GETTING THE POLICE TO TAKE PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING SERIOUSLY

by

Michael S. Scott

The Center for Problem-oriented Policing, Inc.

Abstract: *Police agencies have, for the most part, not yet integrated the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing into their routine operations. This is so for several reasons. First, many police officials lack a complete understanding of the basic elements of problem-oriented policing and how problem solving fits in the context of the whole police function. Second, the police have not yet adequately developed the skill sets and knowledge bases to support problem-oriented policing. And third, the police have insufficient incentives to take problem-oriented policing seriously. This paper begins by articulating what full integration of problem-oriented policing into routine police operations might look like. It then presents one framework for integrating the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing into the whole police function. The paper then explores the particular skill sets and knowledge bases that will be essential to the practice of problem-oriented policing within police agencies and across the police profession. Finally, it explores the perspectives of those who critically evaluate police performance, and considers ways to modify those perspectives and expectations consistent with problem-oriented policing.*

Problem-oriented policing (POP), introduced to the police profession some 20 years ago, has been widely praised, and seldom seriously criticized, as a promising approach to improving police service (Brodeur, 1998; Sherman et al., 1997; Leigh et al., 1996). And yet few police agencies have fully incorporated its basic principles and methods into their structure and operations, nor has the police profession

Crime Prevention Studies, vol. 15 (2003), pp. 49-77.

as a whole fully embraced problem-oriented policing. This paper explores why this is so and proposes steps that can be taken to get the police to take problem-oriented policing more seriously.

The Basic Elements of Problem-oriented Policing

This discussion properly begins with a review of some of the basic principles and methods of problem-oriented policing and what full incorporation of those principles and methods might look like in a police agency and across the whole police profession.

Herman Goldstein (2001:1) emphasizes 10 basic elements of problem-oriented policing.[1] He summarized them as follows:

> Problem-oriented policing is an approach to policing in which (1) discrete pieces of police business (each consisting of a cluster of similar incidents, whether crime or acts of disorder, that the police are expected to handle) are subject to (2) microscopic examination (drawing on the especially honed skills of crime analysts and the accumulated experience of operating field personnel) in hopes that what is freshly learned about each problem will lead to discovering a (3) new and more effective strategy for dealing with it. Problem-oriented policing places a high value on new responses that are (4) preventive in nature, that are (5) not dependent on the use of the criminal justice system, and that (6) engage other public agencies, the community and the private sector when their involvement has the potential for significantly contributing to the reduction of the problem. Problem-oriented policing carries a commitment to (7) implementing the new strategy, (8) rigorously evaluating its effectiveness, and, subsequently, (9) reporting the results in ways that will benefit other police agencies and that will ultimately contribute to (10) building a body of knowledge that supports the further professionalization of the police.

These basic elements, familiar to those who study and practice problem-oriented policing, are explained in detail elsewhere (Goldstein, 1990, 1979; Eck and Spelman, 1987; Scott, 2000), so here the concern is limited to considering what full incorporation of these elements might look like within police agencies and across the police profession.

Full Incorporation of Problem-oriented Policing Into Police Practice

Ideally, there would be a clearer understanding of what the term "problem" refers to: that it refers to an aggregation of smaller units of police business — incidents, complaints, crimes, calls-for-service,

cases — into a larger unit of analysis known as a problem. It does not refer to any and all matters of concern to the police. It specifically does not refer to organizational, administrative and political concerns. Use of the term "problem" in the context of policing would be understood in much the same way the term "disease" is understood among health professionals.

The police would become adept at breaking down large, vague problems into smaller, more precise problems. They would cease talking in generalities about how the police are going to deal with "the drug problem" or with "crime and delinquency" or "disorder and incivility," but rather would insist upon addressing the more specific ways in which these general concerns manifest themselves in that community. They would talk more in terms of controlling problems — reducing the harm caused by them — and less in terms of totally eradicating them from the community. Their objectives would be realistic and achievable.

The police, and those who oversee their actions, would insist that the broad community interest in these problems, as well as the larger community's response to them, be explored, rather than more narrowly looking at what the police are doing to solve the problems. The police would be held more accountable for addressing problems, but less responsible for addressing them alone. The various entities that are affected by particular problems, and those who contribute to their existence, would be actively engaged in the search for an improved response. Top community leaders would help broker the ownership of community problems and resist the temptation to point fingers exclusively at the police for all crime and disorder problems.

