The move to community oriented policing and problem solving: The community as partners for progress

Wayne Everett Miles

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THE MOVE TO COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING AND PROBLEM SOLVING:
THE COMMUNITY AS PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Public Administration

by
Wayne Everett Miles
June 1999
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ABSTRACT

Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) is being perceived as a preferred means for the police to engage their communities as partners for progress in solving the problem of constant or increased demands for police services. This project will examine the concept of the community as partners for progress, and that the appropriate vehicle for this partnership is the move to COPPS. The project explores its impact on law enforcement, and the likelihood of this trend continuing. Detractors from COPPS programs can be expected and will also be explored, as well as some methods by which police managers have moved through them.

The methodology employed utilizes research material gathered from books, published research and literature written on police community oriented policing and problem oriented policing, police management and public administration. Also utilized is original material gathered from the Inglewood Police Department (Inglewood California), which formalized a community and problem oriented policing program known as Inglewood Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (I-COPPS). This project will focus on the police industry as a whole with references to the Inglewood Police Department and several other police agencies to illustrate examples and background information on the topic of COPPS.
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INTRODUCTION

The quality of our lives depends in no small measure on the services that police organizations provide. The police serve their communities in countless ways: from maintaining order and protecting persons from unlawful acts, to protecting the very processes and rights such as free elections, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly—on which continuation of a free society depends. In a society of complex value systems and laws, however, the police themselves can no longer assume total responsibility for a community’s safety. The police must do more to engage their communities as partners for progress through the development of community oriented policing and problem solving (COPPS) programs. These programs emphasize police and community cooperation for the purpose of solving community problems and preventing crime. COPPS challenges police and their communities to provide the leadership necessary to address the issues facing communities in the nineties and beyond.

Fundamental to the COPPS philosophy is the hope for a better tomorrow. It provides a framework to examine and pro-actively respond to changing demographics, social disorder and physical decay. It focuses on neighborhood maintenance and revitalization where necessary; and advances creative and comprehensive interventions against insidious social epidemics such as gangs, drugs and hate crimes. Most important, COPPS is tough on crime; it is more comprehensive and creative, and thus a more
effective approach to policing. Exploring the boundaries of this particular topic is important, because COPPS differs radically from traditional policing, such as motor patrol, and also because the number of such programs nationwide is growing rapidly. Within communities, COPPS initiatives may take various forms (for example, neighborhood policing, community oriented policing, problem oriented policing and the like) and vary in composition and stability over time. Their presence and effectiveness may also vary, depending on quality of life and community well-being issues, and a host of economic, demographic, social, and political circumstances. Nevertheless, COPPS will continue to advance because it seems to make sense, not because it has yet been shown to be demonstrably superior.

The feeling in many communities today is that the system pits law enforcement as an occupying army versus the community. There is some good news in the current situation; it is that the history of this strain has found the 1990’s ripe for change, and COPPS is a pivotal opportunity to unit the police and their communities.

Critics argue that the reason COPPS is still settling in the lower socioeconomic communities (especially minority communities) at a much slower rate than some other communities is that, before, there was no positive foundation on which to build, unlike middle to upper class urban communities. The general public’s feeling that minorities tolerate or condone crime and disorder is one of the great myths of our time. The residents are conservative in terms of crime. In fact, they want the police to be tough on
crime. These citizens are no different than any others citizen regardless of their labeled, so-called “class” or status. Perhaps they might actually want more acute retributions, but they certainly do not want to tolerate crime nor do they like it. Cities where officials engage in hard-line rhetoric and where they spend their limited resources on war-like equipment such as tanks, weapons, riot gear, and tear gas are sending a signal that minority communities resent. The fact is that residents of most minority communities or neighborhoods had justifiable grounds for not feeling relaxed or comfortable with the police. In its daily activity, COPPS embraces the entire community, by assisting them in their vested existence, by working to improve the overall quality of life.

The contention of this project is that the move to COPPS is an appropriate vehicle for the police to engage their communities as partners for progress and will significantly improve a community’s well-being, that COPPS is not meant to substitute for other forms of policing, like motor patrol, but complement all policing efforts, and that COPPS will continue to advance because it seems to make sense, not because it has yet been shown to be demonstrably superior. It should be made clear, however, that this project is intended to raise more questions than it can answer. It is not designed to provide a model for optimal exploration for the move to COPPS as it involves the community as partners for progress. Rather, it serves as a brief overview to identify certain kinds of information to consider in favor of the COPPS initiative. It also targets issues, such as communities of interest, which must be resolved before structuring an effective program.
My experience as a policing officer allowed me to see firsthand how the move to COPPS emphasizing the community as partners for progress can help the police and their communities. My beat encompassed the southeastern part of the city, which is also considered to be the highest crime rate district with the worst gang population. I maintained an office in a shopping center called the Imperial and Crenshaw Shopping Center, and prior at a local elementary school located in the heart of where most of the gang and drug activity was occurring. Policing in my beat area required serving the needs of the people who live, work and visit in the city. Most of the people in my beat are couples with families, and many are young singles. The majority of the people are minorities, primarily African-Americans and Hispanics, and there are also a small number of people from other countries.

The methodology employed in this project consists of secondary data from books, published research literature written on the subject of community policing, problem oriented policing, police management, and public administration that relate to COPPS. Also, original research was conducted on the Inglewood Police Department, which provided primary data.
Inglewood Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving. The City of Inglewood implemented an I-COPPS Program (I-COPPS) to better serve the needs of Inglewood's diverse population. A $1 million grant received from the Department of Justice allowed the City to hire nine police officers and fund the creation of four Neighborhood Public Safety Centers.

Under the command of a lieutenant, the I-COPPS Division is comprised of four police teams which include a Senior Lead Officer (SLO), an Assistant Lead Officer (ALO), a D.A.R.E. Officer, Volunteers and other I-COPPS Officers as assigned to each of the four City "beats." Each beat has a Neighborhood Public Safety Center located in a selected shopping center.

The following programs and positions are all components of the I-COPPS Division of the Inglewood Police. The Commercial Security Officer is the liaison between the business community and the police department and is responsible for security surveys, false alarm billing problems, threatening/obscene phone calls program, C.A.T. (Combat Auto Theft), personal safety classes, New Year's Eve Anti-Gunfire Campaign and is the Assistant Public Information Officer.

Neighborhood Watch is the primary component of crime prevention strategies. Neighbors are encouraged to organize and look after one another. Over 250 block clubs
have been formed as a mechanism, which permits residents to actively participate in safeguarding their neighborhoods.


The Police Activities League (P.A.L.), in collaboration with the Inglewood Unified School District and City Parks & Recreation Department, offers after school and summer activities such as Midnight Basketball.

The Police Chaplains assist department employees as spiritual advisors at major crime/accident scenes, death notifications and assisting victims of violent crimes.

The Public Information Officer is the police department's press liaison and is responsible for coordinating and writing news releases and public service announcements to the news media.

The Volunteer Program is headed by a Program Specialist who is responsible for civilian volunteers who perform various duties in the department, at the Public Safety Centers and the citywide Curfew Enforcement. The Program Specialist is also a certified background investigator who is responsible for recruiting and training civilian volunteers.

Crime stoppers is a fundraising organization staffed by volunteers for citizens to anonymously provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of criminals in exchange for cash rewards.
Curfew enforcement is maintained under section 5-9 of the Inglewood Municipal Code for ages 18 and under. Curfew hours are Sunday to Thursday, 10 p.m. - 6 am and Friday to Saturday, 11 p.m. - 6 a.m.

The Explorer Program recruits boys and girls between 15 - 19 years of age. The Explorer Academy is a 10-week curriculum that promotes good citizenship and interest in law enforcement.

Operation Clear Path provides safe neighborhood routes for school children by utilizing city vehicle workers and volunteers from the neighborhood.

Police Citizens Academy started in 1993. This 10-week program is designed to familiarize Inglewood residents with the inner workings of the police department.

Police Reserves is authorized for 50 civilian volunteers. The Reserves assist and work with police personnel. Reserves also work the Car Club and curfew programs.

S.E.L.F. /L.A.C.E. S.E.L.F. for boys (Self Education Law Enforcement Family) and L.A.C.E. for girls (Ladies Acquiring Character & Education) are rites of passage programs that assist in the re-direction of young men and women from ages 8 - 17. The findings developed from this program will be utilized to substantiate and support the factors listed that the police are more effective by engaging their communities as partners for progress through the utilization of COPPS programs.

First, I will present an overview of the police central mission in general. Then I will review the concepts of community oriented policing and problem solving (COPPS)
to illustrate the major differences between traditional policing and a correlation of community and problem oriented based policing. Next, I will examine the COPPS initiative in terms of what the community is intended to mean in this context, how the concept of community has evolved, and the distinct differences between a geographic community and a community of interest. I will show, using this data, how traditional policing models neglected to proactively focus on solving community problems and adequately include their communities' input and interest for services in the overall police mission. I will correspondingly utilize literature to analyze why the move to COPPS is a valid and viable approach to obtain community support and involvement in examining and proactively responding to urban crime. Major approaches to COPPS are reviewed. Original data from The Inglewood Police Department, Inglewood California, is exclusively featured for this review to demonstrate that the COPPS initiative has positively affected the image of law enforcement and its effectiveness. Lastly, I present using the literature the benefits COPPS are to both the community and the police.
CHAPTER ONE

The Central Mission of the Police

The central mission of the police is to control crime. Increasingly, the police have come to recognize that defining the function of the police exclusively in terms of crime is problematic, for many reasons: How much crime is there? Nobody really knows how much crime there is, so this means that even a dramatic rise in the number of crimes reported may not mean there has been any increase in the actual number of crimes committed, but merely that more are coming to the attention of police. The reverse may also account for at least part of any reported decrease in crime. Indeed, in a community where people do not trust their police, crime rates may plunge merely because residents become increasingly reluctant to call the police. How much can police affect crime rates? The rise and fall in the rates of various crimes may have less to do with police activity than with other factors beyond police control, ranging from changes in the local unemployment rate to the effectiveness of courts and corrections. Is crime the measure that average citizens use to assess the police? There is little doubt that people often complain about how the police should do more to get all the bad guys off the street, but most people understand the limitations under which the police operate.
Most people develop their impressions of police because of contacts that have nothing to do with serious crime—they are stopped for a traffic violation, or they call the department because of a problem with a barking dog or a loud party next door.¹

Crime fighting enjoys wide public support as the basic strategy of policing precisely because it embodies a deep commitment to this objective. By contrast, other proposed strategies, such as problem solving or community policing, appear to ignore this focus.

Although COPPS has no single definition, all advocates of this approach emphasize certain themes: an emphasis on “order maintenance,” perhaps even at some sacrifice of the traditional police function, “law enforcement”; extending police operations through the supportive activities of ordinary citizens (as in crime watches): street cops acting preventively, as problem solvers rather than mere after-the-fact cleaner-uppers of messy situations. These aims require less hierarchy, less control of beat cops through direct supervision, more reliance on police officers’ acting independently, and more emphasis on teams of social specialists.²

Professional crime fighting or as it has more recently been identified, incident-driven crime fighting, relies predominantly on three tactics: (1) motorized patrol; (2) rapid response to calls for service; and (3) follow-up investigation of crimes. The police focus on serious crime has also been sharpened by screening calls for service, targeting patrol, and developing forensic technology (e.g., automated fingerprint systems, computerized criminal record files, etc.). Although these tactics have scored successes, they have been criticized within and outside policing for being reactive rather than proactive.

Reactive tactics have some merit, of course. The police go where crimes have occurred and when citizens have summoned them. They keep their distance from the community and thus retain their impartiality. They do not develop the sorts of relationships with citizens that could bias their responses to crime incidents. Reactive tactics do have preventive effects—at least in theory. The prospect of the police arriving at a crime in progress is thought to deter crimes.

Many police forces have developed proactive tactics to deal with crime problems that could not be handled through traditional reactive methods. In drug dealing, organized crime, and vice enforcement, for example, where no immediate victims exist to alert the police, the police have developed special units that rely on informants, covert surveillance, and undercover investigations rather than responses to calls for service. In the area of juvenile offenses, the Inglewood Police Department, for example, has created
athletic leagues and formed partnerships with schools to deal with drug abuse, gang
activity, truancy, and so on. It is not accurate, then, to define policing as entirely reactive.

