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## Practice versus Paradigm: How Today's Police Departments Define Community Policing

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**Defining Community Policing:  
Practice Versus Paradigm**

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**ABSTRACT**

While many believe that community policing has advanced beyond the defining stages, conflict still exists between community policing as envisioned by academics and theorists and community policing as interpreted and practiced by police organizations. Why is there so much disparity between the theory and application of community policing? Part of the answer lies in the differing utility the concept holds for practitioners and researchers. Analyzed within the precepts of the Trojanowicz Paradigm, content analyses of community policing job descriptions and definitions were performed on data obtained during a 1994 national survey of police departments conducted by Trojanowicz, Woods, et al. Results were surprising, yet consistent with many case studies that trace implementation problems to the failure of the larger organization to incorporate the community policing philosophy.

**INTRODUCTION**

Awareness and popularity of the community policing concept is not without paradox. Everyone claims to know what is meant when speaking about community policing, while consistent criticism remains centered on the vague definitions of the topic. While emphasis on the fundamental problem of defining community policing seems to have fallen by the wayside, advocates and critics, alike, while believing they know it when they see it, have failed to arrive at a consensus pertaining to a concise definition.

Normandeau (1993) envisions community policing as proactive consultation between generalist police offices and the community to solve problems of crime and social disorder in order to improve quality of life, prevent crime, and reduce the fear of crime. Greene (1993) describes community policing as a program of cooperation to solve crime problems. Carter and Sapp (1994) define community policing as a philosophy of police management for proactive policing and problem solving meant to increase efficiency and effectiveness in addressing crime problems, service needs, and to improve quality of life. Miller and Hess state community

policing "...is a philosophy that emphasizes working proactively with citizens to solve crime related problems and prevent crime (1994: 16).

More broadly, Rosenbaum identified common themes in the practice of community policing, "including an emphasis on improving the number and quality of police-citizen contacts, a broader definition of 'legitimate' police work, decentralization of the police bureaucracy, and a greater emphasis on proactive problem-solving strategies" (1988: 34, Rosenbaum and Lurgio, 1994: 302). And, broader still, Gaines states that "according to Goldstein (1987 and 1990), community (oriented) policing is any activity whereby the police develop closer working relations with the community and respond more effectively to citizens' needs and priorities" (1994: 23). Corder, recognizing that "community policing means many things to many people," chose to anchor community policing's various elements within dimensions: "the Philosophical Dimension, the Strategic Dimension, and the Programmatic Dimension" (1995: 1).

Lack of consensus over community policing's definition is not the sovereign property of academics, as practitioner-oriented literature contains even more diverse interpretations. Wycoff and Oettmeier (1994) define it as a geographically-based delivery of service through an interactive process between officers and citizens to identify and address crime and noncrime problems and disorder. Joseph (1994) describes community policing as a philosophy of input and participation emphasizing crime prevention, fear of crime, physical and social decay and quality of life. Weston (1993) sees community policing as a philosophical problem-solving partnership to address community issues. Fulton (1993) understands community policing to be meeting people and being in the public eye. As if to summarize, Ryan concludes, "It is important to note that in view of the lack of definition of community policing, no police agencies currently use a pure concept (if such exists) of community policing" (1994: 134).

The late, Robert Trojanowicz advocated an encompassing view of community policing and attempted the most concise, yet comprehensive, definition. Trojanowicz felt there was room for everyone under the tent. Refining his earlier definition (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990), he described community policing as "...a philosophy of full-service, personalized policing where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems" (1994: 6).

While academics sustain the definition debate and the gelling of common elements emerges from their recipe of writings, actual data pertaining to definitional aspects of community policing within police practice remains scant. Evans (1995) surveyed Oregon police departments and examined the written community policing definitions of 23 agencies in an assessment of training needs for an upcoming grant project. While laudable, the stated purpose of this study was training not definition and its uni-state parameter provides limited information regarding the status of the nation's police defining practices.

