delivering these programs? Or do they work with community groups and agencies that actually deliver the programs? If the police don't participate in program delivery but instead support the program by sitting on advisory committees or going to community meetings, does this count as involvement in CPSD? If they are involved in program delivery, then there is no question that they are engaged in CPSD. If, on the other hand, their involvement consists primarily of providing advice and support, are they involved in CPSD?

The second study we examine focuses more directly on the role of the police in CPSD. This study was undertaken by Arcand and Cullen in 2004 for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The definition of CPSD used in this study, states that it is, "an approach that recognizes and works to address the complex social, economic and cultural

processes that contribute to crime and victimization" (Arcand & Cullen, 2004, p. 5). Data was collected for this study through a series of searches that were conducted through the following agencies and links, by phone, in print, and electronically: RCMP, Municipal Police Services, Provincial Police Forces, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, International Crime Prevention Centre, National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Youth Policy Branch, provincial Crime Prevention organizations, Yukon Justice, Provincial Ministries of Solicitors General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (B.C.), and the Federal Territorial Provincial Working Group on Community Safety and Crime Prevention. Also included were: Internet research, various sites & links; Personal referrals; Printed materials: Blue Line Magazine, BCCPA News, Community Justice Links (Yukon). (Arcand & Cullen, 2004, p. 7)

The authors point out that active police participation – in either the organization or delivery of the program – was a key selection criterion for programs to be included in this inventory. They also note that models such as DARE (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education, PARTY (Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth), and PEI (Project Early Intervention) were not included since these have already been standardized and are being utilized in communities across the country.

This study provides information on 54 programs drawn from all regions of the country. The following table was adapted from the study to summarize the information it provided on the nature of the programs as well as police involvement.

Table 1: A Summary of Police Involvement in Crime Prevention Through Social Development Programs and Activities

Adapted from Arcand and Cullen (2004)

	Number of Programs	**Percent of Total**
Program Base Activity		
Education	37	68.5%
Recreation	14	26%
Safety	25	46%
Environment	6	11%
Community Justice	7	13%
Nature of Police Involvement		
Program Operation	19	35%
Community policing duty	32	59%
Program Dynamics		
Police initiated	31	57%
Community initiated	14	26%
Police only	9	17%

* Note: Percentages may not add to 100 since some programs had more than one activity.

Table 1 shows that over two-thirds of the programs were based on education. It also shows that the crime prevention programs identified by the study were largely undertaken as

part of community policing duties. Program dynamics also offer important information since they show that police initiated 57% of the programs, with an additional 17% being police only programs. The community initiated only 26%. A closer examination of the 54 programs described in the study raises a number of important questions about the nature of the programs contained in the inventory and the extent to which they can be considered as CPSD.

The definition we are using in this article for Crime Prevention through Social Development relates specifically to addressing the root causes of crime. The definition used in the Arcand and Cullen (2004) study is somewhat different although it does include a reference to the complex social, economic, and cultural processes that contribute to crime and victimization. Even with this more general definition, however, there is some question whether many of the programs described in the study can be considered as examples of CPSD. Importantly, an assessment is provided for each program that highlights its CPSD component.

The programs included in the inventory cover a wide spectrum of activities ranging from those that address the root causes of crime (recreation and community development programs) to others that appear to have little to do with CPSD (bicycle safety, intelligence-led policing program, trail surveillance program). As was the case in the Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) study, educational programs and those that are designed to raise awareness and promote pro-social attitudes and behaviour are the most common types of crime prevention programs with police involvement. Table 1 notes that this represented 68.5% of the 54 programs included in the Arcand and Cullen (2004) study. As we argued above, while these may be important and useful programs, they are unlikely to address the structural factors that influence the root causes of crime and victimization. Few of the programs described in this study actually meet the criteria for CPSD according to our definition.