The greatest potential for improved crime control does not lie in the continued
enhancement of response times, patrol tactics, and investigative techniques. Rather,
Improved crime control can be achieved by (1) diagnosing and managing problems in the
community that produces crimes, (2) fostering closer relations with the community to
facilitate crime solving, and (3) building self-defense capabilities within the community
itself. Among the results may be increased apprehension of criminals. To the extent that
problem solving or community strategies of policing prepare the police to use local
knowledge and capacity to control crime they will be supportive of the future of
policing.\footnote{Whisen, Paul M. & Ferguson, R. Fred (1996). The Management of Police Organizations, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. Prentice
Hall, Inc./Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, pp.226-227}

COPPS envisions an altered and much better articulated police mission. In the
words Steven Covey, author of \textit{The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People}, it is vital that
everyone is “not only climbing the right ladder, but that the ladder is leaning against the
right wall.” In other words, the police employee, the department, the policy makers, and
the community must understand and, hopefully, appreciate what the police are
accountable for.
For many agencies, the mission is no longer limited to the efficient control of street crime. It also includes a strengthened attack on dangerous offenders, organized criminal groups, and white-collar offenders; a more determined effort to resolve the problems that underlie incidents reported to the police; and a heightened concern for fear, disorder, and other problems that communities designate as high-priority issues. The mission at times includes police action on community problems such as drugs in schools, drunk driving, public drunkenness, unsupervised children, and other medical and social crises. Although it is by no means easy for a chief or sheriff to create an organization that can accommodate these diverse purposes there does not seem to be any fundamental contradiction among these missions. Many departments are already pursuing these diverse missions with encouraging degrees of success.
Influence on the Mission

Who has the most influence on a police department’s mission and goals and who determines what the organization does? The traditional view is one of a bureaucratic driven system. From this perspective, both police and city administrators are primarily accountable to their communities. The police executive is responsible for the value of the service the department provides, and city administrators are charged with overseeing the police executive’s decisions to ensure that those decisions enhance the department’s value to the community. As demands on services surface, police must consider the concept that they, the community and city administrators all are stakeholders and have a legitimate and vital stake in their own welfare, and should view themselves as being in a partnership towards their desired general ends. From this perspective, change is called for not only in police accountability, but also in the goals, operations, and management of the police force.

Stakeholders and Goals. Various stakeholders will have different goals for the organization. Each stakeholder group (police managers, police employees, the community, and city administrators) views the police organization from a different perspective. To illustrate this point, Table 1 delineates the goals of selected stakeholders for the Inglewood Police Department (IPD). Rationality suggests that stakeholders establish goals from the perspective of their own interests. Because of the diversity of
these interests, police management faces the difficult task of attempting to reconcile and satisfy each of the stakeholder groups while pursuing its own set of goals.

**General Goals of Inglewood Police Department’s Stakeholders**

**Table 1**

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<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<td>Police Managers</td>
<td>Police managers would likely want to benefit personally from IPD; other management goals are to expand the IPD or collapse some of its existing units to better respond to the ever-changing needs of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Employees</td>
<td>Employees would likely want IPD’s goals to include providing good working conditions, equitable compensation, and promotional opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Community</td>
<td>The general public would likely want IPD’s goals to provide public input on community priorities for police services, providing effective and efficient services with minimum costs, and increasing employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Administrators</td>
<td>City administrators would likely want IPD’s goals to be to keep them as city administrators and officials and to satisfy the demands of their constituents so that the city would not be liable to lawsuits.</td>
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An argument exists that if police organizations are to experience enhanced effectiveness, the organization must be management-driven. A broader viewpoint recognizes that, because police organizations are complex and depend upon environmental resources, they cannot maximize any single stakeholder group’s interests. Rather, police organizations must be broadly stakeholder-driven, attempting to balance the desires of all stakeholders. Maximizing any one stakeholder group’s interests at the expense of other groups can seriously jeopardize the organization’s effectiveness. Police organizations cannot emphasize the political interests of city administrators over the monetary needs of police employees, for example, without alienating the employees and eventually harming the organization’s productivity (i.e., triggering low employee morale which lead to employee dissatisfaction, grievances, and complaints, and correspondingly, eroding ambition and initiative and a deterioration in performance). Likewise, cutting salaries and jobs while city administrators give themselves substantial raises will cause employees, residents, businesses, and visitors to go elsewhere.

Since various stakeholders’ desires may conflict, police management must resolve these opposing demands. Fortunately, however, some stakeholders may have more than a unidimensional self-interest. For instance, although some city administrators may desire high financial opportunities, they may be unwilling to allow in corporations that produce tobacco products, even though financial opportunities may be associated with such corporations. And some taxpayers may be willing to pay higher taxes for public services
that help protect the environment. Ideally, police managers recognize that the organization must be managed to balance the pluralistic demands of various stakeholder groups. Obviously, this requirement poses a considerable challenge.
CHAPTER TWO

Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving

While Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) builds on the past, it is much more than just a new tactic or program to be added on to prevalent forms of policing. It entails more than identifying and analyzing community problems and developing more effective responses to them. In its broadest context, it is a whole new way of thinking about policing that has implications for every aspect of the police organization, its personnel, and its operations. With an ever-present concern about the end product of policing as its central theme, it seeks to tie together the many elements involved in effecting change in the police so that these changes are coordinated and mutually supportive. It connects with the current move to redefine relationships between the police and the community. Fully implemented, it has the potential to reshape the way in which police services are delivered. 4 Understanding and application of the COPPS approach should permeate the entire police department, both civilian and sworn, and ideally the entire community, including citizens (individuals and groups), civic officials, the community's public and private agencies, and the media. The philosophy is expressed in the organizational philosophy that assigns officers to beats.

COPPS strives for greater crime control. The techniques are sufficiently different from traditional policing, which necessitates separate coverage. COPPS depends on community involvement and relies on police employee problem solving. The crime-fighting, incident-driven strategy targets crime. COPPS also target crime but adds in a strong commitment to order maintenance and crime prevention by analysis. COPPS broadens the mission of the police beyond crime control. In addition to serious crime, COPPS targets so-called petty crime (vandalism, low-level drug dealing, juvenile offenses), fear of crime, and social and physical disorder, including neighborhood decay.

COPPS provides decentralized service. This often means the officer works directly out of an office in the community, many times as part of a larger team (recognizing that circumstances may dictate other arrangements), with the goal of providing Community Officers a defined beat. Regardless of specifics, the objective is to reduce centralized control of Community Officers by the department, in favor of making them directly accountable to the people in their beat.

COPPS provides personalized service. The purpose in decentralizing officers is to allow them the time and opportunity to maintain daily, direct, face-to-face contact with the people in the community, so that they can forge a new partnership, based on mutual trust, to prioritize and address local problems.
COPPS implies a permanent commitment to the community as partners for progress. COPPS officers are permanently assigned to specific beats, and they must not be routinely rotated or used to fill in for vacancies elsewhere in the system.

COPPS focuses on problem solving. The overall purpose of assigning COPPS officers to permanent beats is to allow the officers the time and opportunity to solve problems regardless of whether the solution includes arrest or some other traditional measure of success. COPPS officers are immersed in the life of the community, so that they can develop creative solutions that address the underlying dynamics of crime, fear of crime, and disorder, with the support and often the direct participation of the community as partners for progress.

COPPS enhances accountability, by robbing the predator, the police, and the community can cloak misbehavior. COPPS is full-service policing. COPPS does not supplant but rather builds upon traditional policing, and COPPS officers function as full-fledged law enforcement officers who make arrests, but who do much more.

COPPS is not a specialty. Everyone in the department should practice COPPS, and COPPS officers are not removed from—or elevated above—their fellow officers. Instead they are generalists who perform a variety of tasks that enhance the delivery of decentralized and personalized police service. COPPS involves average citizens in the police process. By providing a neighborhood its own officer, COPPS allows people a voice in how they are policed—in setting local priorities, in identifying solutions, in
developing new proactive efforts and activities. Average citizens will also be asked to participate directly in a variety of initiative.

COPPS complements reactive policing with proactive policing. Traditional policing is structured to focus the vast bulk of its resources on responding promptly to calls for service, whereas COPPS balances those efforts with activities aimed at short-term and long-term prevention of crime, fear of crime, and disorder. COPPS must face the test of operating within existing resources. COPPS must be affordable and cost-effective; it is not something a department tries for a while or employs as an add-on, but rather it must become the way that the entire police department conducts its business in the community.

COPPS may serve as the model and as the centerpiece for the decentralization and personalization of other social services. Experience shows that the next phase of the COPPS revolution may be the application of the lessons learned from COPPS to the delivery of other social services. In practical terms, this can mean assigning other social service agents—the social worker, public health nurse, mental health therapist, drug counselor—to a neighborhood storefront called a Neighborhood Public Safety Center, where the COPPS officer acts as both protector and catalyst.

Important as well is that COPPS cannot function in a vacuum; it depends on broad-based support inside and outside the department. Success in COPPS depends on
the involvement and interaction of the police, individual citizens and groups, civic officials, the community’s public and private agencies, and the media.

The police will need to develop and implement a strategy to educate average citizens and civic officials about the trade-offs implicit in the shift to COPPS and the timetable required to see positive change. Among the most obvious and common trade-offs are that response time for non-emergency calls may be slowed to allow deploying officers in beats, and average citizens are allowed input on local problems and priorities in exchange for their direct participation and support.

Involving community agencies (public and private) in the process is also very important. Their willingness to cooperate and directly participate is a key element in the successful partnership for progress. This may include changing their work hours and considering decentralizing their social service agents, so that they can work directly with COPPS officers, part-time or full-time.

The police must also make an effort to explain to the electronic and print media the importance of educating the public about COPPS and its trade-offs and to encourage them to include this information in their stories to provide information on COPPS.5

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What COPPS Is Not

Just as it is important to explain what COPPS is, an even clearer picture emerges by looking at what COPPS is not. The following myths continue to cloud COPPS’ true role:

1. COPPS is a technique
2. COPPS is “limited” or specialized policing
3. COPPS is foot patrol of the past
4. COPPS is public relations
5. COPPS is anti-technology
6. COPPS is soft on crime
7. COPPS is flamboyant
8. COPPS is an independent entity within the department
9. COPPS is a top-down approach
10. COPPS is paternalistic or elitist
11. COPPS is anti-accountability

COPPS is not a technique. Police terminology abounds in jargon used to define specific strategies or tactics. COPPS instead embraces a philosophy and strategy that says it will provide everyone in the community, not just special interest groups, the kind of people-oriented policing everyone would want for themselves.
At the heart of this effort lies the attitude that people deserve police who not only command, but earn, respect by listening to the community’s wants and needs, maintaining daily face-to-face contact and involving the community in efforts to prevent and control crime. David T. Bayley, author of “Community Policing: A Report From the Devil’s Advocate,” states that “COPPS is more rhetoric than reality. It is a trendy phrase spread thinly over customary reality.”

He further comments COPPS “over a period of years may become unevenly distributed socially and hence geographically. It could become the mode for the affluent, educated middle-class, while traditional, reactive policing remained the mode for the poor and undereducated underclass.” Bayley could not be further from the operational reality of effective COPPS programs. COPPS, if operating properly, distributes police services more evenly and, correspondingly, targets high crime rate areas. It neutralizes the undue influence of special interest groups that have often been the recipients of preferred services. COPPS recognizes that the so-called under class has as much right to quality police service as the affluent or the businessperson. It is broader based protection for all groups. It is an attempt to legitimize the police role, recognizing that crime is only one of the issues the police deal with, not the only issue. COPPS is a proactive, decentralized approach that depends on community residents for input into police policy making,

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7 Ibid., p. 22
priority setting and advice on patrol deployment. It is a philosophy that recognizes that the foundation of the police is a strong departmental mission statement incorporating the values necessary to deliver services equitably and of high quality.

COPPS is not “limited” or specialized policing. COPPS is full-service policing. Unlike specialists like police community relations officers and crime prevention people, the COPPS officer is the one who gives advice on target hardening and then may be the officer who responds to the complaint of a burglary at the same household. The COPPS officer in this expanded and broadened role performs a line function, not a staff function. Bayley feels that, COPPS provides a new and less demanding rationale for the police at the very moment when the traditional justification is failing. The reason why there is an increasing legitimization of the COPPS officer’s expanded role as mediator, organizer and diagnostian is because private and public agencies are not filling the void by providing the necessary services. The police are usually the only 24-hour-a-day agency.

