Models for Community Policing Evaluation: The St. Petersburg Experience

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Abstract

While community policing is being touted by some as the panacea for all problems in the criminal justice system, others believe that it is just "old wine in a new bottle." Many departments around the country have embraced the tenets of community policing, yet few can answer the bottom-line question: Is it a better way to police?

Community policing's ultimate success or failure rests on the ability to evaluate the process and impact of this "new" way to police. The St. Petersburg Police Department has developed a unique approach to measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of community policing and problem solving. This approach is predicated on the development of technology-based evaluation processes and models. These systems provide real-time data access for reported crime, arrests, repeated calls for service, problem-solving nature/location, and community officer daily activity. The models represent the most comprehensive and technologically advanced approach to evaluating community policing in the country.

This paper will provide a comprehensive history and evolution of Community Policing; give a history of community policing and lessons learned in St. Petersburg, Florida; illustrate the importance/results of pre/post community surveys for evaluation variable identification; present a Crime-Tract Analysis Model for Geo-Based Community Profile/Assessment; and profile a Problem-Oriented Policing Data-Base Management System. These models represent the means for validating/evaluating the impact and process of community policing initiatives through the use of technology.

Origins

The emergence of two styles of policing — community policing and problem-oriented policing — is well documented, e.g., Brown, 1991; Eck et al., 1987; Goldstein, 1990; Higdon & Huber, 1987; Pate et al., 1986; Peak et al., 1992. The two concepts are best perceived as new organizational philosophies or strategies because they attempt to redefine the overall purpose of policing (Moore, 1992).

Community policing is associated with decentralized geographic-based police organizations that advocate closer community relationships. The community policing philosophy requires that the police and the community work together to promote mutual trust and cooperation, empower neighborhoods to fight crime, drugs, and the dangers of apathy, despair, and unrest (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1992). Implemented in several police departments throughout the country, the major aspects of community policing are concerned with quality of life issues, such as reducing citizen fear of crime and victimization (Moore & Trojanowicz, 1988), and increasing positive citizen perceptions of the police (Peak, Bradshaw, & Glensor, 1992).

Problem-oriented policing, on the other hand, is associated with decentralized responsibility with emphases on lateral communication, both within the department and outside the department. Problem-oriented policing focuses attention on the problems

that caused increasing positive citizen perceptions of the police (Peak, Bradshaw, & Glensor, 1992). Problem-oriented policing focuses attention on the problems that caused the incident, rather than on the incident itself (Moore, 1992).

Problem-oriented Policing. Problem-oriented policing deals with the underlying conditions that cause a problem. This concept of policing requires that officers recognize relationships that lead to crime and disorder and direct their attention to causes of the problem (Goldstein, 1990). Moore (1992) asserts that thought and analysis are fundamental to problem-oriented policing to
effectively respond to the cause of the problem and utilize alternatives other than arrest.

Spelman and Eck (1987b) assert that problem-oriented policing converged on three main themes, (a) increased effectiveness, (b) reliance on the expertise and creativity of line officers, and (c) closer involvement with the public. These themes become reality by attacking underlying causes that deplete patrol and detective time, and by educating officers to study problems and develop innovative solutions to ensure that police address the needs of citizens.

Community Policing. Kelling (1988) wrote that the change to community policing was attributed to citizen disenchantment with police services and frustration with the traditional role of the police officer. There was widespread disenchantment, especially among minorities, with police methods that kept officers remote and distant from citizens. During the 1970's, research on preventative patrol, rapid response, and investigative work was discouraging. The research indicated that preventative patrol and rapid response to calls had little effect on crime, citizen levels of fear, and satisfaction with police.

The concept of community policing strove for an absence of crime and disorder, and sought to improve the quality of life within the community. It envisioned the police department and the community as partners in fighting crime (Sparrow, 1988). Trojanowicz and Carter (1988) defined community policing as a proactive and decentralized approach, designed to reduce crime, disorder, and fear of crime, by assigning the same officer in a specific geographic area on a long-term basis. Community policing engages a variety of approaches to involve an officer in helping solve community problems. Community policing seeks to intervene in the problems of crime and disorder by forming a partnership with its citizens.