The final study we examine was conducted in 2003 by Jamieson and Hart for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. The preparation of a Compendium in this study was sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre. It was designed to highlight promising practices supported by federal, provincial, and territorial crime prevention initiatives underway in communities across the country. It represents a selection of exemplary programs as opposed to being an inventory of what currently exists. This study does not look specifically at the involvement of police but is important in the context of the current study since the police are mentioned in the description of involved organizations for each of the jurisdictions. This study is included here, therefore, since it provides useful information on the nature of CPSD programs in Canada and, moreover, provides an additional opportunity to examine how CPSD is being operationalized across the country.

The focus of this study was specifically to describe promising programs that had a CPSD approach (Jamieson & Hart, 2003). The definition of CPSD used in this report states the following:

> The social development approach attempts to address the *root causes* of crime in society. It recognizes that crime stems from a variety of critical experiences in people's lives: family violence; poor parenting; negative school experiences; poor housing; a lack of recreational, health and environmental facilities; inadequate social support; peer pressure; unemployment; and lack of opportunity and poverty. It emphasizes investing in individuals, families and communities by providing social, recreational, educational and economic interventions and support programs for those Canadians, mainly young people, who are most at risk of becoming involved in crime, before they come into conflict with the law. Social development also includes investing in rehabilitative interventions for people who are already involved with the criminal justice system. (p. 3)

This definition is far more extensive than the one we are using in this article. While it refers to social development, it includes a number of activities and programs which we would argue fall outside of the social development realm.

The study contains detailed information on 39 crime prevention programs including some from each province and territory. The focus of the programs varied although particular emphasis was placed on programs for children and youth. Of the 39 programs identified, fully 30 had this focus. Four of the programs address the safety of women and girls while four involved community development activities and one addressed family concerns. The main activity in four of the programs was intervention with individuals who were at risk. The remaining 35 programs were almost equally divided among programs that were educational in nature, those that provided recreation and other opportunities (art, music, drama), and those that were aimed primarily at community development. This represents a simplified assessment of the programs outlined in this study since many of them had more than one objective. However, our assessment is based on what appeared to be the main focus of each program.

The 12 educational programs were quite similar to the ones described in the two previous studies we examined since they were primarily designed to teach skills or provide people an opportunity to learn and develop. Similarly, the 11 recreational programs reflect the types of recreational activities found in the studies discussed above. The 12 programs that address community development issues, however, provide some insight into the key aspect of CPSD – namely, social development. Educational programs attempt to encourage social development by working with individuals, changing attitudes, and promoting pro-social behaviour. Recreation programs move closer to the social development focus of CPSD by increasing available recreational and related opportunities. The extent to which programs are able to achieve a change in the social context is a measure of their ability to achieve social development.

Unlike education and recreation programs, community development and mobilization activities directly address the social, economic, and political factors related to the root causes of crime and victimization. Their focus is on various aspects of the community and their objectives usually involve changing a community to make it a safer and healthier place to

live. While the individuals involved or those influenced by the program may also benefit from the experience, the primary target of intervention is social development at the community level.

Jamieson and Hart (2003) include various types of community development projects in their study. One example is similar to those discussed in the studies presented above and involves the establishment of a youth centre. This creates a physical space in the community for young people through which they are provided various opportunities for recreation and social interaction. The creation of a youth centre represents social development since it changes the community in a positive way. Thus, it could be argued that a community is more developed if it has more resources for its citizens. The addition of a youth centre constitutes just such a resource development.

Several other examples from the Compendium show how CPSD can be achieved through community development and mobilization. Typically, these programs involve an assessment stage during which community members come together, identify a problem, and gather the information needed to develop a community response strategy. Once problems are identified and a plan is developed, community resources are mobilized in a collective response. In many cases, these community development and mobilization programs include the cooperation of a broad spectrum of individuals, groups, and organizations in the community including the police. However, these programs are usually housed in and operated by community-based organizations that are responsible for implementing the community plans. Other community groups may provide resources and support but the responsibility for carrying out the activities lies with the community organization.