Trojanowicz recognized and respected the vast diversity of views held by law enforcement. Prior to his death, he designed, with Joe Harpold of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a national survey to explore community policing from law enforcement's perspective. Trojanowicz wanted to determine the meaning of community policing to those entrusted with the daily responsibility of policing our society. Presented below are the findings from this pioneer effort.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Background*

Data content analyzed in this study were obtained from a 1994, national survey of police departments in the United States, collaboratively performed by "staff of the National Center for Community Policing at Michigan State University and the staff of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Behavioral Science Services Unit" (Trojanowicz, Woods, et al)<sup>1</sup>. Within this seventeen-page survey, were several questions pertaining to the police organizations' definitions of community policing and job descriptions for community policing officers (CPOs). Police departments reporting the use of community policing were requested to submit copies of their community policing definitions and CPO job descriptions. The task of determining whether a police agency practiced community policing was left solely to the departments - survey instructions provided no distinctions as to what constituted community policing<sup>2</sup>. Such guidelines were purposely absent to further the survey's goals of identifying and defining community policing practices as they existed in field.

### *Study Population*

*National Survey Data Base:* Law enforcement agencies serving jurisdictions with populations of fifty thousand (50,000) or more, or law enforcement agencies with one hundred (100) or more sworn officers were surveyed and are referred to in the national study and within this research as *large departments* (n=686<sup>3</sup>, with a response rate of 81%). Additionally, all forty-nine state police departments were included in the national survey.

Reaves notes that approximately 4.2 percent of local departments and 9.4 percent of all sheriffs' departments employ one hundred or more sworn officers (1992a, 1992b). While large departments employ the majority of officers, of the nearly seventeen thousand (17,000) law enforcement agencies in the United States, most are relatively small and employ few officers.

Because the majority of police agencies serve jurisdictions of less than fifty thousand, a non-random sample of those sized agencies was also included in the national survey and are referred to in the national study and within this research as *small departments* (n=245, with a response rate of 60%). This sample consisted of all small departments that had contacted the National Center for Community Policing between March 1, 1992 and September 1, 1993.

The national survey resulted in five hundred forty six (546) usable responses from large agencies. Forty-two percent (n=229) of the large departments reported the use of community policing. One hundred forty-eight (148) usable responses were returned by small law enforcement agencies, with sixty-six percent (n=98) reporting the use of community policing. Content analyses were performed on documents submitted by those agencies reporting the use of community policing.

*Content Analysis, Community Policing Definitions:* Representatives from one hundred and sixty-three (n=163) law enforcement agencies submitted their departments' definitions of community policing. Forty-five (n=45) of the definitions were submitted from small departments and one hundred and eighteen (n=118) definitions were obtained from large departments. Departments in the process or planning stages of creating community policing

definitions (n=13) were included in the sample. These departments provided researchers with partial or draft definitions. The elements of those definitions were analyzed.

*Content Analysis, CPO Job Descriptions:* The sample size of departments submitting community policing officer job descriptions was much smaller than the sample size of departments submitting community policing definitions. Job descriptions were received from thirty-seven (37) police departments. The number of valid cases content analyzed was thirty-six (n=36). One job description was not included after review made apparent the department did not practice community policing<sup>4</sup>. Seven (n=7) of the job descriptions were submitted from small departments and twenty-nine (n=29) were submitted from large departments.

### ***Analysis***

Individual content analyses were performed on the submitted community policing definitions and community policing officer job descriptions. Both analyses were performed using deductive and inductive processes.

Deductively, data were analyzed within the framework of the *Trojanowicz Paradigm*<sup>5</sup> of community policing, defined as...

...a philosophy of full-service personalized policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems (1994: 6).

Analyzing within an inductive process, coding categories were allowed to emerge from the data. Inductive and deductive coding categories, specific to each analysis, are specified below.

Each of the main variables, within both analyses, were further examined with respect to department size, categorized large or small, as previously defined. As a precautionary note, these findings should be considered descriptive indicators only due to small sub-sample sizes and not considered significant or insignificant in a statistical sense.

### ***Coding Categories***

*Community Policing Definitions:* Definitions were analyzed with respect to the following variables obtained inductively from the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* and, deductively, as they emerged from case data.