Riechers and Roberg (1990) described the goals of community policing as fear reduction, increased citizen satisfaction with police, and the development of techniques which address the problems of the community. Community policing promotes mutual trust and cooperation between people and police, and challenges people to work together to make their communities safer. This required a shift in the role and responsibility of the police. Community police officers must now provide the impetus in confronting crime, fear of crime, and decay and disorder in neighborhoods (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1992).

Community Policing & Problem-oriented Policing Philosophies Combined. PERF (1991) suggests five perspectives on community policing and problem-oriented policing. These perspectives are usually combined in varying degrees in police departments.

1. Deployment: the focus in a deployment perspective is on placing officers in close proximity to the community, such as foot patrol and mini-stations. Evaluations of these programs have suggested that they can be effective in reducing crime and fear of crime, however, these studies have not been conclusive.

2. Community revitalization: the focus on this perspective is on preventing deterioration of neighborhoods by having police concentrate on characteristics of the neighborhood that induce fear.

3. Problem: the focus in a problem perspective is on the police and how they handle problems. This perspective finds support in the problem oriented policing philosophy.

4. Customer: the customer perspective focuses on proactive mechanisms for dealing with the needs of the public, such as citizens advisory groups and citizen surveys. This perspective is analogous to the community policing philosophy.

5. Legitimacy: this perspective focuses on the police as being equitable, and being perceived by minorities as equitable.

Problem-oriented policing and community policing philosophies often overlap. A commitment toward one philosophy quite naturally leads toward the other. Many departments that have committed themselves to problem-oriented policing have also developed strategies to allow citizen input in determining what the problems are in the community (Moore, 1992). If both strategies occur routinely, then community policing becomes indistinguishable from problem-oriented policing.

Moore (1992) described ways in which these new philosophies of policing should influence police conduct; by (a) allowing officers to gather information about circumstances that lie behind problems so their underlying causes may be understood, (b) to consider the design of police operations to deal with the problem, (c) to develop measures to determine whether the design of the police operation has been successful, (d) to recognize the important role of the community in selecting problems for solution, and in designing and executing the solution, (e) the goal of crime fighting might best be pursued by establishing trusting relations with the community, and (f) to recognize that police have broader opportunities to prevent and control crime.

Community Policing Evaluation. An occupation that aspires to a high degree of professionalism and accountability, as contemporary policing does, must have a means of defining, measuring, and verifying its performance according to acceptable scientific standards (Geller, 1991). Yet, a close examination of the literature reveals little research on measuring the impact and process of community policing initiatives. Goldstein (1990) noted factors for the absence of community policing evaluation:

Research on the value of Community Policing, or any of its components, in this country is in its infancy ... It is natural to call for more rigorous research ... but the effect of some of the changes being advocated may simply not be subject to evaluation. Too

many changes are occurring at the same time. And there are enormous methodical problems ... We may have to be satisfied with the results of less rigorous research...

This task becomes even more difficult because of the application of "traditional" performance criteria associated with reactive policing, e.g., number of arrests/citations masked as community policing evaluation measurements. These measurements may be included as components of the evaluation of Community Policing only because it is important to establish that community policing operations enhance traditional police services. Traditional measurements, however, are inadequate in terms of evaluating community policing services. These "bean counting" measurements are directed at evaluating reactive police services.

A review of traditional evaluation criteria indicate the need for more meaningful and telling measuring when trying to determine the impact and process of community policing. What should the evaluation measurements be? Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994) suggest there are more quantifiable measurements: communications, networking and referral; programs aimed at social and physical disorder; and resources provided, to name a few.