This raises several important questions related to the role of the police in CPSD. The programs described by Jamieson and Hart (2003) are similar to those outlined by Arcand and Cullen (2004) and Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000). It is clear that the police can and do play an active role in crime prevention programs that are educational in nature. They are less able to participate directly in recreational programs as part of their day-to-day policing duties unless they are expressly deployed for this purpose, as might be the case for School Liaison/Resource Officers or Community Liaison Officers. This is even more the case for police involvement in community development and mobilization programs. Their involvement in these types of programs usually includes sitting on a community committee and participating in the identification of issues, the collection of information, and the development of community plans. They are less likely to be directly involved in the actual community development and mobilization activities. While we noted that police officers are involved in creating youth centres (which is a community development activity), we argued above that this is likely to be based on the initiative of a single officer or undertaken as volunteer work during off work hours. Typically, police officers are not engaged in social or community development activities as part of routine police work, and especially the patrol work where a large percentage of police resources are deployed.

In the current policing environment in Canada, CPSD is roughly equated with a proactive approach to policing. For many police officers, a proactive approach is exemplified by problem-oriented policing in a community context. This was reflected in several of the

police-sponsored programs described in the three studies discussed above. The logic behind this belief is that the police are proactive when they make an effort to resolve recurring problems. They define problem solving as a way of addressing the root causes of crime. However, as noted several times in our discussion, CPSD involves addressing structural factors such as poverty, inequality, and poor living conditions as root causes of crime. While many in the police community acknowledge the importance of addressing these structural factors, they are limited in what they can do to affect problems such as poverty and unemployment or the lack of social and recreational opportunities. This leads to some debate about what the role of the police should be in crime prevention, particularly in its more proactive version – Crime Prevention through Social Development.

The Role of the Police in Crime Prevention: The Perspective of Canadian Police Officers

In order to explore questions related to the role of the police in crime prevention more directly, a research project was designed to solicit the views of police officers at different ranks and from different communities across Canada. In-depth interviews and focus group sessions were held with police officers in six Canadian police agencies. The six police agencies were selected in consultation with key informants in the police community. A convenience sample was drawn that included police agencies from different regions of the country, of different sizes, and from both urban and rural locations. A rural RCMP detachment was included in order to capture the views of police officers with this type of policing experience. In each agency, we sought the views of police officers at different ranks including front line patrol officers, middle level managers, and senior police executives. As well, interviews were held with crime prevention specialists whenever possible.

The interviews and focus group sessions focused on two main themes. First, we asked the police officers to identify what they considered to be "core" policing functions. Once they had developed a list of core functions, we asked them to rank them in importance. However, in order to make this question more realistic, instead of simply asking them to rank the core functions in order of importance, we asked them to engage in a hypothetical budget cutting exercise. Specifically, we asked them which of the core functions would they cut if they had to deal with an unexpected 25% budget shortfall. This forced them to make difficult choices among those policing functions they had identified as core to their role.

The second theme we explored addressed the role of the police in crime prevention and, in particular, in CPSD. In a series of questions around this theme, we examined the types of crime prevention activities currently underway in the six participating police agencies. We also discussed the nature and extent of these activities in the context of proactive policing functions. The role of the police as problem solvers and in problem-oriented policing generally was discussed in this context. Specific questions regarding the role of the police in CPSD were also explored as part of this theme, including a consideration of the meaning of the concept of Crime Prevention through Social Development and the responsibility the police have for social development activities. We

also discussed how the police role in crime prevention could influence the future of policing in this country.

What Constitutes ‘‘Core” Policing Functions?

The first question we explored was what the participants considered to be “core” policing functions. Not surprisingly, we found a great deal of consensus on this issue. The core functions that were identified included responding to emergencies, enforcing the law, and ensuring public safety. Keeping the peace and doing criminal investigations were also seen as core policing functions. Importantly, these functions were often defined in relation to police work done in specific work environments (e.g., downtown versus suburbs, rural versus urban, etc.). These findings were consistent for all six police agencies and across all ranks. In general, the participants expressed a clear sense of responsibility. Indeed, it was obvious that they felt a tremendous obligation and sense of duty to respond if the public needed them.