- **Philosophy:** Was community policing identified as a guiding philosophy for the department?
- **Personalized Policing:** Was personalization mentioned in any way? Definitions claiming specialization of services to particular neighborhoods or forms of interpersonal interaction (police and citizen) were counted under this variable. While operationalized in these two ways to encompass the phrase "personalized policing" the results are reported in aggregate.

- **Patrols:** Did the definition mention freeing community policing officers from the isolation of patrol cars? Was the type of patrol utilized by community officers mentioned?
- **Permanent:** Was permanent assignment of community officers to defined beats or neighborhoods mentioned?
- **Decentralized Place:** Were defined beats or neighborhoods specified within the definition?
- **Proactive:** Was a proactive focus to crime prevention mentioned?
- **Partnership:** Did the definition specify police partnership with the citizenry?
- **Problem Solving:** Was problem solving noted in the definition?
- **Inter-Agency Cooperation/Other Resources:** Were social service agencies, businesses, or governmental resources referenced within the definition?
- **Increased Quality of Life; Decreased Fear of Crime; Identification of Crime Causation; Prevention of Crime:** Were these elements mentioned as community policing goals within the department's definition?

*CPO Job Descriptions:* Community policing officer job descriptions were analyzed with respect to the following variables obtained deductively from the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* and, inductively, as variables emerged from case data. As readers will note, most of the following variables were inductively obtained from the data.

- **Officer's Title:** What was the title of the officer as referred to within the job description?
- **Patrol Type:** What was the specified type of patrol required within the job description?
- **Permanent Beats:** Did job descriptions require permanent assignment to beat areas?
- **High Profile Police Presence:** Did job descriptions refer to deterrence via high profile police presence?
- **Media Interaction:** Was CPO interaction with the media specified?
- **Community Partnership:** Did the job descriptions require CPOs to work in partnership with residents of the community?
- **Identifying Problems:** Were CPOs required by their job descriptions to identify problems within the community?
- **Problem Solving:** Were CPOs required to solve problems or use problem solving techniques?
- **Acting as a Referral Source:** Did job descriptions specify that CPOs would act as referral sources? The act of 'referring' was defined broadly and not relegated solely to referring community residents to needed services.
- **Crime Prevention Programs:** Did job descriptions require CPOs to organize crime prevention programs?
- **Surveys & Statistics:** Were CPOs required to distribute surveys and gather statistics?
- **Public Speaking:** Did job descriptions specify public speaking requirements?
- **CPOs' Duties:** Were the job requirements of CPOs additive to, or separate from, other law enforcement duties?

**COMMUNITY POLICING IN THE UNITED STATES:  
THE FINDINGS**

*How Police Organizations are Defining Community Policing*

The *Trojanowicz Paradigm* stresses that community policing is a philosophy that should encompass the entire police organization. While a police department may begin community policing as a partial program, success depends upon the acceptance and transformation of the whole department. Data from this study reveal that only eighteen percent (n=29) of police departments defined community policing as a guiding philosophy for the department. The majority of departments (82%, n=134) did not specify what community policing was, per se, or defined it as something other than a philosophy. Various answers included: a style, an approach, an attitude, a shift from the organizational model, a partnership, an orientation, a cooperative effort, and a perception.

**Table 1. Community Policing Definitions: Variables by Positive Findings**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
PHILOSOPHY	29	18
PERSONALIZED POLICING	34	21
UN-ISOLATED PATROL	14	9
PERMANENT BEATS	12	7
DEFINED BEATS	21	13
PROACTIVE FOCUS	41	25
<b>PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>63</b>
INTER-AGENCY CO-OP	24	15
QUALITY OF LIFE	34	21
FEAR OF CRIME	6	9
CRIME CAUSATION	18	11
PREVENTION OF CRIME	29	18

n=163

The second element of the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* is personalized policing. Community policing espouses personalized service delivery and the paradigm requires that community officers employ and adapt service delivery strategies to become closer to the public they serve. Successful community policing officers deal with people, not cases. CPOs think about customers and clients, not complainants. The element of personalized policing was evidenced in twenty-one percent (n=34) of the cases. Seventy-nine percent (n=129) of the submitted definitions contained no reference to the element of personalized service delivery.