COPPS is not foot patrol of the past. While today’s COPPS often puts officers on foot in the community as was done in an earlier era, today’s officers do much more than patrol a beat. The same officer day after day diagnoses the beat area and then develops problem-solving approaches ranging from organizing neighborhood associations to referring people to appropriate community social agencies.

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8 Ibid., p. 10
COPPS is not, as Bayley states, “old wine in new bottles” or “neighborhood policing reborn.” The foot patrol officer of the past had a different environmental context and different informal resources like the extended family, churches, and ethnic organizations. Present COPPS officers must rely more on formal private and public agencies. Thus, the necessity to be a neighborhood diagnostician and a link to community agencies.

COPPS is not public relations. Bayley has stated that “as a public relations strategy, COPPS is exceedingly clever.” Improved public relations is a welcomed by-product of COPPS' mandate, not its goal. COPPS’ goal is to provide effective police service with a proactive focus. The delivery of quality service to all segments of the community will increase rapport. “PR talk” will be counter productive, and its positive results will be short lived.

COPPS is not anti-technology. COPPS officers may walk a beat and they may be more likely to spend time visiting homes and businesses than sitting behind a computer, but this should not be interpreted as a rejection of technology. On the contrary, if funding permits, many COPPS officers would welcome the addition of a computer terminal linked to the department. However, the effort recognizes that the goal should be to employ sophisticated and expensive technology where it will provide the greatest

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9 Ibid., p. 12
payback. The COPPS officer is like the base of a funnel, using information filtered down from various "hi-tech" sources and providing information upward generated from his/her neighborhood beat. COPPS recognizes that crime means people—criminals and victims—and that the most impressive technology you can employ when dealing with people is a fully functioning human being. Hi-tech is not only hardware of contemporary electronic technology, like automated fingerprint systems and chromosomal analysis, it is also contemporary ideas like profiling, patrol enhancement and crime analysis.

COPPS is not soft on crime. Critics argue that COPPS’ focus on physical and social disorder detracts from “real” policing, in other words, coping with serious crime. The reality is that these social action duties are performed in addition to traditional law enforcement duties and not as a substitute for them. In fact, it would be more precise to say that the average police officer in the United States spends fewer than twenty percent of their time coping with “serious crime.”

COPPS is not flamboyant. When a police special weapons and tactics team (SWAT) arrives at a crime scene and disarms a sniper, everyone cheers. When a COPPS officer awards a student a certificate for completing an anti-crime and drug program or a youngster a donated basketball for helping with local neighborhood clean up efforts, the long-term effect may be equally as dramatic, but the effort fails to make headlines.

COPPS is not an independent entity within the police department. COPPS is not meant to substitute for other forms of policing, like motor patrol, but to complement all efforts. If the program is functioning properly, the vital information the COPPS officer gathers should be disseminated through the department. COPPS works best when it is not forced to operate in isolation.

COPPS is not a top-down approach. What makes COPPS unique is that it relies on input from the community at large and not just community leaders or special panels. COPPS actively solicits input from all constituents.

COPPS is not paternalistic or elitist. Professionals in any field often feel they know better than others how the job should be done. Just as American businesses, like the auto industry, have learned that you cannot leave the consumer out of the equation, COPPS gives the “consumers” of police service a voice. It focuses on values, not artificial “professional” images. Most importantly, however, are the incalculable values that respect the person and the delivery of quality service.

COPPS is not anti-accountability. Another concern about COPPS is its supposed lack of accountability. Indeed, poor supervision and lack of independent oversight of foot patrol officers in the political era demonstrably led to problems and abuses. The COPPS initiative, however, does not rely exclusively on formal evaluations by superiors who may not actually know much about the officer’s performance on the job, the community

12 Ibid., p. 9
13 Ibid., p. 16. Ibid., p. 24
itself acts as an additional check on the officer as both the “eyes and ears” to prevent and solve crime and as eyes and ears to prevent and control deviant behavior by the police.

As the community becomes more involved in the police process, they lose their reluctance to communicate directly with the police. Control of police behavior from the “grass roots” is much more effective than control by a police supervisor or control by either special committees or civilian review boards. The context of policing today is much different than in the past “political era.” Political “machines” do not control the neighborhoods or the police; many officers are highly educated and/or trained; police officers are protected by collective bargaining agreements; and, in most cases, pay scales are reflective of the economy. The primary accountability problem COPPS faces really stems from the fact that no new measures of its effectiveness have yet been developed to supplant the common reliance on such measures as response time, arrests, traffic citations, and a reduction in various crime statistics.

What COPPS does is employ a broad-based approach to community improvement that makes the entire environment one that deters, inhibits, or prevents crime. Therefore, if COPPS officers fail to be effective because of their involvement in the community, his or her superiors ultimately will hear about it. There is very little doubt that supervisors need only drive through beat areas to see what kind of direct impact their officers are having. If the supervisor sees a

\[\text{Ibid., pp. 27, 28}\]
neighborhood sliding downhill, with uncollected garbage and drug activity operating openly on the street corners, it is obvious the officer is not doing the job.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} Trojanowicz, R.C. An Evaluation of the Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program in Flint, Michigan. East Lansing, MI: National Neighborhood Foot Patrol Center
CHAPTER THREE

The Community as Partners for Progress

The development of the community as a partner through the conscious improvement of COPPS has shown itself not to be just one more front-office idea that takes up a field officer's time. Rather, it emerges as a prime strategy in the survival of not only police departments but also entire communities where people can live and plan in confidence and harmony. Any attempt to explain and define the COPPS initiative must also include identifying what the term "community" is intended to mean in this context. The term "community" can mean very different things. Understanding the dynamics of community is critical to the prevention and control of crime and disorder. The purpose of this chapter will first be to show how the concept of community has evolved over the years and, Secondly, to discuss the distinct difference between a geographic community and a community of interests. These distinctions were easily overlooked in the past when both kinds of community typically overlapped to cover the same population. This has particular relevance to the use of community in COPPS, because crime, disorder, and fear of crime can help create a community of interest within a geographic community.

Enhancing and emphasizing this particular community of interest within a specific geographic community can provide the impetus for residents to work with COPPS

17 Herman Goldstein: Problem Oriented Policing (1990 by Mcraw-Hill, Inc.), p. xii-4
officers to create a positive sense of community in the fullest sense of the term. Therefore
the use of the word community in COPPS can refer to many different and sometimes
overlapping entities. The community of interest generated by crime, disorder, and fear of
crime becomes the goal to allow COPPS officers an entry into the geographic
community. Then together the officer and the “community” can develop new structures
and tactics designed to improve the overall quality of life, allowing a renewed community
spirit to build and flourish.¹⁸

The Community

The United States was primarily an agrarian society with less than 10 percent of
the population living in cities. During this period at the turn of the century, the term
community did not require definition, conveying as it did the idea of a distinct area where
residents shared a common geography and a common culture, as well as elements of
mutual interdependence. As people migrated from farm communities into cities during
the increasing industrialization period, the term communities seemed apt in describing
how even the largest cities divide into smaller units that seemed to meet these three
criteria.

¹⁸ Fessler, Donald R., Facilitating Community Change: A Basic Guide (San Diego: University
According to Donald R. Fessler, (rural) sociologists defined community as “any area in which people with a common culture share common interests.” The problem with such a broad definition is that it can be applied to anything from “a rural village of half a hundred families” to “one of our major cities.” As Fessler noted, large cities are not what we mean when we talk about communities, because the inherent depersonalization that dominates large cities militates against the cohesive sense of community.

In the 1920’s, sociologists such as Robert E. Park described the community as a group of people living in a specific geographic area and conditioned by the subcultural or life processes of competition, cooperation, assimilation, and conflict. The unplanned life processes created so-called natural areas that not only had a defined territorial frame, but also shared special or unique cultural and social characteristics, wrote Meehaghan in his treatise, “What Means ‘Community’?”

By the 1950’s, there were nearly as many definitions of community as there were authors of the subject. George A. Hillery, Jr., of the University of Atlanta, attempted to classify 94 different definitions, by content, to see whether he could identify areas of common agreement. His conclusion was that, “Most...are in basic agreement that

20 Ibid., p. 7.
21 Ibid., p. 7.
22 Ibid., p. 94.
community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional ties.""\(^24\)

This makes it easy to see how the term "community" began to become synonymous with "neighborhood," when applied to areas within cities, though sociologists and ecologists continued to draw distinctions between the two terms that often tended to confuse rather than illuminate the difference. Suzanne Keller, published a 1982 paper called "The Neighborhood," defined neighborhood in terms that echo common definitions of community, demonstrating that confusion concerning how these two terms differ persists today: "The neighborhood, viewed as an area or a place within a larger entity, has boundaries either physical or symbolic and usually both where streets, railway lines, or parks separate off an area and its inhabitants or where historical and social traditions make people view an area as a distinctive unit. Usually these two boundaries reinforce each other: the physical unit encourages symbolic unity, and symbolic boundaries come to be attached to physical ones."\(^25\)

Efforts to update and refine the definition of community in the 1970's focused on identifying new unifying principles. The University of Chicago’s Albert Hunter, in his book, Symbolic Communities, noted the close association among the words "common," "communication," and "community" and posited that both language and shared symbols

\(^24\) Ibid., p. 111.
could help in identifying what he called the “natural community.” Meehagan focused on “social area analysis,” where census tract information was used to break out urban groups of 3,000 to 6,000 people where the data on the homogeneity of economic, family, and ethnic characteristics could be used to identify the boundaries of communities. The theme underlying much of the continuing interest in finding a viable definition for the term community is that once you can identify a community, you have discovered the primary unit of society above the level of the individual and the family that can be mobilized to take concerted action to bring about positive social change. Rita Mae Kelly writes in Community Control of Economic Development, “Prior to the riots in Watts, that in ghetto areas of large cities, the word ‘community’ was almost never applied to neighborhoods or blocks in cities.” The necessity of finding ways to cope with urban social problems that contributed to those riots obviously made identifying the primary unit above the family level that could be harnessed for social change a far more burning issue than it had seemed previously. However, at least three profound changes that have occurred in the United States since World War II have dramatically altered the concept of community. The impact of mass transit, mass communications, and mass media have widened the rift between a sense of community based on geography and one based on a community of interest.

27 Meehagan, p. 95.
Technological Change

The term community implied both a physical and psychological component, which is something many traditional definitions of community do not address. The physical aspect of community related to the fact that the individual lived in a specific geographic area, bounded by functions in daily life that are tied to concrete structures and institutions, such as schools, churches, shops, and other public and private establishments. A community also contains an emotional component based on a community of interest. The glue that held communities together flowed from the communication between community residents that took place during those daily activities. 29 Suzanne Keller wrote about rupture between the physical and psychic aspects of community: "It is now possible for individuals to travel throughout the globe without ever leaving home, while others are at home wherever they set foot. Expanding spiritual and physical horizons have severed the original link between place and community." 30 The three major technological changes: mass transportation, mass communication, and mass media have played a great role in the divorce between geography and community. And while some researchers have touched on the effects of

one or more of these factors, it is almost impossible to overstate the impact this trio has wrought.

In the rural model of the past, the overlap between a community of interest and a geographic community blurred the distinction between the two. For example, when a crisis occurred, perhaps a neighbor's barn burned, neighbors linked by a common geography and a community of interest pitched in to help the farmer build a new barn. While altruism may well have played a role, the underlying reality also operating was that neighbors stuck together because the farmer who lent a hand today knew he might well need a helping hand himself tomorrow.

It's easy to see how mass transportation and mass communication have altered the equation. Today, if you break your arm, instead of asking the stranger next door for help, chances are you will be far more likely to pick up the phone (mass communication) to call a friend or relative across town or across the country asking for help. Then he or she can climb into a car or hop on a plane (mass transportation) to come help.

Chances are as well that you made the decision concerning whom to call based on a community of interest. Maybe you became friends all the way back when you studied the same subject in college. Or perhaps your avid interest in jogging initially brought you together. It could be you found enough common ground as coworkers, back before you
were transferred 2,000 miles away. Perhaps you met at the same cooperative daycare center when your first child was born.31

These kinds of experiences allow people to identify enough of a community of interest to establish a bond of trust. In our rural past, when we did not have the freedom to talk with or visit people far beyond our immediate locale, we were forced to learn to trust our neighbors. Today, it takes less effort to call a friend 1,000 miles away for advice, comfort, or assistance than to walk to the neighbor next door. And we can choose from among the telephone numbers in our address book instead of trying to find common ground with the next door neighbor.

