

COMMUNITY POLICING: THE MIDDLE MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE

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Community policing has evolved as the new organizational orthodoxy of policing. Volumes have been written on the subject by academics and research scholars. However, the voices of those who are charged with the reorganization of their departments and the implementation of community policing have been relatively silent. This article presents data drawn from the content analysis of the written views of community policing held by a select sample of middle managers from across the country. The respondents were attending the administrative officers course at the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. During the course of their studies, they read current anthologies on community policing research. These findings identify and discuss a number of problems that they have encountered in the implementation of community policing. As such, they represent a practitioner's assessment of community policing.

Keywords: *community policing; middle managers; opinions of administrators*

Many scholars claim that community policing has become the new organizational orthodoxy of policing (Eck & Rosenbaum, 1994; Oliver, 2000; Peak & Glensor, 2002). Both academicians and research scholars have written volumes on this subject (see, e.g., Glensor, Correia, & Peak, 2000; Green & Mastrofski, 1988; Zhao, Lovrich, & Thurman, 1999). However, the voice of the practitioners, the police middle managers, who are

responsible for the reorganization of their departments and the implementation of community policing, has been relatively silent.

Police middle managers have been identified in the literature as resistant to change and innovation (see Gaines, 1994; Goldstein, 1990; Greene, Bergman, & McLaughlin, 1994; Moore & Stephens, 1991; Sherman, 1973; Skogan, 1994; Sparrow, Moore, & Kennedy, 1990; Sykes, 1994). Presented here are data from written assessments of community policing issues made by 68 middle managers representing police departments from across the nation that are engaged in community policing. These analyses were conducted while these officers were enrolled in the graduate course option of the administrative officers course (AOC) at the Southern Police Institute of the University of Louisville. The findings presented here were drawn from a content analysis of their responses. These analyses provide insights into the reality of community policing from those individuals charged with the implementation of this operational paradigm.

DEFINING COMMUNITY POLICING

From its title, community policing infers a partnership between the police and the people they serve. This partnership is designed to improve the quality of life in the community through the introduction of strategies designed to enhance neighborhood solidarity and safety. It is expected that the police and citizens of the community will work together to address issues of crime and social disorganization. Under community policing, the department is expected to develop a bond between the patrol officer and the community. Officers are urged to get close to the citizens on their beats and understand their needs, habits, and wishes. The assumption is that the police must be able to truly relate to a community in order to understand its problems and offer creative responses to local problems. Community policing is the actualization of the concept that in a democracy, the police are not supposed to be insular, self-contained, or cut off from the communities from which their power derives (Skolnick, 1999).

Community policing also demands that police departments adopt proactive strategies and tactics and repress crime, fear, and disorder within neighborhoods (Fyfe, Green, Walsh, Wilson, & McLaren, 1997). In return, community members are expected to take a proactive role in helping the police and other government entities set and implement community-oriented policy. It is perceived that through this exchange process, citizens have input to setting organizational goals and objectives as well as

establishing priorities for action. Accordingly, each community or neighborhood area should be policed in accordance with neighborhood needs and values (Kelling & Coles, 1996; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). It is understood that the traditional bureaucratic operational strategy in which one service delivery policy should be enforced throughout a jurisdiction no longer applies. Police assignments and strategies are to be set in accordance with local needs, norms, and values. This decentralized approach to operational strategy is assumed to provide citizens with protection that is tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities (see Reiss, 1992).

In theory, the decentralization process that takes place under the community policing paradigm forces officers and the department to commit themselves to problem-solving partnership with citizens dealing with crime, disorder, and the quality of life (Wasserman & Moore, 1988, p. 5). The decentralization process is supposed to empower both police officers and community members to take an active stance and become both accountable and responsible for the crime problems that plague a community.