Many theorists agree that a primary means of providing personalized delivery of police service is to free officers from their patrol units. Historical examinations of police evolution (see Kelling and Moore, 1988 and Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990) tout the benefits of foot patrol over the latent outcome of police isolation due to the Reform Era's attempts to professionalize and improve police service delivery. The manner of service delivery is an important aspect of the transformation to a community-oriented style of policing. Surprisingly, and perhaps in keeping with the small percentage of departments requiring personalized policing, just nine percent (n=14) of the departments specified removing community policing officers from the isolation of patrol cars. Rarely was an exact type of patrol mentioned within a department's definition and the majority of departments' definitions contained no patrol reference (85%, n=149).

Permanent or long-term assignment of community officers to beats enables CPOs to develop a better understanding of the people they serve. This familiarity fosters sensitivity to the problems of the community and allows for the building of trust between community residents and their beat officers. Permanency of beat assignment, a central tenet of the *Trojanowicz Paradigm*, was referred to in just seven percent (n=12) of the cases. Ninety-three percent (n=151), however, made no mention of permanent beat assignments in their community policing definitions.

Closely related to permanency of assignment was the variable, decentralized place, which Trojanowicz used to refer to beats or neighborhoods as well as decision-making by officers (1994: 4). Many researchers and policy makers believe that larger police agencies need to personalize service delivery through decentralization. Modern management philosophies, such as Total Quality Management, propose that large agencies decentralize their organizations to capture the familiarity smaller agencies enjoy with their clients<sup>6</sup>. Police agencies have been slow to restructure their operations. Eighty-seven percent (n=142) of departments made no reference to decentralized service delivery in their definitions of community policing.

One of the appealing aspects of community policing is the prevention of crime through a proactive focus. Many traditional policing approaches require that someone become a victim before the police (re)act. Proactive approaches entail initiating police activity before a crime occurs. Such approaches attempt to spare citizens the trauma of criminal victimization and departments from repeat calls. The definitions of community policing developed by police organizations, however, neglect this important area. Only twenty-five percent (n=41) of departments refer to community policing as a proactive focus, and only eighteen percent (n=29) mention the prevention of crime as a community policing objective.

The success of community policing centers on problem solving through a partnership between police and community residents. The police have neither the resources nor the methods to single-handedly reduce crime in our society. Further, police-citizen partnerships foster responsibility sharing; crime is no longer the sole responsibility of the police. Citizens learn how and become willing to shoulder their share of the burden. On this, data indicated that theorists and practitioners agreed. Reflected moreso than an other variable in community policing definitions was the aspect of partnership. A cooperative partnership between police and community was reported in eighty percent (n=130) of the departments.

A common criticism that line offices make about community policing revolves around the fact that they do not want to do "social work." To these officers, community policing is not *real* police work. Problem solving and community engagement activities conflict with the subculture of many departments<sup>7</sup>. Others claim that officers do not have time to engage in nontraditional police activities. In either case, departments do not describe their community

policing efforts in a manner that uses inter-agency cooperation or outside resources<sup>8</sup>. Only fifteen percent (n=24) of departments referred to engaging other social agencies to achieve community policing objectives. Definition data indicated that departments were neglecting to utilize the valuable resources and expertise that existed in the community.

The earliest studies of foot patrol reported that it enhanced the public's perception of safety<sup>9</sup>. When officers became part of a neighborhood and dealt with disorder they found that citizens perceived the area to be safer. When neighborhoods are perceived to be safe, it is more likely that socially healthy activities will ensue. Residents are no longer prisoners in their own homes, they feel free to engage in social activities, and they develop healthy attachments to the immediate community. The police, though, have been slow to discover the importance of reducing fear of crime.

Few departments defined community policing as a mechanism to enhance feelings of community security. Only eleven percent (N=18) expressed concern about the cause of crime and only nine percent (n=6) indicated reducing fear. A somewhat larger, twenty-one percent (n=34) of department definitions mentioned attempting to improve quality of life for the people served by the police agency.