While the effects of mass transportation and mass communication have been identified as influences that have contributed to the breakdown of the geographic connection in the traditional definition of community, scant attention has been paid to the role the mass media plays. The relatively recent proliferation of "lifestyle" pieces in newspapers and in nightly television news demonstrates how much individuals and families crave a shared identity. To meet that need, both journalists and advertisers reinforce our perceptions of ourselves as members of well-defined subsets whose identity is based on community of interest.

Instead of defining ourselves by the neighborhood/community where we live, we are likely to label ourselves in terms invented and reinforced by the mass media: baby

boomer, born again Christian, feminist, yuppie, New Age, dink (double income, no kids). For many in today's society, we are what we do and we define ourselves primarily in terms of career. Those who find less satisfaction in their work define themselves by their leisure time activities as a track athlete, a classic car buff, an antique hound. Others see themselves in more political terms: conservative, liberal, tax protester, peace activist.32

If this seems an overstatement, consider that the "invention" of the teenager as a defined community of interest has been a fairly recent invention. Access to the automobile and the telephone, combined with reinforcement of their existence as a special community with defined needs and values, allowed young people between the ages of 12 and 20 to begin seeing themselves differently than they did in the past, when they were simply young people approaching adulthood. The primary community of interest that has encouraged them to group together is the ambivalence in their relationship to their parents, upon whom they depend for support but who rarely allow social autonomy as quickly as most teenagers would like.

Today, mimicking adults, teenagers no longer see themselves as a monolithic group. Within that broad age defined community of interest, teenagers break down into subsets based on divergent communities of interest, visibly identified by rigid (though informal) dress codes and shared language (slang). And teen publications reinforce the individual's identity as a "punker, New Ager, doper, heavymetal headbanger," and so on.

32 Mumford, Lewis, quoted in A New Public Policy for Neighborhood Preservation, by Roger S. Ahlbrandt, Jr., and James V. Cunningham (New York: Praeger, 1979, p. 6.)
Freed from the link to place, an individual can shift gears into and out of various communities of interest during the day. For example, a young woman who identifies during the day with her position in upper management may switch to seeing herself as an aerobics enthusiast at her class that evening.

When paring community of interests and geography was still relevant in defining community, a certain political unity was also implied. That is why, in an earlier era, political candidates would make required visits to neighborhoods, particularly ethnic neighborhoods, in search of votes. Many such neighborhoods literally voted as a block, because their shared community of interests meant that certain issues was of particular concern. In addition, because of the cohesion inherent in such communities, the ward heeler approach could turn out the vote, since face-to-face politicking was singularly effective within such unified communities. Obviously, the pervasive influence of mass media played a role in changing the political equation in communities, since TV ads have replaced handshaking as the most effective political tool.

No longer are neighborhoods as likely to vote as a block, which not only means that they exhibit political apathy but also reduced political clout. Under the old patronage form of neighborhood politicking, corruption flourished, but a politician had to address enough of the community’s needs in order to maintain loyalty. Now that voters are fragmented into varied communities of interest more often than their votes are tied to place, the voters’ ability to lobby as a unit for their neighborhoods’ needs has suffered.
In addition to the combined effect of both these technological and political changes, we can add the changes caused by a profound shift in this country's urban communities after generations of white and then black flight. As the automobile freed people from the need to live close to their jobs and a rising standard of living put cars within the reach of more families those who could, typically opted to escape to the suburbs. The explosion of urban crime that has persisted almost unabated since the 1960's persuaded those who could afford to leave that it was prudent to do so.

The irony, of course, is that the departure of those dollars reduced urban services even more. At a time when employers were demanding better educated workers, many city schools suffered budget cuts that contributed to their relative decline, which meant that even those students who graduated typically possessed fewer skills than children raised in the suburbs. In addition, the dropout rate among urban black students now approached 60 percent. The spiral decline contributed to urban decay, with fewer dollars, public and private, to put toward escalating problems.

In neighborhoods of the past, those who provided public and private services came to the community they served. Everyone from the "paper/rags" man, the public health nurse, the scissors sharpener, the cop on the beat, and the social worker came into the community to work. Today, the equation has changed and now individuals must seek

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out those services. Ironically, residents of poor neighborhoods, the ones with the fewest resources, must now find a way to travel to those services or substitute a telephone call.34

Policing for Today’s Community

The point in these discussions is to examine the dynamics that play a role in shaping the new kinds of community today’s police must serve. To define how community is used in COPPS, therefore, requires defining community in new terms. It was the late social activist, Saul Alinsky, who proposed viewing community through the prism of issues which, in essence, constitute the most urgent kind of community of interest.35 Within any geographic area, the issues that provide the police with the unifying principle necessary to allow them access to the community so that they can most effectively do their job are crime, disorder, and fear of crime.

Much of the renewed interest in defining community, so that this unit can be targeted for change, occurred after the devastating riots in our inner cities. The initial police response to the riots was to institute “community relations” programs, the failed precursor to the COPPS movement that has sometimes confused what the new movement does.

35 Mcenaghan, p. 97.
Most community relations programs were based on the traditional definition of community, the idea that there was a cohesive group within a specific geographic area that could be persuaded through an educational effort that the police are "good guys." The fact remains, however, that community relations programs failed because they did not address the issues of crime, disorder, and fear of crime that provide modern communities and the police with a mutual community of interest that can allow for meaningful interaction.

What COPPS does is put an officer in daily face-to-face contact with the community, so that he or she can have the input of the community in setting priorities. Unlike police programs of the past where police administrators or so-called community leaders set the police agenda, the COPPS movement encourages all sectors of the community to become involved.

COPPS need not be restricted to blighted, inner city neighborhoods. For instance, the Clearwater (Florida) Police Department not only employs COPPS in troubled neighborhoods, but also in their new beach patrol. This reflects the fact that the beach "community" made up of shopkeepers, residents, and tourists not only inhabit the same geographic location, permanently or temporarily, but that their community of interest lies in their desire to reduce crime and disorder on the beach.

It is true, however, that many COPPS efforts have demonstrated success in blighted neighborhoods. While many affluent neighborhoods have a strong desire to
reduce crime, the fact is that they tend to have fewer problems with serious crime than their inner city counterparts; they have more private resources to deal with the threat (ranging from burglar alarms to hired security guards); and the lack of social and physical disorder tends to act as a deterrent to crime, since it conveys the message that crime will not be tolerated within that community.

The fact is that neighborhood decay acts as a magnet for crime, and police departments must allocate scant resources where they hold the promise of making the greatest impact. Putting a COPPS officer into a blighted neighborhood can be a very positive first step in reclaiming that traditional sense of community because of the variety of roles the officer plays. The officer’s primary duty or course is to control crime. However, the single most important thing an officer needs to carry out that mandate is information. The rapport engendered by having the same officer in the same geographic area every day facilitates a two-way information flow. The officer becomes a member of the community.

The officer also acts as a visible deterrent to crime, of crucial importance to those who may lack even the resources to afford a telephone to call the police. Quite obviously the elderly retiree who has no car and must walk to the bank to cash his pension check would find the armed officer’s presence reassuring. The officer’s presence can also deter open drug sales, a potent symbol that the community has lost control. By allowing law-abiding citizens to reclaim their streets, the COPPS officer helps inspire a renewed sense
of confidence in the community. The officer can be the catalyst in the formation of block clubs and associations so that people can be the “eyes and ears” of their neighborhoods.

In the role of community liaison, the COPPS officer also acts as the community’s link to other public agencies. The police are the only governmental agency open 24 hours a day, which makes them the ideal public agent to begin regenerating community spirit. Perhaps the community’s priority is to remove abandoned cars or to have regular trash pickups. While that may not seem like “crime fighting,” crime and decay cluster together, so towing cars and removing trash may be crucial steps in transmitting the message that the community will no longer tolerate crime.36

Creative COPPS officers have developed a wide variety of new approaches to meet local community needs. In one community, an officer held a job fair, including speakers who used role playing to teach interview skills. Another tapped local businesses to donate paint to upgrade the homes of the indigent. The teenagers who helped were rewarded with donated sportsgear. In the role of community catalyst, the COPPS officer provides the hope that urban life can again be enjoyed in safety.

The community can be the most important weapon in fighting crime. However, the sad fact is that many communities have lost the collective will to fight the battle against drugs, decay, disorder, and crime. By getting back to the basics and by stimulating communication between police and neighborhoods processes that allow the

community to rebuild that traditional sense of pride in community life, the COPPS movement holds the promise of improving the quality of life in our cities. And perhaps even more importantly we must recognize the need to restore our communities before this opportunity disappears forever. As author Lewis Mumford wrote: “We shall never succeed in dealing effectively with the complex problems of large units and differentiated groups, unless at the same time we rebuild and revitalize the small unit...The home and the neighborhood are an integral part of the region.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Areas of Resistance

Programs have been added and programs have been deleted as police organizations have searched for magic formulas that would begin to turn back the tide of negativism and lack of confidence in the police. It has become quite clear that police organizations will never have sufficient resources to be all things to people, and that priorities will need to be continuously audited to ensure that allocations of resources are responsive to the most accurate, up-to-date information. Obviously, people from neighborhoods who feel most comfortable with the police are also most likely to be cooperative in assisting the police and each other. These neighborhoods are likely to require less intensive policing than do others, less cooperative areas. To carry this further, it is apparent that lower-class neighborhoods, especially in large metropolitan areas are less likely to have confidence in the police then are urban and suburban middle-class neighborhoods, where conflicts are not so likely to occur.³⁸

When the police are summoned to solve community conflicts in lower socioeconomic ethnic neighborhoods, they are viewed, by some at least, not as the

solution but as the problem against whom the “conflictant” and observers unite. This phenomenon continues to confuse police officers, especially younger officers who do not yet understand the morals and values that exist here. Thus they respond in ways that further hinder communication, understanding, cooperation, and, most important, effectiveness. COPPS for the most part, connotes programs designed to bring officers into closer, more positive contact with the community; to reduce conflict so that there is less need for over policing; and to enhance the police officer’s image as a protector first, rather than enforcer.

It is in the lower-class neighborhoods where officers are most likely to be the focal point upon whom the hopelessness and frustration that accompany poverty are openly targeted. “Things are bad for me because of the government. You are the government. Therefore, you are the reason for my problems.”

Former centers of powerlessness, however, are finding and expressing new power through a relatively new idealism. Gang members are now likely to be referred to (and refer to themselves) as “club” members or “car club” members. These gangs have found powers in that regularly constituted organization are likely to come to their aid in dealing with the police—after the fact. With this and other social changes, the police have tended to adopt a more defensive stance. Institutions and organizations are very

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quick to take up the cry of police brutality, over policing, and the like; and police officers feel that they must be ever prepared to defend their actions and the policies of their organization.

There is good reason, therefore, to concentrate COPPS efforts in the areas of most prominent need, not only with the citizens who live there but with the officers who serve there as well. This is not to say that the police who serve in middle-class and upper-class neighborhoods are free to ignore the problem, for they are not. The relationship that exists between the police and any community served is not to be regarded lightly. One cannot know too much about those, he or she serves. The Hispanic subculture is the most rapidly growing in the United States today; the Asian second. Yet relatively few officers have a comprehensive understanding of either one of them. It is no longer rational (if it ever was) to look at someone and make certain critical judgments on the basis of what that person looks like.41

Cultures are different and people within cultures are different. The enlightened officer is one who begins to recognize and appreciate those differences. The enlightened, effective officer is one who is confident enough to work within those differences. In reality, it would be impossible if not unconscionable to treat everyone alike, for all situations that seem alike are not necessarily so. Without the support of its

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41 Ibid., p.31
citizens, any police force, regardless of size, it not likely to be effective or at least as effective as it might be.42

A secondary area of resistance to certain concepts of COPPS programs is found within the organization. The manner in which police departments have evolved has resulted in strongly supported traditional organizational structures and roles. The idea of sharing policing responsibilities with the community is difficult for many traditionalists to accept. This concern is exacerbated by the fact that some COPPS programs often operate outside the chain of command (leaving many traditionalist feeling that they are “losing control”) and do strange things not thought to be police functions (commonly mocked as being “social work”).

This kind of lack of understanding, commitment, or outright stubborn resistance throughout some organizations has either caused the modification or the complete phasing out of many earlier model programs. Again, some have also failed for lack of community interest or support.43

COPPS versus Police-Community Relations

The police-community relations concept was a step forward, but it was limited. Its goals were to promote public understanding, confidence, and public support through the dissemination of information. These goals are still valid; however, the goals of COPPS are substantially broader and necessary to today’s policing needs.