In contrast to the traditional bureaucratic model, community policing shifts the focus of police work from handling random calls for service to the resolution of community problems (Goldstein, 1990; Peak & Glensor, 2002). In essence, community policing places more responsibility on the department. Agencies committed to community policing must perform their traditional duties of law enforcement, order maintenance, and service as well as attempt to solve local problems (Rosenbaum, 1998). The police function is expanded to include a proactive response to maintaining order, dealing with quality-of-life offenses, and fixing “broken windows”—all of which adds to the complexity of the police role in society (Goldstein, 1993)

Therefore, officers and agencies must do more than simply respond to crime. They must be proactive and anticipate the social and law enforcement concerns of the community before they become problem areas. Community policing officers are viewed as intelligent agents of the criminal justice system who are able to intellectually and emotionally react to citizen concerns. These characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

In sum, community policing is not just a program but an operational and organizational philosophy designed to promote police-citizen community-based problem solving. Partnering with the community, the police seek to find effective long-term solutions to neighborhood crime problems. However, this movement constitutes a major organizational change for the many traditionally managed bureaucratic police agencies in the United States.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of Community Policing

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1. An admission that the police alone cannot solve the problem and that direct participation by citizens is also required.
 2. A shift in the focus of problem definition to a customer orientation and a corresponding concentration on those problems identified by the citizens themselves as being of the greatest concern.
 3. An emphasis on proactive, rather than reactive, policing, replacing a total preoccupation with 911 calls with efforts targeted at particular problems.
 4. The identification and implementation of a range of nontraditional approaches.
 5. The redirection of officers from their cruisers into more direct contact with the community, along with the delegation of decision-making authority to the patrol officer.
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PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is little doubt that police middle managers play a key role in the adoption of any organizational change effort like community policing (Kelling & Bratton, 1993). Failure to win their support is cited as the primary contributor to the demise of team policing in the 1970s (see Sherman, 1975; Walker, 1993). Kelling and Bratton (1993) claimed that middle management has the potential of becoming “the administrative problem” in implementing community policing. They contend that captains and lieutenants gained control of the practice, knowledge, and skill base of the occupation during the development of the professional model of policing. During this reform period, middle managers became the main proponents of the establishment of centralized control over the police organization’s internal environment and operations. Thus, their organizational role makes them the critical actors in the implementation and change required for the adoption of community policing.

This fact is clearly described by Sparrow et al. (1990, pp. 213-214) when they identified six ways that police middle management influences the change process. First, middle managers separate knowledge from power in the department. As a result of their positional authority, they translate the executive’s vision and direction into operational strategies. In order for community policing to take hold, there must not be a barrier between top management and the street cops who have firsthand knowledge of community problems. Second, middle managers largely control the nature of the department’s professional environment. The procedures they develop and the actions they take in dealing with subordinates define and reinforce the core cultural values of the department. It is these core values that inform the officers as to what is and what is not acceptable operational behavior in the department. Third, middle managers are the ones who can change the image

of the procedural manual. Under community policing, it needs to become a source of knowledge, guidance, and inspiration for patrol officers, not the means to justify command control and discipline. Fourth, it is principally middle managers that have routinely quashed new ideas, especially those that they believe challenge their authority. Sparrow et al. (1990) suggested that middle managers subscribe to a new organizational value: "never kill an idea" (pp. 213-224). Fifth, middle managers must define work differently by encouraging their officers to tackle harder, broader problems and empower them by letting them know that the organization values their knowledge and expertise. Finally, middle managers control the extent to which discretion can be built explicitly into the value system rather than being hidden and denied. Ultimately, middle managers have power to choose what they will do: tolerate yet another temporary change in the weather or lend their support to a change in the climate and lead in the reengineering of their organizations.

In 1989, a representative survey of police chiefs in cities of more than 25,000 revealed that 67% had implemented community policing programs in the last 3 years. However, Zhao, Thurman, and Lovrich, (1995, p. 20) found that the departments with the greatest interest in training and education were more likely to implement community-policing programs. Their factor analysis of the responses revealed three types of impediments to the implementation of community policing (organizational, community, and transitional). The mean ratings revealed that police agencies were more concerned with internal organizational barriers than obstacles in their community. The dominant factors were resistance from middle management and line officers. Departments with high correlations on these factors were less likely to implement community policing. In another analysis, these authors discovered that, between 1993 and 1996, interest in community policing had risen and impediments to implementation had been identified. However, they concluded that the institutionalization of community policing was far from certain (Zhao et al., 1999).