### ***Community Policing Definitions by Department Size***

When analyzing variables in relationship to department size, large versus small (greater than 50,000 versus less than 50,000), differences were minuscule for the variables philosophy, personalized policing, patrol, permanent, decentralized place, problem solving; and the goal variables: causes of crime, fear of crime, and prevention of crime. Some difference between large and small departments was evidenced for the variables proactive, community partnership, other resources, and the goal variable, quality of life.

Large departments were more likely to specify a proactive focus within their definitions of community policing (25% versus 16% for small departments). Large departments were also more likely to specify partnership between police and community (77% versus 67% for small departments). From a logical perspective, one could speculate that large departments have evolved further away from their citizens than have small departments<sup>10</sup>. Thus, police in large cities might feel a greater need to reclaim neighborhoods as evidenced by the percentages for the variable, partnership. Similarly, large departments experience greater amounts of crime and have evolved with increasing reactivity to deal with this crime, which might account for their specifying proactiveness within their definitions.

Identification and utilization of other resources (inter-agency cooperation) were also likely to be mentioned more often by large departments (16% versus 9% for small departments). With the multitude of agencies and the self-distancing of large city police departments (in an operational sense) from other social agencies, identifying available resources may prove the more difficult task in large cities; thus, the greater need for identification of outside resources<sup>11</sup>.

Small departments were more likely, than large, to specify quality of life as a goal of community policing (27% versus 16% for large departments). It might be that smaller departments and communities hold this factor more valuable or, perhaps, smaller departments find this variable more easily operationalized.

### ***How Police Departments Operationalize CPO Job Descriptions***

Job descriptions ranged in complexity from simple, two paragraph characterizations to highly detailed, multi-page documents. Evident within these descriptions was the degree of adherence by various departments to the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* of community policing. While the task at hand was not to determine the degree to which a department practiced community policing, it seems worthy to note the varying levels of commitment readily apparent within CPO job descriptions.

Another notable finding was the number of departments possessing distinctive job descriptions for community policing sergeants and community policing lieutenants. One-third of the departments (n=12) submitted job descriptions for their community policing sergeant positions. Seven of those twelve departments (19% of the total departments) also possessed job descriptions for community policing lieutenants.

As one might expect, content within the submitted job descriptions varied widely. While some rogue factors appeared in various descriptions (see last paragraph in this section), most contained factors deemed by the researchers as common to community policing.

Various departments referred to their CPOs in different ways. Predominant among officer titles were Community Officer and Community Policing Officer, as noted in forty-four percent of the cases (n=16). Fourteen percent of police agencies stipulated no special title, simply referring to CPOs as "patrol officers" (n=5). Eleven departments (one department each) referred to their officers by other labels ranging from Beat Officer to program specific titles such as Neighborhood Liaison Officer, P.A.C.E Officer (Police and Community Enforcement Officer), Beat Coordinator, Phoenix Project Officer, COPS Officer (Community Officer Patrolling Streets), COPE Officer (Citizen Oriented Police Experiment), or Safety Action Team Officer.

Analyzing officer titles used by large versus small departments indicated no differences. Regardless of size, departments were more likely to use the identifiers Community Policing Officer and Community Officer.

Nearly seventy percent of departments' CPO job descriptions referenced the type of patrol a CPO would perform. Surprisingly, it was not foot patrol (considered by many theorists a requirement of community policing and mistakenly considered by others to be equivalent to community policing)<sup>12</sup> or motor patrol that was specified most often. Instead, *combinations* of patrol were cited in the greatest share of job descriptions. Combination patrols were of several varieties: bike and foot patrol, foot and motor patrol, and bike and motor patrol. further, combinations of patrol were the patrol type most often cited by both large and small police agencies.

**Table 2. Community Policing Job Descriptions: Patrol Type**

Label	Frequency	Percent
FOOT PATROL	4	11
BIKE PATROL	1	3
RADIO CAR PATROL	3	8
<b>COMBINED PATROL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>44</b>
OTHER	1	3
NOT MENTIONED	11	31

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n=36

Also surprising, was the aspect of permanent beats. Again, a central tenet of the *Trojanowicz Paradigm*, the majority of job descriptions (64%) made no mention of assigning offices to permanent beat areas. Some job descriptions seemed to *imply* permanency and were coded as such.