A History of Community Policing in St. Petersburg

The St. Petersburg Police Department identified community policing as its dominant operational philosophy in the latter half of 1990, with the arrival of its former chief of police, Ernest "Curt" Curtsinger. It began at that time to develop an ambitious plan for the city-wide implementation of community policing. Prior to Curtsinger's arrival and subsequent mandate for the implementation of city-wide community policing, the department had been experimenting with a more limited, programmatic approach. Curtsinger brought community policing to St. Petersburg as a philosophical concept, a holistic approach to policing, stressing that community policing is a philosophy, not a program. This represented an important shift for the department in the transition to a city-wide community policing implementation.

In April of 1990, the Department implemented its first effort at community policing in Jordan Park, a public housing complex located in a high-crime, inner-city area. The PRIDE (Police and Residents Immobilizing a Dangerous Environment) Patrol was comprised of four police officers who were assigned solely to Jordan Park. For the purpose of improving the quality of life and addressing problems in this economically challenged area, the officers formed working partnerships with the Housing Authority staff who managed Jordan Park, other service providers, and Jordan Park residents.

A survey of Jordan Park residents administered by St. Petersburg Housing Authority staff during March 1990, before the PRIDE Patrol was deployed; and again during March 1991, one year after PRIDE's deployment, found that residents' attitudes toward the police had improved dramatically. Also, their fear of crime had decreased just as dramatically and their perceptions of the quality of life in their neighborhood improved.

The PRIDE Patrol project was highly successful, as measured by an 84% decrease in overall crime in Jordan Park, comparing the first six (6) months of 1990 to the last six (6) months, based on an analysis of Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data.

Reported crime continued to decrease in Jordan Park through 1991, though not

as dramatically, following the deployment of the Community Policing Officers (CPOs). Total Part I and Part II crimes reported to UCR decreased 34.4% from year-end 1990 to year-end 1991. However, there was now only one police officer, rather than four, assigned exclusively to Jordan Park.

A comparison of UCR data from 1991 to 1992 showed a 36.3% increase in total Part I and Part II crime in Jordan Park. During 1992, one of the original PRIDE Patrol Officers, who became the Jordan Park CPO and whose presence had been a constant in the area since 1990, left Community Policing and transferred into the Criminal Investigations Section. He was replaced by a newly assigned Community Policing Officer. Clearly, this has contributed to the change in reported crime in the neighborhood. In response to this problem, a second CPO has been assigned to work in Jordan Park, providing more hours of availability of police assistance to residents and enhancing service to the area.

The Housing Authority staff has decreased its presence in Jordan Park due to the start of a residential management program. This period of transition in management may have also contributed to an increase in problems in Jordan Park.

Moving into 1991, the success of the PRIDE Patrol strategy led to the use of additional intensive, neighborhood-based patrol units in other "hot spots" in the city. Area residents and police officers worked together to solve problems and to improve the overall quality of life in these challenged neighborhoods.

Throughout 1991, building on these initial experiences, the St. Petersburg Police Department developed and implemented a city-wide approach to community policing using a split-force concept. The city was divided into 44 Community Policing Areas and, in December 1991, a Community Policing Officer was assigned to each of them.

Prior to deployment, the CPOs received extensive training in problem solving, community relations, communications skills, community organizing, cultural diversity, partnership building, and the utilization of external resources.

Community Policing Officers are given the flexibility to schedule their own hours, according to the needs of the neighborhoods they serve and the projects upon which they are working. They can work specific problems from start-to-finish; they are freed from call-driven responsibilities, but can and do provide assistance on calls in their areas as needed. The CPO can be a valuable source of information about a specific area, its residents, its resources, and the nature and patterns of crime and other problems that impact the area.