Bradstreet (1997) conducted structured interviews with a group of 20 patrol sergeants from the Austin Police Department (in Texas) concerning the implementation of community policing. He found that younger supervisors (the mean age was 39) had more positive attitudes toward community policing. To insure the acceptance of community policing, these sergeants advocated working in teams, the freedom to choose and tailor projects to fit officers' styles, tying community policing to police traditions, and working directly with citizens.

Finally, Gianakis and Davis (1998) conducted a survey of Florida law enforcement agencies and found that community policing took a variety of forms. They discovered that all of the agencies employed some variety of community policing but, even when structural change occurred, the impact on existing policies and systems was minimal. The majority of the organizations in this survey instituted community policing by changing the officers' role rather than the organization. The most common variant employed was restructuring patrol operations through the creation of decentralized substations (Gianakis & Davis, 1998, p. 489).

IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS IN COMMUNITY POLICING

In their colorful critique of community policing, Hunter and Barker (1993) outlined some of their perceived weaknesses associated with community policing. They pointed out that community policing contains layers of "B.S." in that it purports to be "all things to all people under the umbrella of community involvement" (Hunter & Barker, 1993, p. 157). They claimed that departments have great difficulty implementing the model because no one really knows whether it is a program, a philosophy, or both. They pointed out that the decentralization of operational units and focus on order maintenance creates the opportunities for corruption as well as the possibility of unnecessary intrusion in social life (Hunter & Barker, 1993, pp. 160-161). In their view, chiefs and academicians who do not understand it and who are ignoring crime and the necessity of addressing citizens' calls for service have oversold community policing.

Furthermore, Hunter and Barker (1993) contended that the popularity of community policing is shallow and fueled by the tendency to cite "buzz-words." Community policing had been usurped by many police administrators who desire to appear progressive and wish to enhance community relations but who have neither the desire nor the intent to abandon the traditional reactive model of delivering police services (Hunter & Barker, 1993, pp. 161-163). In organizations commanded by these individuals, the basic service delivery strategy continues to be based on citizen-generated calls for service and pressure brought by civic and political leaders. It has been noted that community policing is designed to serve areas in which a sense of community already exists. However, Walker (1993) pointed out that the areas that require the greatest police attention often have little sense of community.

Similarly, Skolnick and Bayley (1988) identified a number of impediments to community policing that exist today as well as when they conducted their research. These include: (a) police organizational norms grounded in traditional notions of the police role, (b) the need for police to react to emergencies, (c) resource limitations, (d) traditional assumptions about patrol strategies, (e) customary public expectations of the police role, and (f) bureaucratic isolation of community programs within the police agency.

Finally, Taylor, Fritsch, and Caeti (1998, p. 3) noted that the problems with community policing are not with the philosophy and mission but with the implementation of change. They raise several key issues regarding this implementation, as follows:

- Changing the entrance requirements for new officers to reflect changes in the police role;
- Changing recruit training from the military-oriented academy to a curriculum more in tune with the new role demanded by community policing;
- Flattening the organizational pyramid and placing more decision making in the hands of officers;
- Turning the organization “upside down” with a commitment to participatory dialogue with officers as a major part of the management style;
- Changing the organizational culture of the department;
- Structural change on a citywide basis.

As noted above, there is a continued debate about the success of the implementation and methodology of community policing. The voices most often heard in this critique are that of academic scholars, and it remains to be seen how their assessments mesh with those of police middle managers engaged in the implementation of community policing. This is the focus of our analysis.

METHOD

THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS COURSE AT THE SOUTHERN POLICE INSTITUTE

This analysis reports on the views of middle managers attending the AOC at the Southern Police Institute. Created at the University of Louisville in 1951, the Southern Police Institute is a division of the Department of Justice Administration in the College of Arts and Sciences. It is one of the

first academic institutions at a university specifically established to educate police officers in United States. Since its founding, the Southern Police Institute has evolved into an advanced leadership and management institute whose mission is to enhance the professional development of law enforcement practitioners. The AOC is a 13-week, accredited, college-level certificate program. The course of instruction is divided into 15 credit hours, which include undergraduate and graduate course options. Undergraduate students can receive 15 units and graduate students 9 units of credit during each 12-week course that is offered twice during the academic year. The course curriculum provides instruction in leadership, administrative management, personnel issues, and organizational behavior, current issues in law enforcement, problem solving, and administrative law.