1. To promote police/community partnerships and problem-solving strategies that combine enforcement and prevention so that the police can respond proactively to the causes of crime, fear and other social problems.

2. To foster and improve communication and mutual understanding between the police and the total community.

3. To promote intra-professional approaches to the solution of community problems, and stress the principle that the administration of justice is a total community responsibility.
Police-community relations is essentially a one-way communication program embracing the concept that people are more likely to support those things that they understand. COPPS, on the other hand, involves two way communications in order to bring about change and modification. The change is desirable on the part of not only the public but the police as well.

The need for an active police-community relations program has not diminished with the formalization of COPPS. If anything, its importance to the total law enforcement program is even greater than in earlier years. The police are continually called upon to perform many tasks, the results of which often are perceived negatively, especially when overshadowed by half-truths and conjecture by the uninformed or misinformed. Therefore, clarification is needed, and it can best reach the greatest number of people in the most expedient manner through an active public relations program.

It must be recognized, however, that successful police organizations are those that are flexible enough to accommodate to changing needs, to change themselves. This is not a change for the sake of change, but rather change to improve the quality of life. Recognizing the need for change is one the first steps in the process, and this recognition is accomplished through feedback. The best feedback is often the most direct, and in this case it involves the bringing together of active members of the police department and active members of the community at large in a dialogue to exchange ideas and opinions.
Obviously, there is a certain amount of police-community relations in COPPS; they involve a communication of the kind of goals and responsibilities held by the police and the method by which they are most likely to be accomplished. On the other hand, in a two-way conversation the police learn something of how they and their actions are perceived. If they are properly alert, they can learn how better to attain certain goals in a more acceptable manner. This can also be an important form in which to test the acceptance of new programs and to make any necessary adjustments before they are initiated. The most basic and most successful COPPS opportunity still begins with a positive one-on-one conversation.

**Detracting Elements in COPPS**

Surprisingly enough, the very existence of a COPPS program will be threatening to some segments of both the community and the police department. Regardless of the program’s title, regardless of its goals and good intentions, some will perceive a sinister or negative motive. At the community level, there is a need for confidence and freedom of expression. By virtue of their presence, COPPS officers will learn a great deal about the community. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that they are not called upon to consciously seek intelligence-type information. Obviously intelligence is necessary for some departmental operations. On the other hand, if a COPPS
officer deliberately engages in intelligence activities, many citizens—and particularly those already suspicious of the police—will refuse to participate in its activities. The formal organization should recognize that sincerity, trust, and mutual respect must exist between the community and the COPPS officer and should make every attempt not to compromise this relationship.

Conversely, COPPS officers are bound to learn a great deal about the conduct of other departmental members from various contacts with the community. If the department in general perceives the COPPS movement as covert, (that is, it is in reality an “internal affairs” unit to expose police deviant behavior), dysfunctional suspicion will arise.44

While the COPPS movement may prove to be the source of a great deal of information that should not be ignored, the information should be primarily utilized for training and bringing about understanding and change in the broadest, most positive sense. The COPPS officer must not be placed in a compromising situation with the community. It is only reasonable that he or she likewise should not be compromised in his or her own department.

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COPPS is the new orthodoxy of law enforcement. Rather than just reacting after crimes by racing to a ceaseless string of calls for service, police should try to create partnerships with their communities in advance to solve problems that otherwise lead to crime. “If community policing isn't in your town yet, it’s probably coming. We’re determined to put more police officers on the street and to expand community policing,” President Bill Clinton has said; he hopes to fund 100,000 more cops for America’s crime-ridden cities. In a recent survey by the FBI and the National Center for Community Policing at Michigan State University, 50 percent of police officials serving cities with populations of more than 50,000 people said they were following this approach to policing, and an additional 20 percent planned to inaugurate it within a year.

Despite its allure on paper, turning the theory into practice is proving complicated. If COPPS cannot deliver quantifiable results quickly, it could end up on the scrap heap of innovation. The variety of programs that are described as COPPS vary substantially. Some cities programs have been singled out as incomplete and superficial, and lacking the problem-solving component. The difference between the “real McCow” and the fakes often comes down to whether the police department appreciates the depth of change needed to make an honest go of COPPS.

The changes needed typically go to the core of a traditional, paramilitary police culture. For one thing, departments must recruit differently, attracting people interested in
service, not just adventure. Police academy training needs to expand beyond arrest procedures to include building skills like community organizing. Statistical performance measures—like number of arrest made or citations written—have little meaning in such a system.

Police departments must also find ways to free officers from the ceaseless string of calls for service: nonstop calls that send officers going from one call to the other. In some departments, dispatchers query callers aggressively to screen out non-emergency calls. But the problem persists. Ideally, experts say, all officers should participate in COPPS, but the influx of service calls, especially emergency calls ("911") forces some departments to split their officers, with a few officers working full-time on community problems while others answer radio calls. In New York, this has caused animosity between the two groups. The reality, contend some experts, is that community policing requires more officers, a tough sell for budget-strapped cities.

When practiced well, COPPS assumes each neighborhood has unique problems, so police commanders and line-level officers are encouraged to customize service, not just follow general edicts from headquarters. Yet many officers feel the philosophy is soft on crime or isn't "real" police work. And many sergeants and lieutenants have resisted allowing street officers to devise their own solutions, fearing a loss of control.

The challenges don't stop with the police. Bringing other government agencies and the community at large into the process as partners is crucial. But overworked city
agencies have at times had trouble responding when police have asked for their help. And many neighborhoods are not taking up the new role demanded of them, especially if they are plagued by crime or have a history of bad relations with the police. People may be afraid of neighborhood retaliation for their participation, uninterested, or simply mistrust the police.

Even if all the obstacles can be overcome, there is no certainty on whether COPPS makes a difference. Nevertheless, Community policing is advancing because it seems to make sense, not because it has yet been shown to be demonstrably superior.

The Partnership

In the middle-class neighborhood, police community partnerships are not difficult to develop, given the present-day crime picture. When crime was occurring in other neighborhoods people were not particularly concerned. But now that crime patterns transcend all boundaries, people are interested—it is their problem too, they have a stake.\textsuperscript{45} Personnel in COPPS programs have their work cut out for them in neighborhoods where the police are seen by some as the enemy or at least someone you do not want to be caught cooperating with. These are usually the lowest socioeconomic ethnic neighborhoods.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.150
Crime in the lowest socioeconomic ethnic neighborhoods is not new. These are inherently high-victimization areas, but the victims for one reason or another are reluctant to complain to the police. This may be a result of mistrust, certain informal “rules” or morale, or simply fear of retaliation. Asian neighborhoods and businesses are particularly among the new variations of “don’t cooperate with the police.” While most criminals attempt to hide their identity from their victims, Asians gang members committing crimes make certain that they are identified by those present. And the threat is very clear that if victims or witnesses cooperate with the police, these are the people who will retaliate. These are the neighborhoods where COPPS officers face their greatest challenge.

First there must be a dialogue, any kind of ongoing non-threatening dialogue. Eventually, through this dialogue there must evolve an understanding that crime is everyone’s business not just that of the police, and that this problem cannot be solved without community involvement. Finally, there must be an understanding that every citizen in the community has something to lose and something to gain; every citizen is a stakeholder and, hopefully, a partner.46

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CHAPTER FIVE

Major Approaches to COPPS

During the late 1960s and 1970s, following recommendations, from the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, a proliferation of federally funded police—community relations models sprang up throughout the country. The purpose was to bring police officers closer to the community, to promote mutual support, to encourage communication, and so on. Some programs experienced relative success; others did not. Most were relegated to test areas and specific officer assignments, as opposed to total departmental understanding, involvement, and support. Even those programs held up as positive examples were, in almost every case, gradually phased out or modified in such a way as to become isolated from the mainstream of their respective agencies. The programs did little to strengthen relationships between the community and response-oriented police officers, or even between police officers assigned to “community relations” and other officers.

The 1970s also gave birth and often death to some form of team policing. Early team policing programs were burdened by lack of documented successes and failures. Those who experimented with team policing were not aware that elements of team policing would prove to be incompatible with preventive patrol and rapid response to calls for service. It would be implemented, voluntarily assigned officers and citizens
would like it, it would have an initial impact on crime, and then traditional habits would overwhelm it and the program would disappear.\textsuperscript{47}

The Inglewood, California, Police Department instituted a program considered by many to be one of the showcase of federally funded community policing programs. As early as the 1970s, the Inglewood Police Department was actively involved in forging community partnerships that have become the foundation for many of its community oriented programs today.

Though now considered an essential component of nearly every law enforcement agency, in the early 1970’s Inglewood was still considered a pioneer when it created a Community Relations Division within its Police Department. Many of the services developed in that era such as School Resource Officers and Operation Property I.D. became the forerunners of today’s expanded and more influential programs such as D.A.R.E. and Neighborhood Watch.

Perhaps because of its early foothold, the Inglewood Police Department's 8-person Community Affairs Division now boasts one of the most extensive menus of outreach services of any agency its size. These include: a network of over 270 Neighborhood Watch Block Clubs blanketing all comers of the city; a business and apartment “Watch”; an inventive D.A.R.E. Program which reached 12,000 children last year alone; victim and witness assistance; a Police Activities League that served over

5000 participants; Chaplain and Volunteer Corps; commercial security consultation; and Combat Auto Theft (CAT). Other contemporary programs operated that have a distinctive community policing flavor include: restricting of illegal activities being carried out on private property; publishing the names of prostitutes and their customers; making crime reporting available via a “hotline”; and obtaining prior property owner authorization to make criminal trespass arrests on private property where loitering and drug activity is occurring. One of the most recent, if not original and well received, programs undertaken by the Inglewood Police Department has been the “Citizens' Academy”. Lesson plans covered include virtually every facet of policing in Inglewood from how calls are dispatched to how incident reports are processed and analyzed to reveal crime trends. Participating community members are taught how to access police services, what citizen involvement opportunities exist, and how the complaint process works. The carefully developed curriculum includes a blend of presentations as well as “hands on” experience that begins with station tours and culminates in patrol ride-alongs.

The benefits derived from the Inglewood Police Department’s full slate of community oriented services cannot be overstated. However, apart from structured programs, it is important for officers and citizens to have increased contact with one another under conditions that promote greater familiarity, comfort and trust. Some of the methods employed to accomplish this in recent years include foot patrols in the
downtown district, officers riding buses, the introduction of a 4-officer bicycle patrol, the advent of a “soft” uniform, and patrol audits by supervisors.

Outreach programs, coupled with strategies to increase positive police-citizen contacts, are the building blocks of strong community partnerships. As early as the 1970’s the Inglewood Police acknowledged that it could not win the fight against crime alone. It was recognized that recruiting and empowering citizens to understand the problems, to share the power and to assist in decision making is imperative if inroads are to be made in curbing crime. A small group of inspired citizens, led by a maverick Councilman and working jointly with the police, boldly took the initiative and quickly and effectively eliminated a chronic prostitution problem in its neighborhood. A similar collaborative effort between police and citizen groups became the hallmark of Operation Clean and Safe Streets in 1984. Inglewood was selected as one of the venue sites of the International Olympic Games and was determined to put its best foot forward before the world. An interdepartmental committee chaired by the Police Department and supported by scores of citizens turned their attention to a region of the City particularly hard hit by blight and noise. The efforts of this partnership resulted in the arrest of numerous loiterers, storage of dozens of abandoned vehicles, removal of hundreds of tons of trash and debris, correction of numerous health and safety code violations, replacement of missing or extinguished street lights, and extensive graffiti removal.48

48 Inglewood Police Department 1996 Annual Report, City of Inglewood, California
Inglewood’s greatest testimony to the power of community partnerships came in response to the challenge of drugs and gangs over the past six years. Under the leadership of the City's first Black mayor and a strong multi-racial coalition on the City Council and the independent school board, participation by local residents was galvanized. Anchored by the active and financial support of six major Inglewood institutions (the Great Western Forum, Hollywood Park Race Track, Centinela Hospital Medical Center, Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital, Northrop University and Inglewood Park Cemetery), a host of coalitions, task-forces and committees were formed. Collectively, thousands of citizens were conscripted into a “war on crime” under the organizational banner known as the “Inglewood Coalition for Police Support”. They may rightfully take credit for expanding community drug education and energetically publicizing dozens of police department reverse stings and “buy-bust” operations. Likewise, the Coalition revitalized community spirit through co-sponsorship of numerous festivals and celebrations, and envisioned and worked for the creation of a special 20-officer Anti-Crime Team.