According to department size, large departments were most likely to refrain from mentioning whether an officer would be assigned, long-term, to a beat area. This might reflect budget and personnel shortages that larger departments have experienced in recent times prior to the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1995. Non-permanence of geographic assignment might also reflect labor contract constraints.

A third surprise was the number of departments (28%) utilizing community policing solely as an order maintenance tool. As one department's CPO job description specified, community policing officers would provide "...a highly visible police presence used to stabilize troubled communities." Reviewing submitted documents, it appeared those departments mentioning a high profile police presence intended to use this visibility in one of two ways: *solely* for its deterrent effect, or *in conjunction* with commonly held community policing principles. Or, to categorize this another way: solely in keeping with *traditional* police practices or in keeping with *community-oriented* police practices. Analysis related to department size indicated small departments were less likely to mention this function than were large departments.

**Table 3. Community Policing Job Descriptions: Variables by Positive Findings**

Label	Frequency	Percent
PROBLEM SOLVING	28	78
CPOS' DUTIES ADDITIVE?	27	75
IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS	25	69
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP	22	61
REFERRAL SERVICE	22	61
CRIME PREVENTION	19	53
SURVEYS & STATISTICS	17	47
PUBLIC SPEAKING	16	44
PERMANENT BEATS	13	36
SGT. JOB DESCRIPTIONS	12	33
TRAINING	12	33
HIGH PROFILE POLICE PRESENCE	10	28
EQUIPMENT (BIKES)	8	22
LT. JOB DESCRIPTIONS	7	19
MEDIA INTERACTION	5	14

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n=36

Because the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* specifies the media as one of the "Big Five"<sup>13</sup> necessary for a successful community policing initiative, descriptions were analyzed for evidence of required (or allowed) interaction between CPOs and the media. Very few departments (14%, n=5) listed contact with the media as a community policing job requirement. If mentioned, the requiring department was likely to be a small agency. One logical reason for this finding might be that large departments commonly have Public Information Officers through which media access information or Public Relations Units that deal with media personnel.

The majority of job descriptions (61%, n=25), regardless of department size, specified the role of the CPO as being in partnership with the community. Following from the notion of police-community partnership was CPO identification of community problems as a specified job function. This specification was evident in slightly over two-thirds (69%, n=25) of the job descriptions. Department size was not a factor in the specification of this function.

Since the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* states that one way to identify community policing is to determine if neighborhood residents are afforded the opportunity to *present* community problems to police, the researchers examined this variable closely. While it was evident that data heavily indicated shared responsibility (partnership between police and residents) for problem identification, no job description distinctly mentioned problem identification brought to a CPO's attention by community residents. After further analysis and lengthy discussion, researchers determined that resident identification of problems may be inherent within the police-community partnership variable but concluded the data did not indicate this with absolute certainty.

It seems overwhelmingly clear that police departments identifying with community policing appeared to be using a problem solving approach. Mentioned by nearly eighty percent (n=28) of the departments, this variable was more prevailing (as a required element of a CPO's job) than any other factor. Researchers noted that problem solving took different forms depending on which department's job description the researchers analyzed. Two departments cited the *S.A.R.A.* (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) model, for instance. Department size made little difference when problem solving was examined. Large departments were as likely as small departments to specify this variable within the CPO job descriptions.

Conflicting with the community policing definitions analyzed above, nearly two-thirds (61%, n=22) of departments' job descriptions required that CPOs serve as a referral source (to other agencies and services) for community residents. Inherent within this requirement was the identification of other resources within the community. Also conflicting with findings from the definition analysis, small departments required this function more often than large departments. Thus, while not mentioned within community policing definitions, departments operationalized the use of "other resources" within their CPO job descriptions.