SAMPLE, DATA, AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This group of police middle managers ($N = 68$), although not a probability sample, does represent 44 agencies from as far north as Alaska and as far south as Florida. Forty-three respondents came from local police agencies with a mean size of 316 officers (Range: 12-1,022) and serving an average population of 137,976 residents (Range: 22,000-364,040). Eighteen members of this group work for county law enforcement agencies with an average size of 639 officers (Range: 124-1700), serving an average population of 561,670 citizens (Range: 104,605-1 million). Seven respondents were from state law enforcement agencies with an average size of 1,946 officers. The average respondent is a male, 43 years of age, with 15 years of police service and 5 years in rank. These officers constitute a convenience sample of professionally oriented police middle managers that attend the AOC program to develop leadership skills. These officers are volunteers—motivated administrators who are attending the Southern Police Institute to further their careers in police management. As such, they may not be representative of the entire corps of police middle managers, but they do constitute a group of career-oriented individuals who are on the cutting edge of their profession. In addition, it would be impossible to conduct a survey of police administrators who have read these community policing works in any other fashion. A sampling frame of such police administrators simply would not be available. In addition, a mailed questionnaire survey is unlikely to elicit the in-depth responses that were gathered for this analysis.

The data for this analysis came from the answers of AOC students to take-home examination questions. These respondents were enrolled in the

graduate option course “JA 665: Special Topics in Policing.” During the course, students were required to read an anthology on community policing research.¹ The results were compiled over three semesters of classes. In the examination, students were asked to give their views of community policing by answering the following question:

What obstacles exist to the successful implementation of community policing in your department? Are they common to other examples that we have considered? Can they be overcome? How or why not? Does policing need community policing to correct the problems that face it today? Can it be done some other way?

Their answers were limited to 5 to 10 typewritten, double-spaced pages. They were also submitted on computer diskette. These answers were the basis of our analysis.

Content analysis was used to analyze the subjects' responses (Weber, 1990). The responses were tabulated in accordance with each test question. The number of responses was compiled, and a listing of categories for each idea was developed. Finally, quotations that best represented the views of the respondents were compiled for each idea.

FINDINGS

OBSTACLES TO COMMUNITY POLICING— MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND OPERATIONAL CONCERNS

The respondents identified a number of perceived obstacles to the implementation of community policing. The top five obstacles ranked according to frequency of identification are presented here.

Establishing and Maintaining Community Involvement

More than half of the respondents (36/68 = 52.9%) claimed that establishing and maintaining community involvement is a major problem. In the classroom discussions, almost all the students claimed that this is an ongoing problem for their departments.

Linkage with the community and engaging in partnership with its residents is a major element of community policing. One of community policing's core assumptions is that community members are willing and able to work closely in cooperation with the police and solve community problems. However, the experience of these informants indicates that this is not often

the case. For a number of reasons, these police middle managers felt that this task is difficult to accomplish. One manager summarized the general feelings of the respondents as follows:

The primary fallacy of the COP (community-oriented policing) concept is the belief that the citizen will take the necessary steps to involve themselves in community crime prevention efforts. In my experience, this has not happened. People will only participate if they believe their community is in trouble, their financial investment is at stake, and there is a dynamic community leader willing to take the lead.

Consistent with the involvement problem is the problem of identifying just who actually speaks for the community and whose interests the police should support. Thus, community policing presents police administrators with problem equity of service and adherence to the rule the law. In a democratic society, police must follow laws and established procedure for the protection of all citizens, not just the needs and values of the few over the many (Kelling & Coles, 1996; Klockars, 1988). One police lieutenant from a city police department expressed this conflict as follows:

Community policing places officers squarely in the middle of awkward conflicts. Block clubs who wish to set up ethnic events often find themselves at odds with official city policy and resent it. Some neighbors want you to act against others with whom they disagree or don't want in their community. Great care is needed to ensure the weight of government will not be used unfairly against those least able to protect themselves. It is my experience than many small social groups want to violate city ordinances.