Lessons Learned

Although the department considers the first year of the city-wide community policing initiative generally successful, it has experienced a number of difficulties. Some of the problems experienced during the first year of city-wide community policing operations and changes made to address and resolve those problems are described below:

Problem: Unequal workload distribution among the Community Policing Areas (CPAs); many areas were too large or the crime problems to serious to be covered or addressed effectively by one officer. The boundaries of the Community Policing Areas were originally designed based upon an analysis of a matrix of factors, that included calls for

service, neighborhood association boundaries, natural barriers, and socioeconomic and crime data. However, the actual workload experienced was uneven in several areas.

Response: As of April 1993, there are 48 CPAs in the city; four (4) new areas have been created and the boundaries of several other areas were adjusted. The decision to create additional areas and to adjust the boundaries of some of the existing areas was made following an analysis of calls for service data that was done after the CPOs completed their first full year of operation. The goal was to redesign the areas to achieve a more equitable workload distribution and provide more effective police service to certain problem areas.

Two large areas have each been divided, so as to be more effectively worked. Two business corridor areas were created to more effectively address the problems unique to these high crime, highly trafficked commercial areas, and to alleviate calls for service from the residential areas contiguous to these corridors. The CPOs serving the residential neighborhoods that border these commercial corridors can now focus their energies within the residential areas; the officers assigned to the business areas will direct their efforts to resolving the problems being experienced along the commercial corridors.

Problem: While the split-force concept and the establishment of a centralized Community Policing Division had the advantage of creating a critical mass that could quickly get the effort off the ground, it also brought with it the traditional communications problems between Community Policing, Patrol, and Criminal Investigations personnel.

Response: In recognition of this problem, the Department has taken two important steps. First, it has decentralized the Community Policing Division and placed the Community Policing Officers under the command of the Patrol District Majors. Second, all Patrol Officers will have specific geographic responsibilities. Rather than patrol a large zone (Patrol Officers were previously deployed over 12 large areas called "zones"; there were four zones in each of three Patrol Districts), Patrol Officers on each shift are now assigned to one of the 48 Community Policing Areas, thus forming a team with the Community Policing Officer responsible for the area who will coordinate the problem solving efforts between the shifts and neighborhood residents. The Investigative Services Bureau is also working on assigning detectives to geographic areas of responsibility, broadening the team of sworn personnel addressing problems in each area.

Effective in April of 1993, the Police Department was reorganized into a three-Bureau structure 2 — there had been two Bureaus. Personnel assigned to the Community Policing Division were merged back into the Patrol Districts; dissolving a structural communications barrier and enhancing the Department's capacity for coordinating the activities of its various uniformed resources.

Problem: The Chief of Police was terminated in February, 1992, following a controversy, growing out of an attempt to conduct in-house cultural diversity training, that began at the onset of the city-wide community policing initiative. The Department was without a chief of police during the remainder of 1992 and experienced a leadership void that

exacerbated efforts to implement this philosophy.

Response: A new Chief of Police was hired in December, 1992. During a staff retreat held during February, 1993, Chief Darrel W. Stephens, with some experience in community problem-oriented policing, clearly communicated his vision of the future of the St. Petersburg Police Department and committed the Department to a full implementation of his community problem-oriented policing philosophy.

Problem: There was a perception among many officers of a lack of support for community policing efforts from upper management within the Police Department. It appeared that some staff members continued to wage "turf" battles that slowed or negated the making of changes needed under a community policing philosophy.

Response: Staff members are being held accountable by the Chief of Police for the implementation of community policing in their areas and for developing teamwork at their level and throughout the organization. The reorganization was the first step in the effort to ensure senior staff members understand their responsibilities.

Problem: The Department's organizational structure compromised the ability to make necessary decisions at lower levels and hence stifled officers' ability to develop and implement creative, innovative solutions to problems in their areas.

Response: The reorganization of the Police Department eliminated one layer of management, somewhat flattening the organization. Other changes, such as broadening commanders' spans of control, were made to facilitate decentralization and encourage decision making at lower levels within the organization.