Interestingly, crime prevention was also identified as a core policing function but usually after the law enforcement and peacekeeping responsibilities mentioned above. Senior officers and crime prevention specialists were more likely to identify crime prevention as a core function than other participants. However, crime prevention was inevitably mentioned as a core policing function in both the interviews and focus group sessions. Crime prevention was also mentioned in the context of the need for police agencies to be involved with their communities including other community agencies.

In order to get the participants to prioritize the core functions, we asked them what they would do if forced to make a 25% budget cut. Since 85% to 90% of police budgets are related to personnel costs, some of the core functions they identified would have to be cut. While this proved to be a difficult exercise for many of the participants, most stated that “soft” policing activities would be given up first. These included such things as school liaison officer programs, community relations officers, and other activities that were not tied directly to responding to calls for service or doing investigations. We were told that cutting entire programs was a preferred strategy to cutting across the board since programs could be brought back if the financial picture improved. The respondents noted that it is harder to get overall budget levels up after they have been cut. It was obvious that many of the participants were familiar with budget cutting realities!

The discussion around budget cuts often turned to the issue of staffing levels. The biggest challenge mentioned by the participants was maintaining the staffing levels needed to respond to calls for service in a timely fashion. While each agency has specialized units, the bulk of the staff in most police agencies is in patrol. Staffing levels in patrol are usually very tight, especially considering that some people can be away due to illness or training courses. This puts pressure on police organizations since they must comply with safety and health regulations that require certain minimum staffing levels. In some police agencies overtime budgets to meet these minimum staffing requirements can be considerable and run into the millions of dollars.

What Role do the Police Have in Crime Prevention?

In general, the six police agencies are involved in similar types of crime prevention activities. These include providing information (education) to reduce (re)victimization, doing CPTED audits and inspections to help victims secure their homes and businesses, participating in various watch initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch and Citizens on Patrol, and offering school-based education and awareness programs such as DARE. However, while some officers pointed out that they were involved with various community groups, few of them reported police involvement in CPSD initiatives. In the interviews and focus group sessions, it was unclear what the role of the police *should be* in social development types of initiatives.

Most police agencies have an individual or a small specialized group of officers that is tasked with crime prevention. These include School Liaison/Resource Officers, Community Liaison Officers, or Community Relations Officers. These are also the police officers working with identifiable groups such as youth, racial or ethnic minorities, seniors, the gay and lesbian community, etc. Most police agencies have specific programs that reflect proactive approaches that have been developed either by members of their specialized groups or self-generated by individual officers. Consistent with the examples above, we were told that some of these programs are initiated by police officers as volunteers.

These programs are based on the needs of specific segments of the community and are often recognized for their effectiveness. The officers involved in these efforts are often credited with doing an outstanding job. Much success is noted which reflects well on the organization and for which the organization takes some credit. All of the participants in this study recognized the value of these types of initiatives and many pointed to the success that one of their special officers had had in developing and implementing a proactive program. However, these proactive programs were not considered to be part of the core function of patrol officers but the domain of specialized officers or units. Ironically, they would be the first cut in response to budgetary restraints.

Much discussion around crime prevention arose when we asked the participants to identify what they did with respect to crime prevention that they considered proactive. This is an important issue in police circles since it signals a modern approach and an understanding of the need to do more than react. After debating whether general patrol counted as proactive crime prevention or not, many of the participants identified their problem solving practices as proactive policing. Indeed for many of the officers taking part in this study, problem-oriented policing or problem solving was equated with being proactive. Moreover, we found widespread support in all six police agencies and at all ranks for problem solving approaches. This should not be surprising for, as Buerger, A. J. Petrosino, and C. Petrosino (1999) point out, police administrators see problem-oriented policing as a way of maximizing their effectiveness by strengthening the community's ability to handle problems without constantly appealing for police assistance.

