Understanding Police Organizational Transition to Community Policing and Beyond

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While police have jumped through hoops for decades, seeking the perfect model of policing, it is a never-ending journey! The demands for service are many, often contributing to a misunderstanding of police roles. The lack of a clear definition has created confusion among some individuals and groups. Society is infused with diversity; a difference of opinion and differences are near impossible to fix in the immediate social environment. The changing perspectives are not a new problem, they have existed since the concept of police resulted in the first formal police services to provide protection for citizens, enforce the law, and arrest people responsible for those crimes and disorder. It has been and continues to be a roller coaster of indecision, as evidenced by the uproar of voices who do not provide more than rhetoric.

United States police have moved through three significant eras, the **Political Era** where local political powers were highly influential in police service delivery. Frustration within the police and among citizens led to the **Professional Era**; and police increased management, education, training and independence from political interference. That was followed by the **Community Era** which is continuously evolving as societal separation and demands cannot find common ground. We refer the reader to "The History of Policing in the United States by Dr. Gary Potter [2] who provides a detailed chronical history necessary for the readers understanding of where we came from and where we presently are.

Within each of these eras, there were emerging concepts to include community policing; community problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, and others. When a social issue becomes a pressure point, it is common to put responsibility for its resolution on the police; where the absence of enough staffing, expertise, and other support necessary to be successful, exists. Examples are domestic violence and the mandatory arrest law, substance abuse, which when limited to enforcement and summoning other services, cannot be a solution. The demands for police to manage mental health and the trend to jail those with this affliction seldom results in a sustainable solution. The expertise in this issue lies in professional other knowledge. These and many other local demands, born out of convenience, are not related to the role of the police. There are no magic programs, there cannot be, and the public will seemingly never be

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[1]. RCL files/publish/articles of general topics/on police/05.01.19 Understanding Police Organiz to COP and Beyond

[2] . https://plsonline.eku.edu/sites/plsonline.eku.edu/files/the-history-of-policing-in-us.pdf

content; speaking of those who want something personalized or non-existent to permit selfish motivation.

In a document, "Comparative Study of Policing Models"[3] are presented five primary goals of policing:

1. Enforce laws
2. Preserve peace
3. Prevent crimes
4. Protect civil rights, liberties
5. Provide services

These essential services require a depth of training, clear definition of duty, and require a unique personality, strong moral character, and courage to confront disorder, deviance, and danger daily. Police do not create the situations to which they are sent in response to 911 calls from citizens. We are often led to believe that police are instigators of all the turmoil for which they are blamed. Accusations are investigated and resolution determined. A contest of wills, philosophy, or challenge often occur, and the necessary details are not included. It is difficult to base decisions on partial data; the analysis is impossible.

Understanding the complexity.

From Policing Models[4], we take a slightly different view of police service models, which in combination and specific application to an agency, aspects are present. A department may use one or more of the elements of each in its determination on the delivery of policing to its community.

1. Reactive (Traditional) Policing. The police respond when a call is received reporting that a crime has occurred. Upon arrival, the patrol service takes a report then pass the investigation over to investigations. The influence of this simplistic model is near nonexistent, as crime is not boundary contained.

2. Predictive Policing. Police use predictive and analytical techniques, the use of extensive database analysis information to identify potential offenders. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a prime example of support for police and community members in collaboration and the need for data and analysis.

3. Problem-Orientated Policing (POP). The emphasis is on police and community sharing information, analysis, and the determination of sustainable solutions to reduce crime and violence and enhance prevention attempts. One of the first agencies fully immersed in this model was the City of Charlotte and its police department.

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[3] . https://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/administrative-law/comparative-study-of-policing-models-administrative-law-essay.php

[4] . www.saint.org.nz

4. Community-Orientated Policing. The focus is for the police to build communications, collaboration, and partnerships with members of their community. The engagement of police, citizens, and stakeholders is a powerful concept.

5. Reassurance Policing. Seeks to identify common issues and involve the community in solving community-related problems (like community policing, #4 above). Reality demonstrates that a police/community collaboration is reassuring to both groups. When the division and mistrust evaporate, a new working partnership emerges. Equality and common purpose provide the foundation of trust and focus on the community's quality-of-life.

6. Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA). This model refers to four critical steps in problem-solving and decision-making processes. Used in Problem-Oriented (#3), and Community-Oriented policing (#4).

Speed Bumps.

