Police Leaders in the New Community Problem-Solving Era

Michael J. Jenkins

University of Scranton

John DeCarlo

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Carolina Academic Press

Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2015
Carolina Academic Press
All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Jenkins, Michael, 1984-
Police leaders in the new community problem-solving era / Michael Jenkins and John DeCarlo.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-61163-590-4 (alk. paper)
1. Police--Supervision of--United States. 2. Police-community relations--United States. I. DeCarlo, John. II. Title.

HV7936.S8J46 2015
363.2068'4--dc23

2014032800

Carolina Academic Press
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Foreword

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, police leaders, policy makers, and researchers were confronted by the stark reality that "professional" policing—that is, the centralized, bureaucratic, factory, reactive model of policing formulated in the mid-20th century—had failed. It failed to control crime, it alienated minority communities, it created an isolated police culture hostile to outsiders, and, despite its emphasis on bureaucratic controls, it failed to maintain officer or management accountability. The evidence of the collapse of professional, or reform, policing abounded: the intervention of the Supreme Court in criminal investigation with its exclusionary rule and Miranda warning during the 1950s; the riots against police during the 1960s; police behavior in response to the civil rights movement of the 1960s; the research regarding its tactics—preventive patrol, rapid response to calls for service, and criminal investigation—during the 1970s; and the seemingly inexorable rise of crime starting in the 1960s.

During the same period, ideas about improving policing began to surface: police had to improve their relationship to the community; minorities and women needed to be hired and promoted in police departments; alternative tactics had to be devised; problems, not incidents, ought to be a basic unit of police work; enforcement of minor offenses is important to citizens; police, at all levels, use extensive discretion; foot patrol has value; citizen concerns are important in devising police priorities; and, civilians can play important roles in police work. Reconciling these ideas to the reigning police ideology was initially difficult. After all, did not opening police departments to citizen and political input run the risk of reopening the long-fought battle against police corruption and political interference in police matters? Was not arresting and ensuring prosecution of those who commit serious crimes the basic business of police? How could local neighborhood concerns about disorderly behavior be responded to in a highly centralized bureaucracy focused on responding to serious crimes? How could police officers be controlled without a strong semimilitary command and control system?

Nonetheless, by the mid-1980s it was becoming clear that policing was not just entering a phase of improving its mid-century strategy, it was moving away from the reform strategy and entering a yet not fully understood era of policing most commonly referred to as community policing. At the core of emerging police thinking was the idea that police had to structure a new relationship with neighborhoods and communities. In many respects this was not a new idea. The community relations movement that started during the 1940s after riots in Detroit and Los Angeles, and which was endorsed by President Johnson's 1965 Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, attempted to bridge the gap between police and community, especially minority communities. It attempted this primarily through meetings with community leaders, recruitment of minorities, and officer training in race relations. The community relations movement had several problems, not the least of which was that many, if not most, police departments viewed community relations as an opportunity to "sell" policing as it was then. But more profound was the failure to understand that if one truly changes the relationship between police and community it has enormous impact on the total strategy of policing. And this is where it gets tough.

It is clear that it is one thing for police leaders, academics, and policy makers to have and understand new good ideas about policing, and to even understand that a basic shift in police thinking is afoot; it is something entirely else to implement the changes that such a shift implies and requires. It is not an exaggeration to write that if a police department shifts from the reform to a community strategy, every element of its strategy must change, from its sources of authority, to its structure and administrative processes, to its tactics and sought after outcomes. Complicating this situation enormously for police leaders is that they make these changes in the midst of their everyday work. There is no time out for retooling. Crime still happens; citizens still have emergencies; children get lost; and "cats still wind up in trees." Moreover they make these changes in the face of the "conventional wisdom" that often shapes media and community views of the police, e.g., that response time is a key metric of police performance.

Michael Jenkins and John DeCarlo have studied and herein present how four police departments have confronted these challenges: Boston, Massachusetts; Los Angeles, California; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Newark, New Jersey. Each has an interesting history both of successes and failures, but all are committed to move towards a genuine community/problem solving model. Moreover, the authors view these departments within the context of police and organizational literature. The question that the authors ultimately con-

front is how, in the complex political, organizational, and social world police exist in, does change survive.

George L. Kelling, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Rutgers Newark University
Professor Emeritus, Northeastern University
Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute

Acknowledgments

The authors appreciate the assistance and support of a number of our personal, academic, professional, and practitioner friends and institutions. This book is based on the dissertation Jenkins completed under the following committee, chaired by George Kelling, Norman Samuels, Ronald Clarke, and Anthony Braga. Their insight and expertise were invaluable in helping to formulate and implement the research ideas. Their comments on early versions of this work undoubtedly improved the book you're reading today.