The unique partnership between government, citizens, private industry, schools and churches described above was duly recognized by the National Civic League, which in 1989 selected Inglewood to receive the prestigious designation as an “All America City”. This coveted award is presented annually to communities that exemplify problem solving through building partnerships.
The Inglewood Police Department coordinated this project with nearly all components of the criminal justice system, brought together monthly as part of an on-going Inter-Agency Task Force. This Task Force was originally formed to support the department's Serious Habitual Offender (now Repeat Offender, Profile and Evaluation) Project. It is comprised of representatives from Law Enforcement, Probation, the District Attorney’s Office, Youth Authority, and State Parole as well as the Schools. They are accustomed to interacting with each other and have access to other criminal justice components such as the Judiciary, Attorney General’s Office and Federal Law Enforcement agencies. The project’s community-oriented emphasis was not expected to place additional service demands on other components of the local criminal justice system. Unlike traditional law enforcement programs, Inglewood Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (I-COPPS) stress problem resolution and quality policing in lieu of increased arrests and other incident-based workload measures.

The I-COPPS program serves the entire nine-square mile city area. It was anticipated that I-COPPS would have a positive effect on reducing such crimes as aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny theft and auto theft. The program was also expected to impact misdemeanor offenses such as vandalism, prostitution, public drunkenness, narcotics, weapons violations, chronic truancy, and unlawful loitering.49

49 Interviews: Cantrell, Hampton. Lieutenant, Commanding Officer I-COPPS Division, Inglewood Police Department Taylor, Rueben. Program Specialist I-COPPS Division, Inglewood Police Department
The Inglewood Police Department’s specific strategy to address crime and related problems required 9 additional police officers, of which one is a sergeant. It is rooted in concepts of leadership, geographical balance, identifying neighborhood problems, and facilitating solutions through building community partnerships. Uniting the department’s three Drug Abuse and Resistance Education (D. A. R. E.) Officers, a Corp of 12 officers, including a sergeant, were deployed equally into each of four geographical quadrants or “beats.” To decentralize police services and enhance school safety, three officers were assigned to a school site in each beat that served as Neighborhood Public Safety Centers (NPSC).

Primary services provided by each three-officer team assigned to a NPSC included Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving, D.A.R.E. classroom education and community crime prevention, and enhanced security in and around school sites.

The NPSC were supposed to operate in many respects like a weekday police mini-substation. It was to become the neighborhood focal point for law enforcement, crime prevention and education. Its presence on school sites was expected to have a strong deterrent effect on gang activity drug use and school-based assaults and vandalism. However, as envisioned, the NPSC had the potential to also serve as highly accessible service centers from which a host of government and community activities could originate or be coordinated. These include, fire prevention and education, code
enforcement, graffiti abatement, parking enforcement, and Neighborhood Watch.

City-sponsored youth programs such as juvenile diversion counseling and summer youth employment and recreation department sign-ups was encouraged to become more mobile and periodically reserve the use of NPSC office space to enhance their outreach efforts. The NPSC was also supposed to serve as strategic sites for disaster preparedness education, and as designated shelters in local emergencies (as school sites frequently are), and as distribution centers for critical supplies.

It is important to note that while a single NPSC was designated per beat, officers would extend school-based services such as D.A.R.E. education and enhanced campus security to all school sites in their beat. The project was characterized as not intended to usurp the role of the school district's security function. Instead, it was forecast that safety in and around Inglewood schools would improve appreciably due to better coordination between municipal and school police, and the presence of more officers directing their attention to neighborhood schools and surrounding activity.

An important element of the NPSC was that it represented the beginnings of "beat integrity" in Inglewood. The City's relatively small size, shift configurations, calls for service and deployment patterns have thus far worked against beat integrity. Accordingly, the strong rapport and neighborhood familiarity, and the opportunity to identify and resolve problems completely, cited as strong benefits of beat integrity, have been missing. Another major benefit of beat integrity is that it opens opportunities for
facilitating awareness of, and sensitivity to, the cultural and lifestyle differences of particular neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{50}

Lead Officers were designated at each NPSC and were responsible for overall management and coordination of I-COPPS activity in their respective beat. Lead Officers were charged with briefing patrol and special enforcement units of unique needs in their beat. As the title suggests, Lead Officers assumed a leadership role in identifying problems, which constitute the underlying root causes of crime, in building neighborhood partnerships and formulating creative solutions. These officers are in for the duration (no transfers) and they got to know the community and to be known by the community. And they became effective.

If conditions in the past indicated the need for such programs, today’s social conditions of the 1990s dictate an imperative: the burgeoning immigration of different races and cultures clustering together in crowded, often substandard housing areas, where the police and citizens do not share common beliefs, do not know or trust one another, or even speak a common language; and where it is not understood that success of each in his or her personal role is predicated, at least in part, upon mutual respect and assistance from the other.

\textsuperscript{50} Interviews: Cantrell, Hampton. Lieutenant, Commanding Officer I-COPPS Division, Inglewood Police Department Taylor, Rueben. Program Specialist I-COPPS Division, Inglewood Police Department
CHAPTER SIX

Why the Move to COPPS

The recent history of policing shows that the field has had an influx of well-meaning concepts whose names seemed to imply automatic acceptance—police/community relations, crime prevention, team policing and so on. All promised to provide new ways to cope with the growing realization that modern policing had inadvertently left people out of policing, both in the sense that officers are an extension of the community and that their primary duty is to satisfy the needs of their communities. In their 1993 book “Reinventing Government,” David Osborne and Ted Gaebler made the observation that the police industry was perhaps the only public system in worse shape than education and health care citing the causation in part to an outmoded way of approaching their communities problems. Osborne and Gaebler advocates a competitive basis philosophy basically supporting ideology of the police being accountable to their communities and that they should correspondingly receive most of their funding based on demographics and need, but they should compete for bonuses based on the strategies they chose and their performance. Funding criteria would encourage the police, for example, to do strategic planning, to invest in prevention, to survey their communities, to empower communities through COPPS initiatives, and to convince participating agencies to adopt mission driven budgets and personnel systems. COPPS appears today as the potentially
brightest option to provide policing a new focus to meet the pressing needs of their communities in the 21st Century. There are five driving forces pushing COPPS:

1. Citizen frustration with police services
2. Research conducted during the 1970s
3. Increased social conflicts of the 1990s
4. Dissatisfaction with the traditional role of the police officer
5. New Police Leadership\(^5^1\)

**Citizen Frustration**

Citizens in general respect most police officers and enjoy contact with police. However, some people continue to be frustrated by police who come in and out of their neighborhoods, with little sensitivity to community norms and values. More and more people are demanding increased participation with police in the determination of police priorities in their neighborhood security and a means of opting for different police services. Police management has been preoccupied with the internal operation and “doing things right.” COPPS addresses the highly value-laden questions of “Why?” Or, rather than simply doing things right, “Are we doing the right things?” There is an old adage that “Nothing succeeds so much as a successful failure.” The professional crime fighting/incident-driven strategy, although not a disaster, has not proven itself effective in crime

Herman Goldstein and a few others pointed this out in 1979, and started their quest to refine an alternative policing approach. COPPS requires that traditional ways of doing things be replaced carefully with a different organizational structure and management ethic. This is difficult because most new ideas or systems are suspect of being grossly inefficient or plainly stupid. COPPS depends on the thinking of everyone in the police department (sworn, civilian, part-time employees, and others). We return to the need for empowerment. COPPS operates on the premise that good ideas can come from anyone and must be encouraged and rewarded. The overwhelming public response to COPPS has been positive, regardless of where it has been instituted. Police and citizens alike are now able to say “yes” or “no” to COPPS based on documented experiences in such places as Boston, Massachusetts; Flint, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri; Austin, Waco, and Houston, Texas; Arapaho County, Colorado; Santa Ana and Oxnard, California; Portland, Oregon; Madison, Wisconsin; and Baltimore County, Maryland—to name a few.

**Research Conducted During the 1970s**

The COPPS movement did not evolve as an independent alternative to policing strategies. It is based on research on police service delivery, which has been performed over the past two decades. Research in the 1970s showed that preventive patrol in patrol cars had little effect on crime, citizen levels of fear, or citizen satisfaction with police.
Rapid response to calls for service also had little impact on arrests, citizen satisfaction with police, or levels of citizen fear. Research conducted during the early and mid-1970s frustrated police executives. It generally showed what did not work. Research performed during the late 1970s and early 1980s was different. By showing what new tactics did work, it motivated the move to renovate policing. This research provided police with the following guidance:

- Foot patrol can reduce citizen fear of crime, improve the relationship between police and citizens, and increase citizen satisfaction with the police.
- The productivity of detectives can be enhanced if patrol officers interview neighborhood residents carefully about criminal events, get the information to detectives, and if detectives use it wisely and feed back to patrol officers.
- Citizen fear can be reduced substantially by police tactics that emphasize increasing the quantity and improving the quality of citizen-police interaction.
- Street-level enforcement of heroin and cocaine laws can reduce serious crime in the area of enforcement without being displaced to adjacent areas.
- COPPS can be used to reduce thefts from cars, problems associated with drug trafficking, and household burglaries.
In the best tradition of integrating and applying research knowledge to new programs, COPPS has been built on the findings of this research. Some of the more critical research efforts and their role in COPPS are worthy of review.

Police staffing commitments. According to research sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, less than 10 percent of a patrol officer’s on-duty time is spent on crime related activities. This includes answering crime calls, conducting investigations, writing reports, booking arrestees, and testifying in court. The remainder of the time is spent on handling calls for service (although some of these calls—such as disturbances—can evolve into an arrest situation), traffic enforcement and control, information gathering, and uncommitted patrol time. The implications of these data are that traditional patrol operations are inefficient and perhaps misdirected. Even in the nation's largest police departments and in the busiest patrol districts, the uncommitted patrol time is less, but the proportion of time spent on crime-related duties remains about the same.

Preventive patrol. The amount of the patrol officers’ uncommitted time varies significantly depending on the jurisdiction’s characteristics, number of patrol personnel, nature of the patrol district, deployment characteristics, and variously assigned duties of the patrol officers. Traditionally, this uncommitted time has been labeled as “preventive patrol,” wherein the officer in a marked patrol car drives randomly through the patrol district as a crime prevention activity. The Police Foundation’s Kansas City Preventive

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Patrol Study challenged the preventive patrol assumption through a year-long quasi-experimental design study. The findings showed that preventive patrol had no significant effect on crime rates. Moreover, the study found that preventive patrol was not only uncommitted time, it was also nonproductive and wasted time. When viewed in conjunction with the staffing issues described above, it is clearly understood how one may assume that traditional approaches to police patrol may be flawed. There is not much time devoted to crime-related duties and a significant amount of time is devoted to uncommitted patrol that does not prevent crime.

Response time. One argument for maintaining traditional patrol is the need to have police officers available for rapid response to calls. Specific emphasis has been focused on the belief that the faster officers respond to a crime scene, the higher the probability of apprehending the criminal. A Law Enforcement Assistance Administration project called the Kansas City Response Time Study tested this assumption. A later National Institute of Justice replication of the study in Peoria, San Diego, Rochester, and Jacksonville (FL) supported the Kansas City findings. The results indicated that there was no relationship between a rapid crime scene response and the apprehension of criminal perpetrators. In arriving at this conclusion, the studies divided response time into

three segments: (1) the amount of time from victim/witness discovery of the incident to
the time the police were called; (2) the time from when the police received the call until
the time a patrol unit was dispatched to the crime scene; and (3) the time of the patrol
unit’s receipt of the call until the officer arrived at the incident scene. While the latter two
segments are the ones most frequently thought of with respect to response time, the first
segment was the most critical. Typically, the perpetrator was gone by the time the victim
or witness called the police, hence negating the possibility of apprehending the criminal
at the crime scene.

These results seem to indicate that response time is therefore not an important
element in patrol management. However, a compounding variable was discovered in the
Kansas City Response Time Study. The research indicated that citizens used response
time as a measure of satisfaction with the police and, indirectly, a measure of police
competence. That is, if response time was slow, citizens were more likely to indicate
dissatisfaction with the police and to believe that the police had limited competence.
Conversely, with a rapid response, both satisfaction and perception of competence
increased. These findings were fairly consistent regardless of the actual actions taken by
the officer at the incident scene. To further compound the problem, it appears that the
citizen’s perception of response time—regardless of actual elapsed time—influenced
their rating of the police in a similar manner. This was particularly true in traumatic,
high-stress situations. The dilemma is clear: functionally, response time is not an
important variable in patrol management; however, its influence on the police constituency is significant and must be addressed. How can these conflicting demands be resolved?