Problem: Some of the officers originally selected for Community Policing assignments were unable to function effectively, due largely to inexperience on the street. The autonomy and ability to utilize external resources, so critical to the effectiveness of Community Policing Officers' efforts, were simply unrealistic expectations for some of the younger, less experienced officers chosen for Community Policing.

Response: The lessons learned include: (1) not to assume that younger officers, being less imbued with traditional values and methods or less "set in their ways", are more open to, or capable of, performing under the community policing philosophy; and (2) not to assume that older, experienced officers are "locked into" in a traditional mind set.

　　The Department found that older "new" officers made up for their lack of policing experience with valuable life experiences and emotional maturity, while young new officers were often overwhelmed by their community policing responsibilities.

　　Some of the older officers reported being "born again"; the autonomy and job satisfaction gained in their community policing assignments have caused them to get back in touch with why they became police officers (to help people) and to experience the satisfaction of knowing they really do make a positive difference in the community.

　　Many older officers practice community policing techniques, though they many

not call what they do "community policing." For example; older, more experienced officers seem more adept at communicating with citizens while attempting to verbally defuse potentially dangerous situations, and seem better able to prevent the escalation of confrontations with combative suspects. Older officers are also more aware of external resources that they can use to make referrals to people in need or can tap into to solve problems. Older officers are simply more likely to stop and help citizens in countless situations that may be considered too petty by younger, more adventurous officers.

Many police officers still do not understand the concept "community policing"; mistakenly assuming it is "social work" or not "real" policing. The challenge is in learning to assess officers as individuals according to their personality traits, work habits, attitudes and experiences. One must first define the officer's abilities and personal policing philosophy and then gauge that officer's capacity for practicing "community policing" as it is being applied in one's agency.

It is a mistake to assume that some of the older officers' somewhat negative views toward community policing are based upon an accurate understanding of just what community policing involves or that the older officer is somehow "stuck" in traditional methods that are seen to have no place under the community policing philosophy.

Subsequent selections of Community Policing Officers have increased the number of older, well-rounded, experienced officers dedicated to proactive policing responsibilities. Some officers with less than two to three years of street experience, and equally minimal life experience beyond high school, have been transferred into primarily call-driven Patrol positions, where they can gain more experience in the basic skills of policing and can work along with Community Policing Officers learning problem solving skills and how to engage the citizens they serve. The increased numbers of experienced officers have provided added support for the younger and/or less experienced officers who are functioning well under community policing.

Problem: There were logistical problems in finding adequate transportation for all officers on the street.

Response: Almost all of the Community Policing Officers now have specially designed police mountain bikes and have been trained on the effective use of these bikes. This has helped alleviate the officers' lack of transportation and has provided an added bonus in enhanced community/police relations. Private citizens and community organizations provided most of the funds with which the police bicycles were purchased.

Problem: When the Community Policing Division was initially formed, one sergeant per district was assigned to supervise each of the three Community Policing squads. Due to the large number of officers assigned to each of these squads, numbers ranged from 14 to 19 officers, the sergeants' spans of control were too broad. They found themselves devoting so much time to administrative tasks and the challenge of keeping up with so many officers, each of whom scheduled their own flexible hours, that little to no time was available for the "coaching" type of supportive supervision that each sergeant had envisioned providing to their officers.

Response: When the Community Policing Division was merged back into the Patrol District structure, additional supervisory personnel were assigned over the Community Policing officers. An additional sergeant was assigned to the District I contingent of community policing officers, dividing this large squad of 19 officers into two squads. District I contains a large high crime area in the inner city.

A sergeant was assigned to supervise the Downtown Deployment Team, which is comprised of nine officers who work the special problems unique to the congested downtown center of commercial activity, adding one supervisor to District II. The District III Community Policing Sergeant maintained her span of control of 16 officers; the high crime areas of District III are confined to a relatively small area within the district. Most of District III does not exhibit serious crime or drug problems.