We are grateful to a number of personnel from within each of the police departments: Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis, Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn, L.A. Police Chiefs William Bratton and Charlie Beck, and Newark Police Director Garry McCarthy confidently opened their departments in support of the research. Desiree Dusseault and Jen Maconochie graciously helped to organize research visits to the BPD. A close friend and colleague, Eric Piza, assisted with visits to the NPD. We thank Sgt. Kristin Riestra and Anne Schwartz for their hospitality during visits to the MPD. Sergeant Jaime Marin and Sgt. Pinto and Officers Chao and Armando kindly assisted with research visits to the LAPD. We are indebted to the many people within each police department who took time out of their daily responsibilities to share their views and experiences.

We thank Teresina Gildea, Jessica Lloyd, John "Zack" Monahan, Joe Mosangkoun, Dana Raciti, and Michael Pristash for their superb, patient, and professional research, transcribing, and editing assistance. We appreciate Beth Hall, our acquisitions editor at Carolina Academic Press, for continuing to be a supportive, energetic, and responsive advisor. We're also indebted to both Ryland Bowman and Grace Pledger for lending their expertise during the production stages.

To our families, thank you for your support and understanding as we stuck to our stick-to-it-ness.

Finally, we greatly appreciate George Kelling's mentorship and decades of contributions to the policing field. More practically, without him, such widespread access to the police departments would not be likely. As students of policing

and as a former chief (DeCarlo), Dr. Kelling's work has been transformative. We're honored to call him a friend.

Generous funding from the University of Scranton's Provost Office, the University of New Haven's Provost Office, and the Bodman Foundation supported this research. We thank, too, our current and past colleagues at these institutions and at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Of course, even with the mentorship, guidance, and support of the preceding sources, the opinions, findings, conclusions, and mistakes remain our own.

Michael J. Jenkins and John DeCarlo

Introduction

What you'll read hereinafter is the result of a relatively open-ended exploration of the current state of urban policing as outlined by the elements of an organizational strategy in Boston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Newark. Jenkins initially began this exploration as part of the requirements for completing his doctoral degree at Rutgers University under the mentorship of George Kelling. DeCarlo, a retired police chief, a police practitioner for 34 years, and a Ph.D. from John Jay College, brings both a practitioner's and an academic's perspective to the analysis and contemplation of the four departments' experiences presented here. We hope that by combining our perspectives in this book you'll get a unique view of how personnel within these police departments view the effect of a community problem-solving strategy on their work.

Chapter 1 introduces you to a brief history of modern policing in the United States. It also explores the concept of a police organizational strategy and breaks it down into its various elements. These elements will form the outline for Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, which present the findings from each of the respective departments. The elements prove useful for understanding the police profession as a product of a comprehensive organization.

Chapter 2 shares a little bit about the methods and methodology. You might find some of the discussions surrounding the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of conducting such research helpful to your own studies of police and police organizations. Chapter 2 also describes the specific sources of data and the analytical process followed in building each of the cases in the subsequent chapters.

We set the stage in Chapter 3 by giving a brief overview of the departments' and the cities' histories, pointing out key developments that will prepare the reader for understanding the current research of each department. We also provide some statistics on the demographics and crime rates in each of the cities to help the reader picture the general context in which the departments operate.

The next four chapters, then, delve into the community problem-solving experiences of each of the departments. At best, we would like to think that the

findings in each chapter represent the typical, unbiased police officer's view of police work and the police organization in the United States. At the very least we present the finest face of community problem-solving that some arguably top-notch police executives can offer. As you will see, even *that* promises to be quite telling. You will notice some lengthy direct quotations within these chapters. They are one of the main sources of data in building each case. It is our desire that you will see these for the richness they provide and for the thoughtfulness with which our police respondents approached this study.

We present each department's magnitude of change in Chapter 8, analyzing the change from where each department came to where they show signs of heading in the future. The designations of low, low-medium, medium, high, etc., are relative to each department and depend on the access and quality of the data we were able to collect. We also summarize some of the notable changes in each of the elements of the departments' organizational strategies. As in the four chapters that lead up to it, we use Chapter 8 to re-orient the reader with the current status of the police departments. The illustrations of each department are meant to give the reader a basis for comparison when examining their own best practices or research.

Chapter 9 closes with some key themes that emerged while placing the experiences of the study's departments into the greater body of literature and practice. The importance of police leadership and organizational structure bears repeating in our discussion. The nature of their uncovering and the robustness with which the data pointed to them warrant future attention by researchers and practitioners. Finally, the chapter and book close with the defining characteristics and challenges of policing in the new community problem-solving era as well as an explanation of why we believe the name fittingly describes the latest policing era.