Patrol deployment. The deployment of police officers has been a constant source of indecision for police administrators. Based on population, police employment in the United States ranges from 0 to 44 officers per 1,000 residents. Geographically, the number of officers per square mile ranges from 0 in Angoon Division, Alaska, to 1,278.5 officers in the Manhattan Borough of New York City. In between these extremes are variable distributions about which no meaningful conclusions can be drawn. There is no single factor or ratio which can be used to determine the “ideal” police strength for a given area. While certain quantitative variables can be programmed into a comprehensive model for determination of optimum patrol officer deployment, the most fundamental variable is available resources—how many police officers are available for deployment? A second consideration is the types of activities officers are expected to do—answer crime calls, answer service calls, take accident reports, aggressively initiate “police activity,” check buildings, speak to citizens, and so on. Obviously, these duties will vary with the area, shift, nature of the community, and mandate of the community. The types of calls and demands for police service will also influence deployment patterns. The proverbial bottom line to deployment issues is that given the number of personnel

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56 BJS, op. cit.
available, how can the department most effectively perform those functions the community expects. The answer lies largely in the qualitative variables of service delivery and a change in the traditional concept of patrol deployment. That is, instead of deploying personnel simply based on numerical demands, we should first examine the policy and functional demands of the patrol force and then match officer availability to those demands. Concomitantly, we must develop our directives for officer performance to fulfill the qualitative policy/service demands as well as the raw quantitative demands. It is proposed that if the citizen demands for service can be met through alternate patrol strategies, such as COPPS, then the numerical call demands will, over time, conform to officer availability. That is, by placing the qualitative needs and desires of the community as a primary factor in deployment decisions, the administrator is effectively placing the “horse in front of the cart.”

Performance measures. An ongoing problem in police personnel management has been how to measure police performance. Traditional quantitative measures—number of arrests, number of reports written, number of calls answered, number of miles driven, number of traffic tickets issued—lack substance with respect to the nature of the police function and the delivery of police services. The notable advantage to such measures is that they are relatively easy to collect, document, and compare. Ideally, qualitative measures of individual police performance should be collected. Factors such as an officer’s communications skills, how the officer relates to the public, how the officer
the type of work the officer does as well as his/her effectiveness. Unfortunately, this information is very difficult to collect validly and substantiate if an officer’s performance evaluation is challenged. The research on the subject, notably that done in a National Institute of Justice study by Whitaker, infers that police agencies should strive for a balance between the qualitative and quantitative measures. In order to do this, police administrators must first clearly establish goals for the organization to accomplish. Next programs must be implemented to achieve those goals with clearly articulated officer responsibilities incorporated into the program. Officers should be evaluated specifically on the criteria delineated in the program. In some cases, the evaluation methods need to be nontraditional, such as interviewing or surveying citizens with whom the officer has had contact or reviewing the officer’s plans as well as his/her progress in executing those plans. In traditional police patrol there are typically no unique programs or plans on which officers may be individually evaluated. Moreover, as noted previously, to measure variables associated with preventive patrol or response time would be misleading indicators of productivity. Thus, in order to measure effectively both the performance of the individual officer and the police organization, comprehensive and specifically oriented plans for officer performance must be developed.

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Job enrichment. Job enrichment refers to the increase of quality of life in the workplace. Included are factors which increase morale and job satisfaction such as increasing individual decision making, urging innovativeness, delegating greater responsibility, and involving subordinates in policy development and organizational plans. While the literature shows that job satisfaction may not increase individual performance *per se*, the research does indicate that it contributes to a lower turnover rate, less absenteeism, fewer cases of tardiness, and fewer grievances by employees. Further research shows that high job satisfaction is a good predictor of length of life, and low satisfactions in correlated with various mental and physical illnesses. On the matter of productivity, the research indicates that morale and job satisfaction are related to productivity; however, these are mutually reciprocating variables. That is, higher productivity contributes to greater satisfaction and vice versa. Since there are defined organizational and individual benefits to increasing job satisfaction and morale, it behooves the prudent administrator to consider these factors in the development of any program.

Public perceptions of the police. In general, the public is supportive of the police. They feel that the police are fundamentally honest, generally corruption free, do not discriminate, and do not regularly use excessive force. However, when the population is stratified by various demographic variables, the picture begins to change somewhat.

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Notably, blacks and Hispanics are less supportive of the police in general and are particularly more likely to feel that the police are discriminatory and use excessive force. Furthermore, blacks indicate the belief that they receive poorer service from the police than whites, and Hispanics feel they receive inadequate police protection. It must be recognized that most crime victims are minority group members and that the majority of police calls for service are from lower income minorities. Thus, those citizens who must rely the most on police services also rate the police the lowest. This should send a message to police administrators. More attention must be given to the needs and quality of service afforded to the citizens who are most reliant on public law enforcement agencies.

Citizen demands for police service. Crime analysis has provided—and continues to provide—important information on crime trends and police calls for service needs. However, with sophisticated analytic techniques and computer-driven reporting methods, law enforcement has drifted away from communications with citizens. The emphasis is on the data output based on the sample of calls and reported crimes the police receive. However, these represent the most problematic incidents and skew the perspective of what the public desires from the police. While citizens feel that response to serious crimes is important, they also want the police to attend to the minor, yet annoying, facets.

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of community discomfort such as abandoned cars, barking dogs, and juvenile vandals and trespassers. The police need to listen to the community and establish a dialogue to determine what types of services the citizens want. Then, those needs must be addressed—not ignored or given lip service. The preliminary research indicates that responding to community needs on these minor calls may significantly increase citizen satisfaction of police performance and perception of confidence.63

Police community relations. Since the genesis of the community relations movement by the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the National Institutes held at Michigan State University, there has been an ongoing search for the best means by which to establish effective police community relations.64 Philosophies have varied ranging from special programming, police training programs, community education, to special police units with the charge of establishing effective community relations. As the concept evolved, the research directly pointed to the fact that effective community relations must have two major elements. First, the police must recognize that they receive their mandate from the community and are responsible to the community in the performance of their task.65 Second, community relations must be a product of total police operations involving all personnel—it is the interactive effect of departmental

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64 Radelet, op. cit.
programming and officer behavior.\textsuperscript{66} As a result, police community relations should be viewed as a primary and ongoing responsibility of all officers, a responsibility that is constitutionally mandated because the authority the police exercise is granted by the people.

\textbf{Relating the Research to COPPS}

The findings of the research projects in these various areas have had important implications in the development of the COPPS concept. Since it is known from the Bureau of Justice data that less than 10 percent of an officer's time is spent on crime and a significant amount of time is spent on service calls, the police should recognize this in their patrol force programming. Furthermore, since it is also known that a significant amount of a patrol officer's time is uncommitted patrol, yet that patrol does not prevent crime, the inference is that the police need to make better use of that time.

Further research showed that rapid response to calls for service does not help apprehend criminals, yet it is an important variable in citizen satisfaction and perception of competence. How can this discrepancy be reconciled? This is compounded by the question, how does an administrator most effectively deploy personnel to meet new patrol programming needs yet have cars available for responding to calls while not wasting time on uncommitted patrol? In addition, it is known that the minority

communities are the least satisfied with the police and that there is the feeling that the police are not responding to citizen service demands.

From a management perspective, the prudent administrator wants effective performance measures in order to validly measure personnel performance and have effective milestones by which to gauge organizational success. Similarly, administrators want to enrich the satisfaction and morale of employees in order to achieve the best, hence providing the most effective, organizational environment.

While not a panacea, COPPS addresses all of these needs. By reallocating patrol officer time, COPPS makes better use of personnel. Furthermore, by getting "closer to the community" and establishing a dialogue with citizens, the public has a different and more accurate measure by which to assess officer competence and rate satisfaction with the police compared to response time. With these alternate measures, the police can give less attention to the response time issue and have the dilemma it posed largely resolved. Through the community dialogue developed in a COPPS program, law enforcement agencies may more accurately define community concerns and respond to those constituent needs. Similarly, this targeted response will contribute to greater satisfaction from minority groups and help establish overall better community relationships.

By the same token, when a police officer is given a mandate to diagnose community problems, be creative in the development of solutions to those problems as well as to serve the roles of a community organizer, facilitator, educator, and referral
resource in addition to law enforcement officer, then the growth potential of the officer is dramatically increased. These variable duties with their inherent responsibilities help change the police officer's role from that of a job to that of a career. With these changes come the job enrichment we desire to see in our personnel.

Admittedly, COPPS is not the answer to all problems the police face. However, it does appear to respond to many of the findings and questions posed by the research as well as serves as a framework for new program development.

**Increased Social Conflicts**

Social conflicts between patrol officers and citizens have increased in the 1990s for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that officers often find themselves hurrying from call to call, with no real opportunity for closure. People want police help and it doesn't always happen. The growing proliferation of foreign born immigrants of many races, values, and different languages is compounded by different life experiences with police. One of the ways COPPS addresses social conflict is by incorporated into routine operations the techniques of problem identification, problem analysis, and problem resolution. COPPS also relies heavily on values that incorporate citizen involvement in matters that directly affect the safety and quality of neighborhood life. Police department culture becomes one that recognizes the merits of community involvement and organizes and manages departmental affairs in ways that are consistent with such beliefs. If police
are to understand crime prevention, they need to know what they are trying to prevent. They should define what crime is. Crime does not just mean a breach of a city ordinance or an infringement of state or federal law. A definition should include a perspective that focuses on what the public perceives as a problem, not just what concern enforcement agencies. That perspective will alter or adjust police priorities.

Because different neighborhoods have different needs and priorities, it is necessary to have an adequate understanding of what is important to a specific neighborhood. To acquire such an understanding, officers must interact with residents routinely and keep them informed of police efforts to fight and prevent neighborhood crime. This ensures accountability to the community as well as to the department. The desire to improve policing and attempts experiments to change attitudes and behavior among police officers and communities is not new with this generation of innovators. Although some changes were visible, they were short lived, in much the same way as police community relations (PCR) and team policing. But we should not forget that many innovators and innovations of the past were very successful and are still with us or cycling upward as technologies change. But these successes were for the most part in the nature of things (tools), not people; and even failures provide valuable data.
Dissatisfaction of Police Officers

Finally, patrol officers are frustrated with their traditional role. Despite the lip service that patrol is the “backbone of policing,” every police officer knows that, at best, patrol is what officers do until they become detectives or are promoted. Patrol officers have the most important mission in police departments—they make arrests, conduct preliminary investigations, enforcing traffic, and handle the public's most pressing problems and must make complex decisions almost instantaneously. Patrol officers are general practitioners who make house calls. Even so, police administrators continue to treat patrol officers as if they were the “buttbone” of the agency, not the “backbone.” Patrol officers are practitioners, important practitioners who make house calls.

New Police Leadership

The new police leadership is unique in the history of policing in the United States. Unlike the tendency in the past for most chiefs and sheriffs to be local and inbred, chiefs and sheriffs of this generation are knowledgeable and sophisticated, and are mobile. They are every bit as skilled and creative as are their private-sector counterparts. With growing criminality and a worldwide drug problem, they've been compelled into thinking smarter, and often, into doing more with less.

One of the ways in which the Inglewood Police Department is addressing this need is through the efforts of the I-COPPS program. I-COPPS has been more of a
philosophy that has remained flexible, enabling the department to respond to the ever-changing needs in the community. The department has had several different community and problem oriented type programs or projects with varying degrees of success. What they have sorted settled into is a multilevel approach.

There is an Anti-Crime Team (A.C.T.) that sole job is to go out to designated target areas and take the immediate action needed to help to make a difference. I-COPPS itself is a separate division which has programs like Neighborhood Watch, D.A.R.E., P.A.L., Commercial Burglary, and Lead Officers assigned to Neighborhood Public Safety Centers (NPSC), to both reach out to the community and solve community problems. At the patrol level there are tactical action plans. Officers and Sergeants are encouraged to come up with plans or programs that will help them to meet specific needs they are having right there at the field level. Lead officers are responsible for hosting regular meeting with every sector of the department, both sworn and civilian, to develop responses to the various priorities established by their respective communities.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Benefits of COPPS

Benefits of COPPS to the Public

If done correctly, COPPS will benefit both the public and the police. Some of the benefits to the public are a commitment to crime prevention. Unlike traditional policing, which focuses on the efficient means of reacting to incidents, COPPS strives to confirm that the basic mission of the police is to prevent crime and disorder.