A Crime-Tract Analysis Model for Geo-Based Community Profile Evaluation

The St. Petersburg Police Department initially formed the Community Policing Division in November of 1990 to facilitate the development of the community policing philosophy as the operational philosophy of the department. In May of 1991, a committee was formed by the Community Policing Division staff to develop a plan to determine the number of Community Policing Officers needed to carry out Community Policing city-wide. Research indicated there was no existing methodology or model to determine how many Community Police Officers should be utilized in a city-wide deployment or how to determine their geographic area of responsibility. As a result, the committee developed their own methodology to accomplish this task. The Crime Tract Analysis Committee analyzed the crime tracts of the city in relation to the number of calls for police service in each area. The department's computer aided dispatch (CAD) system provided the data for analysis.

The analysis resulted in a unique matrix scoring system for ten (10) patrol zones in each of three (3) patrol districts. Each patrol zone was subsequently scored and ranked according to the variable scores. Those zones with the highest score and rank determined the greatest need and number of Community Officers. A formula was developed to determine the number of officers for each zone. The total number of points for each zone were divided by the number of zones. The percentages for each zone were computed to represent the distribution of officers for a range of potential officers. For example, if a zone received 12 percent of the total score, that zone would received 12 percent of available community police officers. Computations were done on a hypothetical availability of 20, 30, 40, 50, and 60 officers.

Based on this analysis 43 Community Policing Officers/Areas were originally established. Each Community Policing Area would have one Community Police Officer assigned. One additional officer was assigned to the Division to handle administrative responsibilities and to assist the other officers. Each policing area was recognized to have different concerns, needs and priorities based the aforementioned assessments. This recognition set the stage for the development of a city-wide survey. This survey assisted in the identification of additional variables to be utilized for a community policing evaluation model.

Community Needs Assessment Survey

Prior to deploying its initial contingent of 44 community policing officers throughout the city in December of 1991, the Planning & Research Unit of the St. Petersburg Police Department administered a survey designed to measure citizens' perceptions of crime and drug problems in their neighborhoods, their fear of crime, perceptions of quality of life concerns, satisfaction with police service, ratings of specific contacts with the police, and willingness to work in partnership with the police to improve their neighborhoods' quality of life. During October and November of 1991, a total of 1,448 citizen surveys were completed city-wide. Surveys were administered by a group of 40 volunteers from the community. These volunteers attended a training session and were assigned an area within which they were to draw a systematic sample. They canvassed their areas, attempting to make contact and complete a survey with the head of household at every third residence. Survey takers working in commercial areas also completed surveys from a sample of business locations in the area.

There were neighborhoods in the city that were not adequately sampled for a variety of reasons. A few volunteers dropped out after receiving their training, some dropped out well into the period of data collection, others were simply unable to complete the number of surveys they originally committed to complete. Their areas were left uncovered, as there were simply not enough volunteers to replace them or handle larger areas than originally assigned. The danger of going door-to-door in some neighborhoods was prohibitive to the method of data collection used; that is, having face-to-face interviews completed by citizen volunteers.

The 1991 survey sample was fairly representative of the city population. The age distribution, percentages by gender, home ownership and length of residency in St. Petersburg were all representative of the city's population. Minorities, however, were slightly under-represented in the survey sample.

A follow-up survey, conducted during February and March of 1993, only yielded a total of 337 completed surveys. Several difficulties were encountered during the fielding of the second survey. The survey was originally planned to be repeated in the fall of 1992, one year after the first survey was completed. The police department was without a police chief at the time and this lack of leadership delayed the administration of the second survey. The number of volunteer survey takers decreased as many citizens simply did not want to commit so much time to participating in the project a second time. Because of the delay in administering the survey, actual survey administration then coincided with a controversial and racially divisive mayoral election in the city; many citizens were working in this campaign.

Since the 1993 survey sample under-represented certain neighborhoods and also under-represented the proportion of minorities in the St. Petersburg population, valid generalizations cannot be drawn from the survey sample to the larger population. Therefore, survey findings describe the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of the sample population only and can only suggest findings that may or may not be accurately applied to the population of St. Petersburg.