It is difficult for the police to convert their long-standing practice of delivering traditional law enforcement to the often ambiguous and ill-defined philosophy of community policing. Both are necessary and necessary. Many police employees cannot articulate community policing or the implications to their department. The same difficulty arises when the officer attempts to apply community policing to their roles and responsibilities. The law enforcement model is, or should be, based on statutes, the rule of law, established procedure, rules of evidence, elements of crime, court decisions, and other more empirical action. A police officer is not a mediator or to engage in making social decisions on how to process an incident seeking alternative outcomes to decision generally made by others. Police are guided by facts, evidence, and usually, the course of action is not hypothetical, rather conclusions from concrete evidence. Expecting them to assume a more humane decision where time allows for all manner of fact gathering, the conceptualization of what is known, weigh alternatives and reach a conclusion; not part of how they are trained concerning the core duties for their presence. There is middle ground certainly, and the window between enforcement and a community resolution approach can be resolved, but not without clarity of purpose for being engaged in a situation in the first place.

The definition of community policing includes bike patrols, neighborhood officers, special programs, and a host of other activities that enhance the department's visibility. The extent of community policing practices varies considerably, and no single standard illustrates superiority and signifies excellence. Resolving job performance issues while determining acceptable behavior under community policing and conceptualizing how it all coincides with the public demand for service, is perhaps the cause of most resistant overcomes. Too often we see where the "concept" defines an opinion, and actual practice is lacking.

With the decision to implement community policing, the chief should ensure that planned change is well thought out, carefully constructed, and includes substantial employee input and discussion. They are changing an individual's belief in something that influences organizational behavior. A person's views are a combination of his or her values, knowledge, expertise, and experience. Meaning individuals see the world through their belief systems and act according to these views. To ignore the Constitution, Bill of rights, rules of evidence, statutory provisions, and a long list of clear guidance rules, is irresponsible. We also note a caution, that COP is not rhetoric of the concept, but measured in actual practice. What is the agency doing to support the concept, and how does the community evaluate this service?

Learning takes place, and change can occur when people review the consequences of their actions and learn from these experiences. Thus, if an individual believes that community policing is of value to them, the organization, and the community, the change will occur. In support of this philosophy, Kurt Lewin's[5] principles of adult learning and adaptation to one's environment aid the change process. Seven of these principles have direct application to organizational change; in this instance, the move from traditional to community-oriented policing or community problem solving policing. They are as follows:

Principle 1:

> *Effective learning will influence the learner's cognitive (thinking) structures, attitudes, feelings, values, perceptions, and behavioral patterns.*

Changing how officers provide service includes changing their thinking, feelings, and performance measures, blending new methods into existing practice. These adjustments include providing staff with full information, including them in change planning, ensuring they understand the necessity for change, and providing each with future performance expectations.

Principle 2

> *People will believe more in the knowledge they have discovered themselves than in the philosophy presented by others.*

Assigning individuals, the task of determining how other non-law enforcement agencies function under a community-policing model, the effects of change on the organization, their successes, and failures, etc.; lead to a higher comfort level. After determining relevant facts, the individual applies this information to his or

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[5] . Johnson, D, and Johnson F. (1991). <u>Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills</u>. rev. ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991.

her agency and weighs out the benefits and drawbacks involved. Following this assessment, the individual will be able to judge the value of community policing to their respective agency. Hopefully, it will be positive and relevant facts will be shared with others in the organization. However, will it lead to transformation? Agency assurance of sustainable change is not issuing a directive; it requires a series of steps to ensure it occurs.

Principle 3

> *Learning is more effective when it is an active rather than a passive process.*

When a person can determine the value of practice, theory, or concept, they understand it more thoroughly. Understanding relates to prior knowledge and past learning (experience), which when combined, the longevity of retention and application extend. Another way of saying this is until applied and used in one's daily work, most concepts, practice, and theory are not entirely understood. Determining ways in which staff can "use" and apply new ideas and practices stand a stronger chance with regular use, even becoming acculturated into the daily life of the individual.

Training in community policing (COP) and community problem-oriented policing (CPOP) must include real application and experience if we expect it to become a habit and routine practice. And, importantly, it must include the public as active partners. And importantly, I include the public as active partners.

Principle 4

> *Acceptance of new ideas, attitudes, and behavioral patterns cannot be brought about by a piecemeal approach. The individual's cognitive, affective, and behavioral system must change.*

Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
Thinking	Feelings	Actions

In their totality, all three elements act together rather than separate parts. When trying to bring about personal change, training and education must simultaneously address the learner's feelings, behaviors, and thinking, as each is related to the other. Consistency, clarity of the message, and intent are woven together to provide the individual with all necessary information. Consistency, clarity, and intent allow the person to rationalize their choice, find commonality and benefit from the change, and the ability to determine how it will improve and support current modes of practice and service delivery. COP/CPOP dribbled out over months never takes shape, leaving individuals to continue practicing what they know best, which brings a false sense of comfort. With the decision to proceed, all aspects of change must be thoroughly planned and executed. Staff

must have the benefit of complete knowledge and background before asking them to engage in personal and organizational change.