A minority of the respondents (14/68 = 20.6%) felt that these conflicts result in citizens developing negative feelings about police performance and service delivery in general. During class discussions, several respondents claimed that their department tells the community that they will work to serve their needs. However, when the department cannot provide what the community groups are demanding, a credibility gap is developed and citizens feel the police department is not keeping its word. Community policing, in their view, has enhanced citizen expectations of their local police to an unrealistic level.

Lack of Definition

A sizeable portion of the officers (32/68 = 47.1%) agreed with the themes expressed by Hunter and Barker (1993). They felt that community policing tries to be all things to all people. As a result, it lacks definition and a coher-

ent strategy. This opinion is supported by the fact that many officers claimed that their department does not have a clear strategy or direction for community policing. This sends a message to these officers that executive support for community policing is lacking. As this officer described,

We all operate within our own individual and organizational paradigms, and until we are forced to shift, few will. The current form of organizational management is not favorable or supportive to community-oriented policing. We lack empowerment and visual support for the program. As a result, there is continued strong resistance from the rank-and-file officers and the entrenched organizational structure.

A minority of the respondents (12/68 = 18%) questioned the assumption that the professional model of policing has outlived its usefulness. These responses are summarized as follows:

Law enforcement is expected to “make bricks without straw.” The traditional method of “policing,” catching, and incarcerating the “bad guys,” will never be obsolete. Community policing is not compatible with the notion of a truly free society. It is an emasculated form of policing—a goal and a promise, not reality.

COP represents a “wholesale embrace of untested ideas”—as if a police executive can change the entire focus, goals, and objectives of his/her organization as easily as changing a shirt. It turns the police into armed, underqualified social workers. Community policing, for all its political support, will not change the traditional paradigm.

For many of these officers, the uncertainty created by community policing’s lack of substance and direction reinforces their support for the clearer traditional mission of the professional police model. In addition, when asked during discussions what is the major form of service delivery used by their department, they all answered rapid response to calls for service and random patrol. Thus, although many of these departments claim to be doing community policing, they are in fact adhering to the professional model’s service delivery strategy.

Organizational Structure and Managerial Culture

Almost half of the respondents felt that the traditional hierarchy of authority in their department is a problem (32/68 = 47.1%). They observed that most of their administrative and middle management peers are very territorial and protective of their particular areas of control. They describe the authority structure of their departments as featuring a top-down management style, with work to be performed in compliance with volumes of policy and/or fear of punishment. In the view of our respondents, these are a

hindrance to implementation. Many of the respondents claimed that their departments grant little, if any, autonomy to the individual police officer. Mistakes are typically punished rather than used as a basis for training and effective supervision. Several officers claimed that they were unable trust the ability of line patrol officers to make community problem-solving decisions because they are too young and inexperienced.

One respondent noted that for community policing to become the dominant operational strategy, it must become a part of the very culture of the organization. He stated,

Community policing demands that we reform the entire departmental decision-making process and power structure. Reorient and retrain the entire police department in the tenets of COP from the top management on down, to change their culture from response-oriented law enforcement to community engagement and problem solving. This will require expending much energy and resources for a long period of time. It is just not happening in my department.

Interestingly, many of the respondents were critical of their own performance and role in the implementation of community policing. They clearly recognized that their actions did not enthusiastically support this innovation. One source of their resistance that emerged in the writings and discussions was their belief that community policing could cause middle managers to “manage themselves out of existence.” There is a high level of fear and resistance to community policing among the managers because in their view it seeks to redefine their role and the way they perform their duties. As noted by this officer,

As managers, we are heavily invested in the professional model of policing—with a centralized, hierarchical, and bureaucratized command structure. It is difficult for the middle management officers to give up their power and let the patrol officer make more decisions and to allow the organization to become decentralized. In the end, we have to correct their mistakes with an unhappy public. Our job security and liability are threatened.

Obviously, they fear the loss of their positions, power, and authority under this innovation. This type of fear has been noted in the management literature as a primary source of resistance to change (Beer, 1988).

The respondents also tend to view the implementation of community policing as particularly difficult due to differences in perception among line officers. The dissenting line officers tend to view COP officers and problem solvers as “screw-offs” who cause traditional patrol units to handle the

brunt of the calls for service. To combat this feeling, midlevel managers must be able to manage the organization's service demand while employing a community policing operational strategy. This issue presents a difficult challenge to these managers, and it requires a major strategic redirection of the department. In many departments, this needed strategic direction is not happening.