The survey was intended to provide information to be used in an evaluation of the implementation of city-wide community policing in St. Petersburg and is planned to be administered on an annual basis. It will continue to provide much needed information

about the impact of community policing throughout the city. The survey will be used as a method of further evaluating the impact and process of community problem-solving initiatives.

Additionally, the community survey provided the structure for the identification of community policing variables that were developed into a computerized problem-solving data-based management system.

Discussion of Survey Findings

The majority (57.9%) of respondents city-wide in 1991 felt that the safety of their neighborhoods was unchanged over the past year. One-third (33.3%) of respondents felt their neighborhoods had become less safe. A small percentage (7.7%) felt that their neighborhoods had become safer.

In 1993, there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of respondents who felt that their neighborhoods had become safer during the past year, which represented the first year of city-wide community policing operations. One-quarter (24.7%) of respondents in 1993, compared to 7.7% in 1991, reported that their neighborhoods were safer.

In 1991, half (50.8%) of all respondents city-wide named property crimes as the most serious problem in their neighborhoods. An almost identical percentage (51.0%) in 1993 also named property crime as their neighborhoods' most serious crime problem.

A higher percentage of respondents in 1993 (10.7%) named assault/robbery as a serious crime problem. In 1991, 8.8% named assault/robbery as the most serious crime problem in their neighborhoods. The percentage of respondents naming drugs as the most serious crime problem decreased slightly from 1991 to 1993 (12.4% vs. 9.2% respectively).

Respondents were asked whether they were "very concerned," "somewhat concerned," or "not concerned" about several problems that may affect the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Levels of concern about crime, housing appearance, feeling safe and secure, neighbors, adequate police patrol, noise/nuisances, and juveniles all increased from 1991 to 1993. Many community policing officers were working hard in their assigned geographic areas to heighten residents' levels of awareness of crime and quality of life issues. We believe respondents' rising levels of concern about the issues listed above reflect this increasing level of awareness.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of concern for a variety of crime, or potential, crime problems. From 1991 to 1993, respondent levels of concern about neighborhood decay and the presence of gangs increased. The level of concern about drugs decreased. The levels of concern about most crime problems (being attacked, break-ins, sexual battery, vehicle theft, vandalism, barking dogs/noise, and domestic violence) were unchanged.

The fear of crime was measured by asking respondents whether they felt safe being out alone in their neighborhoods both at night and during the day. Less than half (46.4%) of respondents city-wide in 1991 reported feeling afraid of being out alone at night in their neighborhoods. Only 8% of respondents reported being afraid to be out alone in their neighborhoods during the day. In 1993, a much smaller percentage (33.9%) of respondents reported being afraid to be out alone at night in their neighborhoods, which is consistent with their perceptions that their neighborhoods had

become safer during the past year. In 1993, fully 95% reported feeling safe being out alone during the day.

Citizen satisfaction with police service was measured by having respondents rate police performance as either "good," "fair" or "poor" on five factors: speed of emergency response; the availability of officers to help with non-emergencies; officers' courtesy; officers' professionalism; sensitivity of officers to citizens' needs and feelings; and, overall satisfaction with police service.

Following the completion of the first full year of city-wide community policing operations, respondents' satisfaction with police service increased dramatically. Nearly half (46.1%) of all respondents city-wide in 1991 reported having had contact with a St. Petersburg police officer during the past year. This compares to 52.4% who had contact with a police officer in 1993. The greater amount of contact with a police officer in 1993 resulted from increased attendance at neighborhood meetings. In 1993, 17.5% of respondents who had contact with a police officer reported having made that contact during a neighborhood meeting, compared to only 6.2% in 1991.