Within police agencies we would expect to find formal and routine systems that allow one to identify problems from among the mass of the smaller units of police business handled. Police incident reports would be designed with an eye toward capturing information about incidents that would facilitate subsequent problem analysis. For example, reporting officers might be asked to record factors — social or environmental conditions — that contributed to the incident. This would make it easier for subsequent analysis to locate all incident reports with certain contributing factors.[2] Dispatch records would have more precise codes to allow analysts to distinguish among different types of problems that are often lumped together under broad dispatch codes.[3] Staff would be dedicated to identifying apparent and emerging problems that would then call for closer analysis and perhaps new responses. Again, this parallels how the public health profession has developed systems for identifying outbreaks of disease and injury that call for special interventions.

There have been tremendous advances in recent years in information technology available to police that permit them to capture, sort, display, and analyze large quantities of data (Dunworth et al., 2000). Relational databases, computerized mapping, geographic information systems (GIS) technology, and other tools are becoming standard for many police agencies. Many police agencies now routinely produce lists that identify "hot spots," chronic offenders, chronic victims, and so forth. Many police agencies are emulating the New York City Police Department's Compstat methods to present emerging trend data and hold officials accountable for developing and implementing responses to emerging crime patterns. These are generally positive developments in policing, reflecting improvements in technology and methods in comparison to what existed before. Yet these developments do not of themselves achieve the more nuanced and in-depth definition and exploration of problems that are essential to good problem-oriented policing. For example, Compstat methods tend to be limited in several important respects. They tend to emphasize Uniform Crime Report "Index" crime data over the 90% of other incident reports that are not classified as an Index crime and over data other than police crime and incident reports. They focus on short-term trends rather than longer-term trends, a focus that lends itself well to developing stop-gap crime suppression interventions, but less well to understanding persistent community problems.

If problem-oriented policing were more fully adopted, we could expect the police to improve their understanding of crime and disorder problems; to see top police administrators and mid-level managers more engaged in matters directly concerning how their agencies handle various community problems. Goldstein observed quite accurately that police administrators devote most of their time and attention to organizational, administrative, and political concerns, perhaps in the misguided belief that the standard policing strategies — embodied by preventive patrol, handling incidents, investigating crimes, and arresting offenders — are adequate means for addressing the myriad of crime and disorder problems confronting the police.

The analysis of problems in POP departments would be of sufficient depth and rigor to get beyond simplistic understandings and explanations of the causes of community problems; the search for new and alternative responses to these problems would be sufficiently broad and creative to get beyond conventional police responses; and the responses adopted would be carefully tailored to local problems. Analysis of problems would especially look to reveal the many, often conflicting, interests that various groups in the community have in each problem rather than clinging to the fiction that there is a single community with a unified interest in these

problems and a consensual view as to how problems should be addressed. There would be a greater willingness to explore, challenge and change current responses.

Police agencies using POP methods would employ researchers and analysts, either as permanent staff or on a consulting basis, who are professionally trained in the principles and methods of problem analysis and action research. This staff would work closely and collaboratively with police operations officers identifying and analyzing problems, developing and implementing responses to them, and assessing the impact of those responses. Such staff would be relatively free of competing demands to perform tasks not related to substantive police concerns. Their work would extend beyond conventional crime analysis that is oriented principally toward predicting when and where future offenses will occur and guiding officers in criminal apprehension efforts. Problem analysts would be paid competitive wages and enjoy a higher level of status and influence within police organizations than they do today. They would be seen as indispensable to the routine operations of a police agency, not as peripheral support staff. There would be sufficient research and analysis staff to support routine problem-oriented activities in the agency. Even if there were only one researcher/analyst for every 100 police officers in an agency — a seemingly reasonable ratio — this would significantly enhance the current level of research and analysis support present in most police agencies today.

Measurement of success under POP would focus more directly on substantive outcomes — the degree to which problems were reduced effectively, efficiently, and equitably — and not merely on either the degree to which police involvement in problems was reduced or the extent to which responses were implemented. Police agencies would be measured in more sophisticated ways — by their relative effectiveness in addressing community problems — rather than solely by conventional measures of Index crimes, arrest rates, clearance rates, and response times.

Police agencies would prepare reports documenting problem-oriented initiatives and retain those reports and supporting documents in an organized records system. They would rely upon such reports and files to improve future problem-oriented inquiries and to share their findings with other police agencies and researchers. Problem-oriented record systems would have the same level of importance and resources as do incident records, case files, and the dozens of other records systems typically reposited in police agencies. Lessons learned from the experiences of problem-solving initiatives would be fed back into other systems in the agency: written policies and procedures would be updated and made more consistent with

emerging good practice, and training programs would continually be informed by the findings and experiences that emerge from problem-oriented work.

