

Police and community relations: the difficulties in transitioning from a more tra...

Law



Police & Community Relations: The difficulties in transitioning from a more traditional model of policing to community policing Tutor:

Date:

Police & Community Relations

In the United States, policing has undergone through four eras namely: the Political era, the Professional or Reform era, the Community Policing era and the recently employed Compstat. The system of policing during the political era was entangled in politics. The police was not an autonomous department and so it encouraged patronage in politics and the mayors and council members just to reward friends did recruitment. This system prevailed between the 1840's to 1930's (Lasley et al, 2011 p. 475). With the emergence of scientific theory in administration, the police in America was not left out of emphasis in terms of unity of control and production. The professional or reform era thus set in. the Reform era was concerned with reutilizing and standardizing the work of the police where te police officers were to make arrests wherever it was possible and to enforce the law. Instead of assigning duty to patrol officers, in cases of arising problems, special units e. g. drugs, juvenile, vice and tactical were created. This professional era despite its disadvantages, made an improvement from the previous political era. For instance, merit became the criteria to select police executive officers, which improved patrol officer recruiting, training and testing. However, the emphasis of the quantity aspect by this professional era became a source of the problem for the police service. In this case, police could be evaluated on how many tickets they wrote the number of kilometers covered or the arrests made. Here, we see that the primary

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indicator of police effectiveness based on the crime rate.

Community Policing

During the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, there was increased crime and the police were under immense pressure (Lasley et al, 2011 p. 475).

Factors including violence increase, the changing view of management (scientific) which stressed efficiency over effectiveness, quantitative policing over qualitative and police administration isolation from the community amongst others necessitated a break from the professional to the Community Policing era. Community Policing concentrates on social disorder and crime via police services delivery, which includes problem solving, prevention, community engagement and partnerships and traditional law enforcement.

The difficulties in transitioning from a more traditional model of policing to community policing The Community Policing concept began around 1970s in the United States when suggestion was that to improve police performance redesigning of the police job based on motivation was necessary. Firstly, the concept began with teams of police officers assigned to specific locations to offer police services in the area. Team policing failed in the end because of poor planning and haste execution of experiments. Foot patrol, during the late 1970s and 1980s, became popular. This is because it led to reduction of crimes and an increase in the neighborhood safety level.

However, it was not enough to put police on bicycle and foot patrols or in neighborhoods. The concept of foot patrol faced a difficulty in this case and it required going beyond. Police roles are redefined to a neighborhood ombudsman and a problem solver rather than a crime fighter. Policing was

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still a force driven by incidents rather than a proactive and a creative entity to solve crime and disorder. Problem solving was also lacking in Community Policing. The writings of Herman Goldstein concerning problem-oriented policing received attention leading to a combination of Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) which has become the way of many police organizations. As a result, the police have involved the public in solving problems and thus citizens are now taken as part of the process in policing.

Earlier i. e. during the period between 1987 to 1994, the philosophy of COPPS spread rapidly in the police subculture via various forms of communication. However, community policing during this period was still limited to midsize and large cities and its strategies seemed to target only fear-of-crime issues and drugs while making improvement of police-community relations (Lasley et al, 2011 p. 487). Community policing has failed to provide a strategy able to reflect not only police adherence to the model of community, and the philosophy of problem solving policing. It also gives direction deploying the scarce resources, and measuring the performance of the police. Compstat is the new strategy that meets this need. Compstat can be viewed as a component in the COPPS approach because it refers it employs Scanning, Analysis, and Response and Assessment (SARA) model of the COPPS.

Reference

Lasley, J. R., Larson, J. K., Chandrika, B., Gregory, C. (2011). Assessing the long-term effects of officer race on police attitudes towards the community:

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