The last major coding category analyzed was the aspect of CPO duties. Overwhelmingly, CPO duties were additive to regular patrol duties (75%, n=27). This held true for both large and small departments. Researchers debated the meaning of this finding. On the one hand, this result might indicate that CPOs do "double duty" - performing community policing in addition to traditional law enforcement duties. Viewed this way, one might suggest that police agencies have broadened service delivery as demanded by community policing philosophy. Or, it might indicate that departments have failed to fully mesh community policing principles into organizational practice<sup>14</sup>.

Several variables arose from the job description data. First, was the aspect of requiring CPOs to organize crime prevention programs. Fifty-three percent (n=19) of the departments specified this requirement. Interesting to note, is that organizing crime prevention programs was a requirement more often specified in large departments than in small (62% versus 29% respectively), perhaps reflecting increased crime problems within larger cities.

A second variable emerging from the data was the requirement of conducting surveys and gathering statistics. Departments were split nearly half and half regarding this requirement. Small departments were more likely to require this function than large departments (57% versus 31%).

Another 50/50 split evidenced via inductive analysis was "public speaking," required of CPOs in just under half of the departments. Public speaking probably is reflective of the need for officers in smaller departments to "wear many hats" and the lack of specialized personnel often found in larger departments.

Other common factors induced from the submitted job descriptions included training requirements and equipment. These job description sections clarified skills necessary for CPOs to perform the duties categorized and analyzed above. For instance, communication skills were deemed necessary to community partnership and ability to ride a bike was necessary for combination patrol.

Conversely, several departments specified factors that would deem an officer unfit for community policing service. Mentioned most often, was abuse of sick leave. Also mentioned as prohibitory were prior citizen complaints against an officer.

Other factors emerged that appeared specific to a department's union contract, such as he issues of flex-time and shift assignments. Some departments required elements unique to their

populations served; i.e., one department required bilingual ability, one required CPOs to provide counseling, and two required CPOs to deal with environmental hazards.

### EXAMINING THE CONFLICT

Conflict certainly exists between community policing as envisioned by theorists and researchers and community policing as defined and operationalized by police organizations. Why is there disparity between the paradigm and the application of community policing? Part of the answer lies in the differing utility the concept holds for researchers and practitioners.

Few of the elements of the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* were found in the formal documents of police organizations. The most central tenet of his model, identifying community policing as a guiding *philosophy*, was present in only eighteen percent of the examined police documents. Another tenet, permanency of beat assignment, was also conspicuously absent in the vast majority of cases. At issue, too, was the element of removing CPOs from the isolation of patrol cars<sup>15</sup>. Again, the overwhelming majority of definitions lacked any reference to this definitional aspect.

The most common language contained in organizational definitions *and* job descriptions were the elements of police-community partnership, problem identification, and problem solving. It might be speculated that police organizations find these elements easier to operationalize (i.e., the "concreteness" of partnership, problem identification, and problem solving is firmer, more "real," than the concreteness of philosophy). Too, departments might find that these elements do not require the extent of actual organizational change that comes with adopting, operationalizing, and internalizing a guiding philosophy.

Further evidence of an "operationalizing problem" is reflected in the number of departments submitting community policing definitions versus those offering CPO job descriptions. One hundred sixty three departments submitted their community policing definitions. Several departments even parroted the *Trojanowicz Paradigm* of community policing, suggesting they had accepted and adopted this definition as their own. Developing a CPO job description, however, was another story. Only 36 departments provided this document, supporting the existence of an operationalization problem. What role police labor unions play in the development or non-development of CPO job descriptions remains unknown.

Departments utilizing community policing as an order maintenance tool lends further credence to the premise that practitioners, in an organizational sense, might be following the "community policing path of least resistance." Evidence of factors like this, within police documents, might help to explain the wide chasm between paradigm and practice. This same evidence might also assist in explaining the presence of many different forms of community policing that fall under the rubric of its umbrella.