The notion of problem solving is a key feature of modern policing especially as it relates to community policing strategies. As Williams (1996) notes, the, "primary goal of problem solving is to identify and resolve the 'root causes' of chronic problems at the neighbourhood level" (p. 312). However, police officers often have different views on what problem solving means. For many of the participants in our study, the problem in problem-oriented policing is usually based on repeated calls for service which is defined as a problem by the police because of the expenditures involved in returning to the same address time after time. Problems from this point of view may not necessarily be the community's problems. Resolutions can involve intensified enforcement, negotiations and mediation, the mobilization of other resources (seniors groups to support other seniors in the community) or so called third-party policing where those implicated are encouraged, persuaded, or bullied to change their operations to avoid future problems (e.g., bar owners or landlords). The objective, for the most part, is to reduce the repeat calls for service. For a small number of respondents, problem solving had broader connotations that more closely resembled the tenets of CPSD and addressed the root causes of crime.

The availability of resources for problem solving activities is crucial. We found that the practical limitations for effective problem solving were based on a lack of resources. A common complaint was that patrol officers typically go from call to call during their entire patrol shift and have little time to do anything beyond taking reports. A sergeant or other supervisor has to allow an officer the time to do a proper problem solving exercise. This usually requires relieving the officer of patrol duties and covering the shortage in patrol staff while the problem solving work is performed. This is often difficult since front line officers, as well as middle managers, are usually dealing with a waiting list of calls for service. Ironically, few of these are emergency calls. Instead, most involve public order issues such as dealing with homeless individuals, those with mental health issues, or those with chronic drug or alcohol problems. Public disorder calls are also common such as neighbour disputes, complaints about barking dogs, and noisy parties. A large portion of the remaining calls involve youth (mischief, vandalism, loitering, petty property crimes), break and enters, and domestic disturbances. These comprise the bulk of the calls answered by patrol officers and represent the routine work that they do. However, the volume of these calls puts pressure on patrol officers to respond in a timely fashion.

Time pressures mean that the scope of problem solving is usually limited and focused on the factors resulting in repeat calls for service. In most cases, there is little opportunity to address the more structural, root causes of crime. This suggests that despite a conceptual understanding of proactive policing as well as general support for problem solving, *police work remains essentially a transactional process rather than a strategic and comprehensive response to problems*. The message we were given over and over again was that the police understand the need and effectiveness of proactive approaches but don't have the resources to do this properly. Current service delivery models restrict the extent of proactive work for even the most supportive officers.

The limited ability of the police to do proactive problem solving tells only part of the story. We found a desire among the participants at all ranks to have front line officers do more than go from call to call. While those at different ranks may have different reasons,

many understand that people enter policing with the idea of contributing to a better society. They want to make a difference and believe that as police officers they can help people. One senior officer told us that current patrol duties quickly turn these officers into report takers. The respondents acknowledged that going from call to call every day leads to dissatisfaction and low morale. Front line officers and their supervisors told us they would like to do more than take reports. Like-minded middle managers can encourage and allow their staff to use their skills and take the initiative to do more, but this has to be managed and others have to take up the slack with respect to answering calls for service.

There was some discussion, however, about conflicting messages with respect to the value and importance of doing proactive work. While most middle managers talk supportively about proactive policing, some continue to pressure front line officers to meet monthly traffic ticket quotas because these lead to good statistics. Indeed, the need for good statistics and the role that statistics play in promotion and reward systems is crucial. The consequence is a very mixed message in which most officers take the default position and ensure that they have the right statistics since these count when rewards are considered. The main message was that the police currently don't have very effective ways of measuring the results of proactive policing which, hence, doesn't show up in their statistics or count in terms of rewards.

Our discussion on proactive policing indicated that there is little understanding or agreement on the role of the police in Crime Prevention through Social Development. Few of the participants had considered what such an approach would mean in terms of the day-to-day activities of front line police officers. When various examples of a more comprehensive, proactive approach were presented, many of the participants found the ideas appealing since they would allow officers an opportunity to do more than merely take reports. The examples of proactive policing suggest that something positive can be done when police officers work with others in the community. The outcomes also suggest that the police can have an important impact on their communities. However, a broader vision incorporating such an approach is lacking at the present time.