Specialized Units/Innovation Ghetto

A number of the departments represented in this study implemented community policing as a separate unit. The respondents claimed that this structural arrangement results in a lack of communication between the community policing officers, the road patrol officers, and supervisors (28/68 = 41.2%). As one respondent summarized,

Community policing officers have been empowered by their immediate supervisors to "be their own bosses," and patrol supervisors are unable to use them as a resource to answer calls that are holding. As a result, they are alienated from the other officers because they rarely handle any calls for service and thus add to the patrol officers' workload. Community policing must become a department-wide philosophy practiced by all of our personnel, not just a few in specialized units. There are conflicts between beat officers and community policing officers. They wear a special uniform and are not subject to calls for service. Community policing officers have been involved in activities which have questionable benefit or which do not promote the image and respect we strive for.

Another middle manager stated,

COP officers are viewed as a "protected class." In a separate unit, they are segregated from the remainder of the patrol section, and petty jealousies, communication problems, and other conflicts develop. The deputies that were chosen for our COP unit were marginal performers and/or discipline problems, yet they were given brand-new, federally funded cars and radio equipment. The COP deputies also work flexible hours and will not respond to 911 calls for service. The COP deputies should have been assigned to regular patrol watches and remained a part of the regular patrol section.

A great deal of creative policing has been restricted to individual programs and has not been shared with the average patrol officer, who continues to patrol in the traditional fashion. In effect, these departments have created innovation ghettos comprised of officers who are despised by their fellow patrol officers. Expecting officers to be creative community problem solvers and resource facilitators will require moving beyond separate units

to a total organizational strategy for the adaptation of community policing. In one respondents view,

The majority of community officer aspirants desired the position due to the unofficial benefits and not because of their desire to make a difference within the community. The resistance from the "grunts" is made an even greater problem due to the absence of training or the dissemination of information to the patrol personnel concerning the "program." Community policing was being shoved down the throats of patrol officers without their input into the process. Program officers receive such noncontractual benefits as working Monday through Friday, weekends off, a take-home vehicle.

The respondents indicate that community policing in their agency was most commonly implemented as a separate unit in the organization and that this works against its acceptance by the majority of officers in the department.

The Failure of Leadership

Several respondents claimed that community policing is a failure in their departments because of lack of leadership support (19/68 = 27.9%). As one officer stated,

The chief only displays token interest in programs and ideas proposed by members of the command staff. He has failed to take a position of leadership and has demonstrated little commitment to the community policing philosophy instead of embracing its principles and promoting them throughout the agency.

Several officers complained that their chiefs displayed similar behavior and an unwillingness to show leadership in COP implementation. They claimed that without the chief's support, these programs are doomed.

OVERCOMING IMPLEMENTATION OBSTACLES

Despite the above problems, many of these officers expressed a belief that community policing represented the wave of the future. In discussion groups, the officers expressed the belief that anything that brings their departments closer to the community is a positive thing. As one officer stated,

Community policing reflects police accountability and responsibility to the neighborhoods and the citizens that live there. The police work concurrently with citizens in those neighborhoods on issues critical to the community. Community policing is the blending of police expertise with those of the community volunteers in facing the problem activity in our diverse neighborhoods.

The officers offered the following opinions of how to implement community policing.

Partnerships With the Community

Although they have trouble maintaining community partnerships, approximately half of these middle managers (32/68 = 47.1%) believe that proactively engaging the community is critical to the success of reform. As one officer stated,

Remaining in the traditional reactive mode will foster the “us versus them” attitude, whereas community policing breaks down this barrier. The traditional reactive police operational model also fosters an attitude among the citizens that the police are responsible for dealing with and handling all of society’s ills. Community policing creates a sense of accountability and responsibility among the community.

Many of these officers see the neighborhood as the first line of defense against crime, not the police department. They expressed support for the concept that patrol officers should actively be encouraged to seek input on problems and issues from citizens. Many believe that if underlying problems can be addressed, then calls for service will be lessened. The police and community working together is the foundation of community policing. These officers believe that by the police working closely with community institutions such as families, schools, neighborhood associations, and merchant groups, they may have a better chance to sustain their partnership efforts.