Citizen satisfaction, then, was measured further by asking only those respondents who had contact with the police during the past year for their perceptions of that particular interaction. Respondents who had contact with a specific officer rated that officer's performance on the following factors: appearance; conduct; helpfulness; concern; the ability to put the respondent at ease; problem solving ability; being treated fairly; whether the officer listened to them; and, whether the officer used good judgment.

Again, respondents' perceptions of their specific contacts with specific officers showed improvement from 1991 to 1993. Respondents were asked who is MOST responsible for the quality of life in their neighborhoods. The great majority of respondents in both 1991 (81.4%) and 1993 (85.4%) felt that residents and police should work together to solve neighborhood problems.

Respondents were then asked if they felt PERSONALLY responsible for their neighborhoods' quality of life. A slightly higher percentage of respondents report feeling personally responsible for the quality of life in their neighborhoods in 1993 (59.2%) compared to 1991 (56.5%).

In 1991, prior to the onset of city-wide community policing operations, less than half (44.5%) of respondents city-wide reported being aware of the Police Department's community policing plans. In 1993, three-quarters (75.0%) of respondents reported being aware of community policing in their neighborhoods.

In 1991, less than 5% of all respondents city-wide knew or could name their community policing officers, as would be expected in this initial survey, which was administered prior to the deployment of the community policing officers. Most of the officers that were named as community policing officers by survey respondents were, in fact, Crime Watch or Community Awareness Officers, who work with our Crime Watch groups.

In 1993, over one-third (38.4%) of respondents said they knew their community policing officer and nearly one-third (30.7%) accurately named the appropriate officer assigned to their neighborhood. The percentage of respondents saying they had been victims of at least one crime during the past year was slightly lower in 1993 (14.9%) than in 1991 (20.8%).

The majority of victims in both 1993 (69%) and 1991 (60%) were victims of a

burglary or a theft. In 1993, 82% of victims said they reported the crime to police, compared to 84% of victims in 1991.

Respondents were asked to assign either a "high," "medium," or "low" priority to a variety of problems, according to the attention they felt the police should give to each problem.

From 1991 to 1993, a higher percentage of respondents were assigning a high priority to truancy. The city has experienced increasing rates of juvenile gang activity.

Respondents were asked for their sources of information about the St. Petersburg Police Department. This series of questions allowed for multiple responses, that is, respondents identified all of their sources of information about the police, not just one source upon which they might rely the most.

City-wide, in 1991 and in 1993, T.V. and newspapers were both sources of information about the police to over 80% of respondents. Interestingly, in 1991, over one-third of respondents (37.6%) reported getting information about the police first-hand, from their own personal experiences. In 1993, nearly half (48.5%) reported having first-hand knowledge of the police department. This may be due to increasing contact with the police as a result of neighborhood meetings and other community-based police activities.

Summary

In summary, Brown (1989, p. 7) concluded that com- munity policing is a means whereby the police can "become a part of and not apart from the community" it serves. Community policing or problem-oriented policing approaches have reduced citizen's fear of crime, improved their perceptions of the police and the quality of life in their neighborhoods, and in some cases, had an effect on crime (Eck et al, 1987).

For community policing to work it must be supported both internally as well as externally. The police department and the community must believe that it is a better way to police; and there needs to be an evaluation process/system that makes reality out of conjecture.

Major Quire begain his law enforcement career in 1970 as a Patrol Officer/Detective with the Anderson (IN) Police Department. He left that department to join the St. Petersburg Police Department where he is now responsible for the Vice and Narcotics Division. Previously, Major Quire served as Lieutenant for the Department, with responsibility for supervision of Sergeants and Community Officers. He was involved in the implementation of the Department's community policing efforts and was a member of a research team that visited cities with similar programs.

Major Quire received an associate's degree in police administration from St. Petersburg Junior College. He also holds bachelor's and master's degrees in criminology from the University of South Florida, where he is now working on a doctorate in education. His experience with the St. Petersburg Police Department has provided him with a comprehensive background in complex financial, tactical, strategic investigations and undercover operations.

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