Public scrutiny of police operations. Because citizens will be involved with the police, they will be exposed to the “what,” “why,” and “how” of police work. This is almost certain to prompt critical discussions about the responsiveness of police operations.

Accountability to the public. Until the advent of COPPS, officers were accountable for the actions only to police management. Now officers also will be accountable to the public with whom they have formed a partnership.

Customized police service. Because police services will be localized, officers will be required to increase their responsiveness to neighborhood problems. As police-citizen partnerships are formed and nurtured, the two groups will be better equipped to work together to identify and address specific problems that affect the quality of neighborhood life.
Community organization. The degree to which the community is involved in police efforts to evaluate neighborhood problems has a significant bearing on the effectiveness of those efforts. The success of any crime prevention effort depends on the police and citizens working in concert—not on one or the other carrying the entire load alone.

**Benefits of COPPS to the Police**

Greater citizen support. As more people spend more time working with police, they learn more about the police function. Experience has shown that as people's knowledge of the police function increases, their respect for the police increases as well. This increased respect, in turn, leads to greater support for the police.

Shared responsibility. Historically, the police have accepted the responsibility for resolving the problem of crime in the community. Under COPPS, however, citizens develop a sense of shared responsibility.

Greater job satisfaction. Because officers are able to resolve issues and problems within a reasonable amount of time, they see the results of their efforts more quickly.

Better internal relationships. Communication problems among units and shifts have been a chronic problem in police agencies. Because COPPS focuses on problem-solving accountability, it also increases cooperation among the various segments of the department.
CONCLUSION

I began this project by pointing out its contention that the move to COPPS is an appropriate vehicle for the police to engage their communities as partners for progress and will significantly improve a community’s well-being, that COPPS is not meant to substitute for other forms of policing, like motor patrol, but compliment all policing efforts, and that COPPS will continue to advance because it seems to make sense, not because it has yet been shown to be demonstrably superior. I also pointed out that this project is intended to raise more questions than it can answer and is designed to illustrate the necessity for police to engage their community as partners for progress.

There are several reasons for the belief in the appropriateness and value of COPPS among police organizations: (1) citizen response thus far to the new strategy, (2) ongoing research on police effectiveness, (3) recent experiences the police have had with COPPS, and (4) the values of the new generation of police managers.

Citizen Response. The overwhelming public response to COPPS has been positive everywhere that it has been instituted. COPPS has become so popular that there are now more than 200 communities in the United States that have some form of COPPS effort. Some simply require officers park their police cars and walk for part of each day. Others have the officers ride motor scooters or patrol on bicycles or even horseback. Perhaps the most direct approach involves having officers walk a beat on foot or manage
a neighborhood public center for a major part of their daily tour of duty. In any case, the basic premise underlying the COPPS concept remains the same: The COPPS initiative’s ultimate value is the power to inspire new ways of thinking and acting to resolve community problems.

On December 17, 1998, Vice President Gore announced $28 Million in COPS funds for 156 communities in 39 states to hire 413 COPPS officers under a universal hiring program, siting crime is at a 25 year low and people are beginning to feel safe walking the streets of their communities again. Police and citizens alike are now able to promote the move to COPPS based on experiences in such places as Boston, Massachusetts; Flint, Michigan, Kansas City, Missouri; Austin, Waco, and Houston, Texas; Arapaho County, Colorado; Santa Ana, San Diego and Oxnard, California; Portland, Oregon; Madison, Wisconsin; and Baltimore County, Maryland-to name a few.

Over the past decade, COPPS have gained momentum within police departments. COPPS represents a fundamental shift in the philosophy of policing. Its essence is full-service law enforcement which focuses on addressing citizen concerns and on providing high quality services. The concept draws from both customer service-oriented management strategies such as total quality management (TQM), value-added management, and the re-engineering the corporation approach, and on law enforcement research. COPPS shares with these management systems “an emphasis on customer
demand, providing the best possible service, comprehensive problem solving, and employee motivation and job satisfaction."

By reallocating officers time, COPPS makes better use of personnel. In addition, the police becomes closer to the community and establishes a dialogue with citizens. This has a number of positive effects including: (1) providing the public with a more accurate gauge of the effectiveness of officers and the department as a whole, (2) encouraging citizens to define and prioritize their community’s needs, (3) increased public satisfaction and improved police-community relations, (4) the enrichment of police officers responsibilities to include new roles as a community organizer, facilitator, educator, referral source and problem-solver.

In philosophy and practice, COPPS complements the tenets of a traditional policing approach. The COPPS officer is removed from the patrol car and interacts closely with the people of the community over an extended period of time. A rapport is developed which fosters communication and problem solving which extends beyond traditional policing.

A number of benefits can be seen for both the public and police when a COPPS program is implemented. These include:

- Humanizing the police. People begin to relate to officers as people, not just as a uniform or institution.
• Permitting people to see police officers in a helping role, not just an enforcement role.

• Opening lines of communication between the public and the police. This can encourage discussion of a wide range of issues, such as street violence, drug trafficking, and other mutual concerns.

• Providing feedback to the police department to allow it to better understand the fears and concerns of the community. The police may then develop problem-solving efforts.

• Officers perspectives on community life and community concerns may be broadened.

• COPPS training introduces officers to a measure which gauges success by community acceptance and support rather than numbers of crimes and arrests.

• COPPS officers will become a resource for the department in developing problem-solving initiatives.

• COPPS may stimulate interest in other police activities, such as the Police Explorers or the Police Athletic League, and in other youth-oriented programs.

Building on ideas of partnership, open communication, and mutual respect,
COPPS can make significant progress in increasing the quality of life in our nation's communities.

New Research on Effectiveness. COPPS' unique contribution is a radical departure from the past. There continues to be many debates and the discussion is healthy. As Bayley has stated, "evidence about the shortcomings of customary policing is much greater than evidence about COPPS." Critics of COPPS should be clear about the criteria used to evaluate it. For instance, there is general agreement that traditional policing does not have a significant impact on crime. Why then should COPPS be attacked for its perceived lack of impact on crime?

The question of whether COPPS has merit in today's communities is controversial. Critics argue that their studies done on narrow parameters are justification for abandoning the concept, while defenders of such programs argue that methodological problems that prevent these studies from assessing quality-of-life issues hamper such programs from being evaluated accurately. Many traditional police executives also express difficulty with the COPPS concept. They typically argue that it is not cost effective, it exposes the officers to political corruption, and, most importantly, it does not correlate with today's high-tech, computerized age. Some also make the mistake of viewing the argument between COPPS and "motor" patrol as an either-or proposition.

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strict mandate from the police executive, coupled with effective supervision, can control potential problems of political corruption. In terms of its compatibility, experience shows that COPPS fits well with computerized information processing and the use of high technology. Information gathered by COPPS officers through the community at large can later be computerized and then disseminated to others within the department. COPPS then is not intended to displace motor patrol; instead, COPPS can augment other efforts in the department to prevent and control crime. What COPPS does is provide the police a full spectrum approach that ranges from motor patrol’s quick response to COPPS’ emphasis on what the officer does after he arrives.

The main reason that COPPS tends to be undervalued, perhaps, stems from the fact that quality-of-life issues are generally omitted in most assessments of the program’s worth. Researchers regularly omit qualitative considerations from their studies, since quality of life does not readily lend itself to quantifiable data. Programs judged primarily on narrower standards such as whether the cost is justified by the resulting reduction in the crime rate fails to assess the programs’ contributions to the broader aspects of life in those communities. Central to the qualitative issues is the question of what role community residents themselves—the taxpayers—should play in determining how their communities will be policed. Increasingly, communities are demanding more input into the distribution of the scarce resources available for community services that directly affect their quality of life. Undeniably, however, the citizens in Inglewood proved they
not only want COPPS, they are willing to pay for it. Twice, in the 1980s, Inglewood citizens voted to increase their property taxes to pay for their COPPS program. Studies based on narrow research, replete with scientific jargon, in concert with the traditionally conservative views of police executives locked into a frequently unresponsive bureaucracy, cannot dull the momentum of a concept that taxpayers see translated daily into a creative and beneficial program that improves the quality of their lives.

Experience with Innovation. The desire to improve policing and attempts experiments to change attitudes and behavior among police officers and communities is not new with this generation of innovators. Although some changes were visible, they were short lived, in much the same way as police community relations (PCR) and team policing. If cities in the future are to become livable places for all people—rich and poor, young and old, singles and families, healthy and ill, black and white—the prospects for expanding COPPS are favorable. The familiar neighborhood police officer, the after-hours sponsor of the youth team, the community advocate, the block club organizer, the community problem solver, are only some of the many roles that COPPS officers will fill in the future. Their successful performance is a fundamental condition for wholesome environments in the cities of tomorrow.

COPPS raises the question of how quickly its framework can be implemented. Pragmatically speaking, it would be difficult for most police departments to change their underlying philosophical approach overnight. Incremental change offers a manageable
strategy with time for experimentation, transition, and a safer political climate. Given a commitment to change, a willingness to reallocate resources, and procedural flexibility, a piecemeal approach can prove effective, though full implementation will be slower in coming.

New Police Leadership. The historical legacy of police professionalism invested command officers with the full range of prerogatives and responsibilities associated with law enforcement. Traditional police management evolved out of efforts to reform police work by improving the quality of police service and increasing organizational control and accountability. Subsequently, reform policing became characterized by rigid organizational controls; limited discretion; personnel specialization; centralization of authority; organizational inflexibility; and clearly defined lines of authority, responsibility, and communication.

The broadened mandate and increased officer activity typical of COPPS appears inconsistent with traditional reform era police management. Rather, COPPS seems most compatible with contemporary management philosophies such as total quality management (TQM). Contemporary management principles necessitates a number of improvements in today’s new police leadership:

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• Police executives should create an organizational vision to provide long-range direction for their departments.

• The police executives' life and leadership style should be in tune with community expectations.

• Police executives must listen to both employees and community members and provide ongoing feedback.

• Personnel recruitment and selection should be future directed and geared toward fulfilling the departmental vision.

• Policing should primarily focus on community and citizen problems, not on time management and officer deployment schemes.

• Community perceptions of crime, police performance, and quality of life problems are significant and should not be ignored.

• Police executives should strive to provide the best possible service and value to the community in relation to police resources expenditures (Couper and Lobitz, 1993).

The changes will not come easily, however experience does suggest that a transition pattern usually develops. At first, traditional police approaches are recognized as limited or even unsuccessful. Second, attitudes among administrators, police personnel, and citizens begin to change. Third, community assessments are performed and police responsibilities redefined. Fourth, new operational and organizational
approaches are developed. Fifth, the community is enlisted to work cooperatively with
the police. Finally, both the police and the community must commit to the initiative.
COPPS is a significant shift from traditional policing; its implementation will entail
resocialization of all police personnel. This process requires time, commitment, and
patience. Police managers must develop a strategic plan to implement change which
includes steps to resocialize those within the organization in order to shift the
occupational ethos toward a COPPS philosophy. An important aspect of long-range
planning in police management and operations is comprehensive self-assessment through
a 3-staged approach including refocusing, refining, and reallocation. 1. Refocusing
involves re-examining the police department’s mission, goals, and objectives and
redefining their significance. The activities and services the police department will
provide in the future must be articulated in written form. 2. Refining occurs after the
department’s direction has been formally refocused. At that point, policies, procedures,
job descriptions, personnel evaluations, and training must be adjusted to the match the
new mission. 3. Reallocation of departmental resources (i.e., people, budgets, equipment)
is required to meet the needs of a newly defined departmental direction. Future problems
can be addressed by building an adequate foundation for change through thoughtful
planning and the development of a strong vision. Not surprisingly, this is an achievable
mission for today’s “new breed” of police executives. In the United States, the new police
leadership is distinct and unique in the history of policing. This generation of chiefs and
sheriffs are more knowledgeable and sophisticated, and are mobile. They are as educated, skilled and creative as their private-sector counterparts. Facing growing challenges of their agency’s image, crime, fiscal and policy issues, they’ve been compelled into thinking smarter, and often, into doing more with less.
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