The Need for Strategic Planning

Many respondents (29/68 = 42.6%) suggest that a first step in this process is for the organization to engage in strategic planning. They suggest that what their departments should do is develop a change model for COP. Planning is critical to the success of any change effort (Beer, 1988). However, a critical first step is for the department’s leadership to decide what are the goals for community policing in their department. Once goals have been established, then organizational changes can take place and implementation accountability fixed (Hammer & Champy, 1993). As reported above, this has not been done in some of these departments. As one lieutenant wrote,

The police department must adequately project a clear set of goals, expectations, and success for the community policing programs. Then a plan can be developed as a means to convince political leaders that the program is worthwhile and beneficial to the community. Lastly, organizational changes should take place in line with the plan.

New Role for the Police Officer

The respondents were impressed with the potential for community policing to change the role of the line officer. They felt that uniformed officers (“grunts”) very rarely get the recognition they deserve: “They have been treated like factory workers or privates in the military.” In the discussion, they describe their officers as almost robotic in the way that they respond and handle one call for service after another. They perceive their employees are not being empowered. However, they failed to see their own responsibility for creating this operational world for their officers. It is these middle managers that have the power to grant greater autonomy to their patrol officers. However, when confronted with this fact in the discussion groups, they quickly defended themselves based on the issue of liability. Under community policing, the line officer analyzes, plans, and takes the initiative rather than deferring to the bureaucratic chain of command. They are encouraged to think for themselves and solve problems in their assigned areas, making full use of their knowledge. If they are not permitted to do this, then the department is not engaged in community policing.

Many of the respondents (26/68 = 38.2%) observed that this new role for the patrol officer as a problem solver is critical to creating partnerships with the public. These officers believe that this approach would provide the police with a vast resource pool to address the underlying causes of community problems and crime. As one of the group stated,

By attacking the causes, we can significantly and positively reduce the occurrence of crime and enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods. The community must be trained in taking action by and for themselves to solve its problems. They must be trained to not expect the police to be able to handle all problems and to understand that the police will no longer come on every call for service.

Many of the managers believe that as a result of this change, the officers will feel more job satisfaction and citizens will develop trust in the police. They see this as central to their perception of the basic concept of policing—serving the public. One officer stated that in his area people were more concerned with “noncriminal, nonemergency ‘quality-of-life’ issues.” Concern and care for the welfare of the community may never replace the traditional police role of “incarcerating the bad guys,” but these officers do see it as a positive factor in helping to forge better work relationships between officer and citizen.

Line officers were also cited as crucial elements in the change process. The belief was that change would be easier to implement when the line

officer is included in the process. The values of community policing were cited as particularly pertinent to the new "Generation X" police officers who question authority and established organizational structure (Zemke, Rains, & Filipczak, 2000).

Develop COP Ideologies Within the Department

Again, these positive responses stressed that community-oriented policing is the future of law enforcement. Many officers expressed belief in the ability of the community policing philosophy to promote internal change in police management systems (25/68 = 36.8%). As one respondent noted,

The principles of total quality management (TQM) can help police departments address the limitations of the traditional, professional model. They promise to reduce the layers of authoritative bureaucracy, streamline administration, foster rapid decision making, and improve communications between the ranks. Community policing addresses the limitations of the traditional, professional model. The professional reform strategy in policing did not lend itself to a customer service orientation. Policing today needs to move from the reform strategy to a more responsive, community-oriented approach to address the needs and expectations of citizens. Haplessly, our ties with the community are breaking and the longer we wait, the more difficult the repairs will be.

In order for such changes to take hold, community policing must be embraced as a department-wide philosophy.

The machine is in motion and community policing must be implemented in the future. The agency must support the idea and lead by example and not push it down on the employees. The traditional, bureaucratic model has reached its limits and can no longer deal with the demands placed on it. Organizational structures need to be re-engineered [sic] the mission of community policing. It should adopt as the philosophy of the entire agency to establish a long-term commitment between the police and community and not as a limited project.