Principle 5

> *It takes more than information to change ideas, attitudes, and behavioral patterns.*

Merely telling or ordering employees that COP/CPOP will become the department's way of conducting business assures failure. It goes beyond providing a rationale for change or reading material. Most employees will attempt to assimilate what change means to their job, performance evaluation, assignments, and other components that impact on the delivery of police service. Examples of how COP/CPOP will reduce crime and allow officers to spend their time more wisely points out the benefits and obstacles that will be encountered and resolved. Once provided with enough information to understand the new concept, officers should reflect, discuss, and report the benefits of making a change. Plans for accomplishing the adoption and practice of COP/CPOP must include all members. When we involve all members of the organization, we increase the likelihood of success.

Principle 6

> *Behavior change will be temporary unless the ideas and attitudes underlying them are also addressed.*

Telling employees that the department has adopted either the COP or CPOP philosophy and that all personnel will begin to use these practices, has little to no effect when it applies to the enthusiasm and long-term adoption of the concepts. It is necessary to change individual attitudes and ideas, instill practice with belief, and encourage a willingness to participate and follow the new way of conducting business. Longevity depends not only on organizational commitment and support; it is also about each person's desire to make the transition to doing business and delivering services using the COP/CPOP model.

Change Example.

A patrol officer of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, responding to the adoption of the Community Problem-Oriented Policing model, pointed out that the performance evaluation system did not include working with the community to identify problems, to gather data, analyze and engage in sustainable problem-solving with society as a partner. Officers concerned about the annual evaluation were focused on the criteria in the current evaluation document. Notification of this brought about a change in assessment, and it was with the input of patrol officers.

Principle 7.

> *Changes in the perception of oneself and one's social environment are* necessary before changes in ideas, attitudes, and behavior will take place.

Staff must believe they are capable of behavior that is appropriate to the situation they find themselves engaged with. One's self-perception serves as a guide to personal beliefs and results in your response in the work environment. Traditional law enforcement is comfortable to the experienced officer and switching to a new program, something as ambiguous as COP/CPOP, often meets with resistance. Convincing officers of the benefits of COP/CPOP is a hard sell, but when successful, the rewards are outstanding.

Summary.

Changing individual behavior and organizational tradition is a complicated and often an impossible task. With the decision to implement change, steps must be taken to ease the process and reduce the extent of employee anxiety. Employees should participate in change planning, contribute ideas and suggestions, and explore the implication of change on the tasks they perform as part of their job. To do less is to invite failure.

Effecting organizational change is not an easy process. The urgency to implement a new idea may overshadow taking enough time to include employees in the process. Today's police officer must choose between the old style of traditional law enforcement and the newer models. If employees could participate in planning and providing feedback from the beginning, the implementation of new programs would be easier to achieve. Challenges in implementing COP lie ahead, but we are better prepared to address them if we but pause for a moment and organize how we discuss and implement future change initiatives.

Police seek to provide the services dictated by law and procedure, court decisions, best practices and training, and in that triune of thought, it may not be enough with some segments of the community. However, police cannot be all things to all people, nor should they try to do so; as it is impossible given the diversity and changing social conditions encountered. It goes to mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives within the identified role for the organization.

The following five recommendations offer police more structure in their decision-making equating to the delivery of services.

1) Do your homework, know your stats, utilize Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expertise to determine problems, hot spots, areas with the greatest needs. Substantial advancement of GIS applications for police

have been achieved[6] , and the use of this technology and expertise is no longer optional.

2) Engage in a problem-solving exercise with the identified problems utilizing the Scan, Analyze, Response, Assessment (SARA) model by Herman Goldstein[7]. Incorporating database files into GIS is SMART Policing and takes the conjecture out of the picture and allows decisions based on data analysis, facts, and reality.

3) Engage your citizens and other stakeholders. Never go it alone as a police department for you cannot determine how others in your community are thinking, or importantly, what they offer to bolster the deliberation and planning process. Your goal is inclusion, collaboration, and partnerships. The strength of this approach proved sustainable and accomplished goals established to reduce crime, violence, and improve quality of life[8].

4) The power of success lies in the street level approach, the officers, supervisors and citizen groups, supported by GIS Analysts, administration and other elected and appointed officials.

5) Chiefs do not have to go it alone, for the employees, citizens and stakeholders will assist if given the opportunity. It is worth the time to construct a plan and implement it, to do the front-end work and emerge with a sustainable solution. Perhaps winning a lottery would be a more straightforward challenge to undertake!

The police and sheriffs of the country are making decisions to protect their agencies and personnel and to reflect situations where apparent indecision by political and other groups indicate disdain, resulting in the passing of rules that are contrary to the role and duties of the law enforcement community. This state of imbalance will exacerbate, and then realization by members of the public that we cannot condone less police service will bring about massive social inclusion by those now silent. When that happens, yet another change will occur.

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[6] . See> Elizabeth R. Groff. "Information Systems for Community Policing: A Micro-Analysis of Crime." Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. Website: http://elizabethgroff.net/index.html

[7] . Goldstein, Herman. (1979). Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach