

Zero tolerance policing



Within modern society the contemporary debate from the population is, ' what do we want from our police forces and what is an acceptable level of performance should be in terms of fairness and effectiveness of today's policing. Bowling (2007) in his research study outlined the importance of ' zero tolerance policing and ' problem orientated policing' within society. The author in this assignment will analyse what the public actually want from their police force and also outline and evaluate the concept of ' zero tolerance policing' and ' problem orientated policing' by using Bowling (2007) views within his research papers.

Within police policies and powers which are governed by individual acts produced and enforced within Parliament and are sanctioned in the police and criminal evidence act (1994). This act deals with the complex interpretation of criminal and police evidence which puts these policies into application that are practical within society. The majority of these were supportive of concepts that deal with various crime and criminal activities that are socially unacceptable such as anti-social behaviour. Within communities and neighbourhoods the concept of change in the police force was needed within modern society.

' Zero tolerance' concept of policing started in New York (US) at a period in time when the drug trade and various other socio-economic factors showed an increase in these criminal activities. Homicide in particular saw an increase, it increased an incredible 63% within the periods of 1985-1990 (Bowling 1999). Bowling (1999) states in his research paper that the rise of Homicide in the state of New York maybe connected to the decline in the drug market and inner fights with various street gangs within New York City.

Due to this increase in criminal activities within New York, the New York Police Department commissioner promised prior to becoming elected that he would try and reinvent the streets of the city of New York (McLaughlin 2007). With the full backing of the newly appointed Mayor of New York, they would now ensure that they will enforce the law and provide 'zero tolerance' policing with New York City.

In the UK, Jack Straw and Tony Blair tried to recreate this policy on 'zero tolerance' within the streets of Britain. Jack Straw's concept was to allow the police the power to,

....." Reclaim Britain increasingly brutalised urban spaces from winos, addicts, squeegee merchants, graffiti taggers, louts and disorderly youths"..... McLaughlin (2007).

During the decades there have been a number of attempts of reforming the police force within society through legal changes that attempts to transform police cultures and accountability within the police force. During the concept of police reform within today's modern society should be concerned with accountability and responsiveness to the communities and neighbourhood in which the police force are serving. Within the police forces geographical area, the communities should be guaranteed the maintained of peace and be protected by their local police force within society. It is clear that with the introduction of 'the new police' in the 18th Century, have played a pivotal role in the general literature within policing.

Policing within England perceived various problems in society, concerning popular disorder within various classes, including the poorer members of
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society. The ‘ new police’ were associated with the mechanisms of social order and control within society. The working poorer class was incorporated into a life which is seen as more of a disciplined movement in the development of reform, common and extremely recurrent in the 18th Century.

The policies of the police were to find effective ways of preventing and reducing criminal activities within society and provide a positive method and concept of policing for all members of the community. The policies and procedures of policing have general law enforcement duties that include the concept of regular patrols and responding to general public’s calls for various police service.

The role of the police within society goes far beyond the general public’s imagination and their roles change from day to day. Their work regime reflects on the various roles within society which can be directing traffic to homicide. In all of these activities the officer is carrying out their role in the criminal justice system. Within society the police are expected to fully protect and govern the streets within modern society, the concept of ‘ zero tolerance’ policing was introduced to establish a safer policing regime to protect and ensure the safety of communities and neighbourhoods within society.

Zero tolerance policing is extremely popular with the general public who see this as the police being tougher on any types of criminal activity. In July 2003 a poll conducted by ICM (2003) analysed and concluded that the support from ‘ zero tolerance policing showed a majority of the general public were in

favour of this type of policing within their neighbourhoods and communities. Zero tolerance style of policing within society can be extremely beneficial to communities and this can lead to reductions in criminal activities within the geographical area. However zero tolerance policing can have a negative effect on the communities within society, with the presence of the police presence can antagonise racial motivated criminal activities in communities if not policed correctly and effectively.

Within the concept of 'zero-tolerance' policing the concept of 'Broken windows theory' is utilised by criminologists. Kelling et al (1982) they suggest that any low-level criminal activities must be solved quickly, thus, mending the 'broken windows' if these activities are not resolved straight away further disorders and crimes may escalate within societies community. The concept of dealing with disorderly conditions to try and prevent any criminal activity is present in police strategies where the police attempt to impose social and community order through strict enforcement. According to Cordner (1998) and Skogan (2006) community and problem-orientated policing concepts and strategies where police officers tried to develop order and reduce criminal activity through the method of cooperation within neighbourhoods and community members and address recurring criminal problems within society. This method of policing varies from geographical area across police forces, but the concept of 'Broken windows' is utilised in the prevention of crime control.