What role should front line patrol officers play in working on proactive, comprehensive community-based initiatives? Existing time constraints make an expanded role difficult for patrol officers unless they are deployed in a different way. They do not have the expertise to undertake many of the social level interventions required. However, they do have access to, and detailed information about, communities and their residents. Their expertise is in securing a situation, assessing it, and understanding what is needed. They are limited, however, by the fact that they do not have access to the required community resources. Existing community resources such as child protection, children's aid, welfare, and domestic violence services are often fragmented and overtaxed.

Conclusions

Our interviews with police officers show that there is a great deal of consensus on what constitutes core policing functions. Law enforcement, responding to emergencies, and maintaining public order top this list. Crime prevention is identified as a core policing

function but usually receives lower priority. Soft policing functions such as crime prevention would be the first to go if police budget cuts had to be implemented.

There are contrasting and often contradictory forces at play within the police environment which tend to dissolve quickly when the actual day-to-day operations of the police are examined. Our research showed that while police agencies "talk the talk", time and resource constraints mean that most front line police officers go from call to call on each shift. There are few resources available for proactive police work. Those individuals or units involved in most proactive work are seen by other police officers as special units that are separate from the front line. Moreover, while doing interesting and important work, what they do is not "real" police work. At the same time, having these specialized units usually means taking officers away from the front line leaving the remaining officers to shoulder a heavier load. This often creates resentment and low morale.

The findings from our study regarding core policing functions indicate that so-called real police work involves law enforcement and maintaining order. This leaves crime prevention in a peculiar position with respect to the role of the police. While it is part of the core function of the police (keeping the peace), and it is touted in police philosophies and management rhetoric, it is consigned to the margins of core policing. As well, it is usually equated with problem-oriented policing that is focused primarily on repeat calls for service as opposed to the root causes of crime. CPSD is a particularly good illustration of this since the police are neither accustomed nor trained to work at the social level. Yet, while many police agencies espouse a proactive approach, in reality they are mainly involved in traditional crime prevention activities such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), and educational programs including school liaison officer programs.

We pressed the respondents on some of the proactive practices they identified as successful. These often involved the police acting in concert with community partners. Some were quite extensive involving a range of community actors including service providers, community groups, and individual residents. If these isolated examples had merit, could their elements be identified and used in the development of a new service delivery model? We tested this idea with the participants suggesting what an integrated model of service delivery might look liked based on the examples they had given us. An integrated model would build on the existing strengths and expertise of the police while adding the support and resources of other community agencies.

Police officers are the only 24/7/365 agency in most communities. This means that they are usually the first to respond to problems. Their main role is law enforcement and maintaining public order. However, they should be able to use their knowledge and expertise to act as facilitators in an integrated and comprehensive community response. They have information about the community and are in a unique position to be able to facilitate an appropriate community response. They can help to maximize the community's response by sharing decision-making power with other service agencies such as health, social services, child protection, and education. They can also offer legitimacy to a comprehensive community response and help to enlist the participation of community representatives (groups and residents). We need to test the validity of such an approach with police leaders

for it does imply some fundamental rethinking of the expectations we have of the police within a community policing philosophy.

Police officers see themselves as peace officers whose primary responsibility is to enforce the law and maintain public order. They don't want to be turned into social workers or, in fact, do social work. Police actions are often directed toward individuals causing harm or experiencing problems. Their focus is on individuals since the justice system is designed around ideas of individual culpability and responsibility. While it is relatively easy for them to deliver traditional crime prevention measures, it is more difficult for them to undertake CPSD and other comprehensive social development approaches because they require a different focus and different skill sets while they operate at a different level. They have the community as their focus and activity at the community level as their goal. Social development implies that you are working *at the social level*. Many of the successful efforts of school and community liaison officers do just that in relation to activities that result in social development, such as enhancing the availability of recreational resources in a low-income community. Crime Prevention through Social Development and other proactive responses in the community require actions that address that social level. The police are not trained to work at this level and some would argue that community development should not be their responsibility, that others in the community should take the lead in this area but with the full support and cooperation of the police.