Need to Develop a New System of Performance Evaluation

A little more than a third of the middle manager group felt that a new performance evaluation system must be developed (23/68 = 33.8%). The discussion groups suggested that this performance system must measure and reinforce the employee's ability to conduct community policing functions. Also, it was suggested that the internal reward systems be reworked to emphasize the skills necessary to practice COP and that problem solving be recognized over 911-call response. Last, for implementation to succeed, it

needs to be reinforced by the department's performance assessment and reward system. As one manager put it, "What gets measured gets done."

CONCLUSION

The summary of middle manager rankings listed in Table 2 reveals their ambivalence toward community policing. It would seem that they have adopted the philosophy of community policing but are unwilling to make the organizational changes necessary to support it. This is because they are wary of both the potential problems of a philosophy that empowers the least experienced and lowest-ranking member of their organization. This conclusion is supported by the finding that the only ranking that achieved majority status was the obstacle of "establishing and maintaining community involvement" (52.9%). However, there is some evidence that the obstacles to and strengths of community policing identified by these police middle managers mirrored each other.

The community involvement obstacle was balanced by the potential strength of partnerships with the community (at 47.1%, the top identified strength). Obstacles 2 through 5 all have to do with internal issues that can make the implementation of community policing problematic. However, Strengths 2 through 5 deal with methods to handle these issues, such as strategic planning and a new system of performance evaluation and the potential that community policing holds for the line officer. These rankings reflect the thinking of these middle managers and how they would deal with implementation problems.

It is clear that these police middle managers carefully regard the philosophy of community policing. One officer was particularly forthcoming in his or her criticism of the paradigm.

I think the concepts of community policing embody a wide spectrum of philosophies, techniques, and strategies. The spectrum is so broad and so diverse that there is no conceivable way to include them all under a single umbrella called community policing. Probably the worst thing that occurred is that it was given that name. Community policing has become a buzzword known to police, citizens, politicians, and governments. With this name so widely accepted, there is a general belief that if a department is not "doing it," the department is somehow not operating properly; even though no one is really sure what it is. Agencies must guard against using community policing as a total approach or they will face disappointment and failure.

On the positive side is the following quote from another middle manager:

TABLE 2. Obstacles to and Strengths of Community Policing Identified by Police Middle Managers

<i>Obstacles to Implementation</i>	<i>Strengths of COP</i>
1. Establishing and maintaining community involvement (52.9%)	1. Partnerships with the community (47.1%)
2. Lack of definition (47.1%)	2. The need for strategic planning (42.6%)
3. Organizational structure (47.1%)	3. New role for the police officer (38.2%)
4. Specialized unit (42.1%)	4. Development of COP ideologies in the department (36.8%)
5. Failure of leadership (27.9%)	5. Need to develop a new system of performance evaluation (33.8%)

Note: COP = community-oriented policing.

Policing needs community policing because crime and public disorder are not problems. They are symptoms of numerous problems. These problems include drug addiction, unemployment, teenage mothers, etc. . . . Crime is both a symptom of these problems and a result of them. If the policing community continues to address the symptoms instead of the problem, the problem will never be cured and will always be present.

Finally, the heart of the debate is expressed in this quote:

The real issue is whether policing is and should serve such a preeminent social service role. In large part, the answer to this question is whether the police are the appropriate unit of government for the more comprehensive community involvement anticipated by community policing. Although there are numerous reasons militating against such a significant role, it would appear that, for lack of a better solution, that role might fall to the police.

Obviously, these middle managers feel that they are caught in the “middle” of this change in policing. However, many of them fail to take ownership for the role they must play in the implementation process. It is not just the chief executives’ direction and responsibility to make community policing an organizational reality. Organizationally, it is the middle manager that has the responsibility to operationalize the goals and objectives of the chief executive. If their concerns and expressed belief in the potential of community policing is not translated into action aimed at correcting the identified problems, nothing will happen. Community policing is then doomed to be what it is in most police departments today—a special unit program. Their frank responses, however, do provide valuable information concerning the value and purpose of this sea change reform.

NOTE

1. The two anthologies were *The Challenge of Community Policing: Testing the Promises* by D. Rosenbaum (Ed.) (1994, Sage) and *Community Policing* by P. Kratcoski (Ed.) (1994, Anderson).

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