Weisburd et al (2007) analysed that the concept of 'broken windows' can be defined as,

...." One's perception of incivilities in the neighbourhood or community that has more of an impact than the amount of incivilities within the neighbourhood or community"..... (Weisburd & Braga, 2007).

Houses that are unkempt and are not cared for gives individuals who are committing criminal activities the misconception and impression that the community does not care or value the quality of life within their neighbourhood. The environment signals the criminal individuals the freedom to steal, litter, and vandalize this geographical area within the community. Within the community if there is various types of unkempt houses this could open up the communities and neighbourhoods to be exposed to various types of disorders, such as loitering and public drunkenness, that if the problem is not dealt with could exculpate and therefore lead to more serious crimes.

..... " Neighbourhood and community disorders can influence honest people to move out of the neighbourhood or lock themselves in their homes, but it influences the disorderly and especially criminals to move into the neighbourhood and commit criminal activities"..... (Harcourt, Nov. 1998: 297).

Within communities and neighbourhoods if certain individuals are committing disorderly activities such as, youths and teenagers gathering in front of the local small convenience store. These individuals can start to consume alcohol in front of the shop and over a period of time the area is unkempt and considered to be a problematic area of society. Community and neighbourhood members are can be therefore be approached and hassled by

very persistent disorderly individuals. This can lead to local members of the community feeling that their neighbourhood is no longer safe place to live. The individuals can feel intense insecurity can therefore force the individuals to stay inside of their homes, or relocate to another area, which leads to empty houses and can lead to further deterioration of the neighbourhood.

Zero tolerance method of policing can be defined in many ways. The most widely used approach involves strict non-discretionary enforcement of criminal law regardless of the circumstances and nature of the offence. Many advocates of zero tolerance stimulate that whilst it does consist of positive methods by the police, it does not automatically lead to the conviction and arrest of minor offences and criminal activities within society. Advocates also claim that zero tolerance policing can reduce criminal activity within society and also reduces the fear of crime in communities. Zero Tolerance policing can also drastically increase the confidence in the ability of the police by the community and neighbourhood members and can also be beneficial to the community and also help with problem orientated policing.

The concept of Problem-Oriented Policing offers the theory that

.....“ the more the police force are accurately and can therefore identify and minimize the immediate causes of trends and patterns of crime, hopefully the less crime there will be within society” (Sherman, 1993).

In order to test this theory criminal activity has to be measured. However, the measurement of crime can be extremely problematic due to the various amount and types of crime within society and also the fact that unfortunately

not all crimes are recorded. Therefore measuring how effective prevention methods are is also just as difficult.

Adams (1996) research study emphasised the study on reducing youth crime in communities, he concluded that police officers can prevent the intersection of motivated criminal offenders within time and space with suitable targets of crime, the less criminal activity there will be. However the research study found that there was no obvious reduction in criminal activity by the setting of curfews for the majority of offenders which in the research study was aimed at youths in society.

Another researcher Kennedy (1996) suggested the method and concept that the more police officers can remove weapons and guns from public open places and hopefully deter individuals in society carrying them in the environments of criminal events, the less criminal activities there should be. Through better knowledge and therefore application of search procedures Kennedy found that the reduction of gun carrying significantly reduced gun crime within society.

Problem oriented policing can have massive benefits towards the community and hopefully it will promote more involvement in the issues of public safety, and in turn can reduce the feelings of fear and increases the feelings of safety within the general public in society. With good policing of the concept of problem orientated policing, it can promote an extremely positive perception of today's modern police force.

In conclusion most criminal activities within society are statistically increasing and the majority crime rates and especially the rates of violent

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related crimes are drastically increasing throughout the globe. Statistically the main targets for blame are higher drug consumption, higher inequality of individuals in communities and racial motivated crimes, and greater availability of gun and knife crimes. Within the government some politics viewpoints can favor the principle of rehabilitation and structural improvement to fight crime within society. The concept of 'zero tolerance' and 'problem orientated policing' aims to prevent serious crime by controlling and clamping down on the many different categories of minor crimes that police officers believe can lead to further criminal activities and therefore needs the concept of using custodial sentences for first time offences.

A major body of research and many authors on the concept policing have analysed argued that modern day policing can be seen as not being an effective way of controlling crime and that in any case the method of dealing with criminal activity is not the only section of what the police force do and therefore it is considered not the distinctly role within the modern police force in society (Neyroud and Beckley 2001).

Neyroud and Beckley (2001) in their research concluded that the pivotal role and functions of the modern police force highlights a move in the methods of the principle of law enforcement and criminal reduction and prevention in modern society.

This concept of zero tolerance policing and problem orientated policing will hopefully allow the general public within communities to feel safer within

their neighborhood's and have total reliance of the police force that are policing today's modern society.

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