The problem of defining what is being implemented under the label of community policing presents obstacles for evaluators. Researchers find it difficult to compare programs due to the diversity of departmental approaches. As Wycoff and Oettmeier found in Houston, "When jobs are as dissimilar as police patrol work may be across different assignments or different areas of the community, the need for equity may reduce the evaluated job dimensions to the most common elements of the role" (1994: 3). If we are to advance our understanding of current-day policing, future researchers need to examine the source and reason for conflict between paradigm

and practice. Weisburd suggests the source lies within the role conflicts that exist between evaluators and police, themselves (in Rosenbaum, 1994).

A broadened understanding of this topic area could be realized through case studies and other forms of ethnographic research. Such methodologies might assist in distinguishing factors that are common to the actual *practice* of community policing from factors that appear in a department's official documents.

Data within this study provide evidence and support that conflict exists between community policing as envisioned by theorists and researchers and community policing as it is operationalized within police organizations. Whether the source of this conflict lies within police organizational constraints (re: implementation<sup>16</sup>), or within the actual players on both sides of the community policing coin (researchers versus practitioners) requires further study.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> A report, *Community Policing: A Survey of Police Departments in the United States* is available from the National Center for Community Policing, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, 560 Baker Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1118.

<sup>2</sup> Survey instructions to respondents simply stated: "If your department does not currently practice any form of community policing, please fill out and return sections I and II. If your department does currently practice community policing, please fill out all sections" (Trojanowicz, Woods, et al.).

<sup>3</sup> Sources for a listing of all non-Federal law enforcement agencies serving populations of 50,000 or more or having 100 or more sworn officers included the Department of Labor, the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Statistical Abstracts. The main source used in the national survey was Statistical Abstracts. These 686 agencies constituted the same population used for several recent Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) studies. PERF was generous in providing the National Center for Community Policing and the Federal Bureau of Investigation with mailing labels for distribution of the national survey instrument (Trojanowicz, Woods, et al., 1994: 9).

<sup>4</sup> The one unusable case was from an agency that forwarded a job description for the department's "Crime Prevention/Community Relations Officer." The sergeant submitting this job description admitted that officers filling this position "are not community policing officers" and that his department "did not practice community policing."

<sup>5</sup> The *Trojanowicz Paradigm* of community policing is based upon Trojanowicz's initial (1990) and later simplified (1994) definitions of community policing. This paradigm has also been referred to as the *MSU Model*.

<sup>6</sup> For related commentary, refer to Weisheit, Wells, and Falcone's "Community Policing in Small Town and Rural America." *Crime & Delinquency*, Vol. No. 4, October 1994: 549-67.

<sup>7</sup> Some would argue that many of the problems in policing emanated from these subcultural beliefs.

<sup>8</sup> Over the last two years, the Neighborhood Network Center and other similar concepts that make use of inter-agency partnerships between police and social service agencies have become increasingly popular. Other questions within the larger, national study pertained specifically to these types of partnerships.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Kelling's conclusions regarding the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment (1981) and Trojanowicz's report on the Flint Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program (1982).

<sup>10</sup> Refer again to Weisheit, Wells, and Falcone for related commentary.

<sup>11</sup> Refer again to Weisheit, Wells, and Falcone for related commentary.

<sup>12</sup> Trojanowicz considered foot patrol an integral *part* of community policing, a strategy or tactic used to achieve the philosophy. He was cautious to point out that a department could employ foot patrol while not actually practicing community policing philosophy. Conversely, a department could employ community policing philosophy without using foot patrol, although this might prove difficult.

<sup>13</sup> The "Big Five" consists of: the police, the community, the media, political leaders, and other social service agencies (Trojanowicz, Woods, et al.: 1994).

<sup>14</sup> The debate over this finding hinges upon the definitions of "additive" and "separate." One researcher pointed out that additive really indicates separate and, therefore, the coding scheme needs revisited.

<sup>15</sup> See Walker's "Community Policing and Patrol Cars: Oil and Water or a Well Oiled Machine?" in the June, 1993 issue of *Police Forum* for an extensive discussion of this issue.

<sup>16</sup> This source of conflict is in keeping with various community policing case studies such as Flint, Newark, Houston, and others. See Greene and Taylor's discussion in Green and Mastrofski's (eds.) *Community Policing: Rhetoric or Reality* (1988).

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