A new integrated and comprehensive service delivery model could be a way of giving police officers an expanded role in community problem solving. Such a model would emphasize their skills and expertise as peace officers and law enforcers. It would build on their operational expertise and experience as first responders. It would provide the police with a way of being involved in proactive community-based problem solving. Creating an integrated and comprehensive service delivery model, however, requires the police to work closely with others in the community. And while the police and their community colleagues have been talking about partnerships for many years, few collaborative partnerships exist in which there is shared responsibility for resources and service delivery. Most partnerships involve cooperation of some sort with some even requiring the coordination of services. Sharing power, however, is not usually part of this equation especially when it comes to the police. If others in the community are to share some responsibility for dealing with community problems, a new type of partnership will have to be developed – one that requires all those involved to share power and control!

The police should be motivated to try such an approach for a variety of reasons. It would allow them to play more satisfying roles as members of integrated teams. We expect that, while working as part of an integrated team, they will be able to see the results of their interventions in the social development of neighbourhoods and communities with a concomitant drop in crime and social disorder. Additional community resources would be available to work closely with the police making police work easier, as well as more rewarding. An integrated service delivery model would also provide the police with a clearly defined way of being involved in proactive approaches. These would go beyond the narrow problem solving responses currently used by the police. It would also require the police to rethink the way they measure their actions and how they are held accountable. Social level

indicators such as quality of life and fear of crime will have to be incorporated alongside traditional outcome measures. This is consistent with new management philosophies that are taking advantage of emerging technologies for measuring outcomes. That being said, the value and impact of an integrated and comprehensive community-based response model will have to be demonstrated empirically.

The police have to see themselves as one player in a broader community effort to deal with crime and improve community safety. As Leighton (2000) notes, the dangers posed by crime must be viewed within the context of changes at all levels of society. As well, all institutions, including the police, must thoroughly and honestly evaluate their roles and functions and take matters in hand. A new police management approach is required, which must focus on strategic and comprehensive problem solving in partnership with other community service providers. Crime Prevention through Social Development can be facilitated through effective police-community partnerships. Police organizations have to recognize the interdependence between the socio-economic, health, social services, education, and criminal justice systems.

Commitment from senior administrators in the police community as well as in partner agencies will be needed. Community resources including those provided by the police are required if a new service delivery model is to succeed. It must be borne in mind that the bulk of these resources already exist in the budgets of various agencies and that an effective integrated service delivery model should actually result in the need for fewer resources in the long run. Since municipalities provide the funds for most of these services, it should be possible to get their cooperation for an integrated response. Provincial cooperation will also be required for those services funded by that level of government.

Based on the examples of successful interventions at the community level we were given, a new service delivery model will have to combine patrol functions with services targeted to specific areas. The identification and prioritization of high “calls for service” neighbourhoods is one way of deciding where to focus the integrated services since they may be too expensive to be deployed throughout the community. Nor is such a response needed in every neighbourhood. One suggestion was that a patrol squad that is responsible for a particular area could rotate individual officers through various functions. These would include some officers responding to calls for service and providing enhanced information while other officers from the squad worked on an integrated neighbourhood team. In this way, individual officers would have an opportunity to be involved in both reactive and proactive policing duties as they rotated through the different roles.

Cooperative training could be scheduled for integrated team members. Police officers working on integrated teams could learn about the mandates and responsibilities of other non-police team members, including the challenges involved in doing these jobs. At the same time, non-police team members could learn about police work including their mandate, responsibilities, and challenges.

Police researchers such as Buerger, A. J. Petrosino, and C. Petrosino (1999) believe that extending the police role is a natural and desirable consequence of community and

problem-oriented endeavours. Others, such as Marx (1990), believe that the police should be multi-purpose actors whose goal is to promote the community's welfare. However, we prefer to give consideration to an alternative approach that would consolidate the law enforcement role of the police while encouraging the police to facilitate problem solving through partnerships with other service agencies. These community agencies have a responsibility to address long-term problems and are better equipped than the police to do so. The role of the police and core policing functions should emphasize their law enforcement mandate while taking advantage of their knowledge of the community, their leadership, and their ability to facilitate an integrated and comprehensive community-based response.

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