The police profession — through government agencies and private police research organizations — would similarly collect and synthesize knowledge about how the many crime and disorder problems faced by the police should be handled. Researchers would be funded to conduct studies designed to improve the overall understanding of common crime and disorder problems and how the police can effectively address them. The knowledge gained from research studies and police problem-solving initiatives would be collected, synthesized and fed back to police practitioners. There would be journals, articles, guides, seminars, training programs, websites and so forth devoted to the police handling of substantive community problems, all of which would contain information directly relevant to police practitioners and be written and presented in styles and formats that could be readily digested by police officials.

Government officials who oversee police activities would come to expect that the police were capable of analyzing problems carefully and of devising comprehensive and customized responses to difficult problems. At the same time, and through careful analysis, government officials would better appreciate the complexity and intractability of some crime and disorder problems, and thereby become more circumspect about demanding immediate and simple solutions to some problems. They would insist upon proper analysis before investing in or authorizing new responses to problems. This is no more than is routinely expected of other government services, whether it be water and sewer service, public health, fire control, or road construction. Government officials would be more open to heeding the advice of the police about emerging community problems and the need for the community to improve its responses to them. Both the police and the local governments to whom they report would become more comfortable with the police role as the proverbial canary in the coal mine, an early warning system for emerging crime and social disorder problems.

Police officers would be trained in the principles and methods of problem solving at least as thoroughly as they are trained in other operational strategies like criminal investigation and emergency response. This would include imparting to new officers a better understanding of the range of crime and disorder problems they will confront and what is known about how these problems can be controlled. They would emerge from their training programs with a greater capacity to recognize problems and at least initiate processes to analyze and respond appropriately to them.

Police organizations would be adept at tracking the progress of problem-solving initiatives and able to mobilize the right level of resources to match the scope and seriousness of each problem being addressed. This includes providing the right level of leadership to problem-solving initiatives and combining line-level input and involvement with higher level authority and resources. Problem-solving initiatives would be brought to conclusion in a timely fashion, not left to stall for lack of attention. Greater attention would be paid to the details and challenges of implementing responses in the knowledge that many good plans fail because of poor implementation and monitoring.

The administrative and organizational systems of police agencies would be better aligned to support and enable problem-oriented activity. Officers would be expected to think and act in a problem-oriented fashion and would be evaluated, rewarded and recognized for doing so. Formal and informal communications networks within agencies would promote the sort of discussions and information exchange essential to effective problem solving.

The foregoing discussion reflects a rough ideal vision of what police agencies and the police profession might look like if the concept of problem-oriented policing were taken more seriously. We turn now to exploring why the current state of affairs remains so far from the ideal.

Why Don't the Police Take Problem-oriented Policing Seriously?

There are three main reasons why the police do not take problem-oriented policing as seriously as one might hope they would. The first reason is the police lack a complete understanding of both the basic elements of problem-oriented policing and how those basic elements ought to be integrated with conventional forms of policing. The • second reason is, even where there is a good understanding of the basic elements and how they should be integrated into an agency, police agencies often lack, or lack access to, all of the skill sets and knowledge bases that are requisite for effective problem-oriented policing. The third reason is there are insufficient incentives for the police to take problem-oriented policing seriously.

Getting Police To Understand the Basic Elements of Problem-oriented Policing and How Problem Solving Fits in the Context of the Whole Police Function

That many police officers and administrators do not yet understand the basic elements of problem-oriented policing is not surprising. Although the concept has been in the public domain for over 20 years, the communication of its basic elements to the general police profession has only occurred within about the past 10 years. During that time, the concept of problem-oriented policing has been melded in some people's minds with the parallel concept of community policing. While there have been some benefits from trying to merge these two concepts into a unified whole, that effort has not always been successful and it has left some confusion and disagreement about which particular aspects of the two concepts are of highest priority (Goldstein, 1990; Scott, 2000; Brodeur, 1998). In many police agencies, for example, improving the overall relationship of the police to the community, especially to minority communities, has been a higher priority than improving analytical systems and knowledge about specific crime and disorder problems. So some police executives and researchers have devoted their time, attention and resources to opening lines of communication between the police and various community groups, and perhaps have seen this *necessary* step as also being *sufficient* toward adopting a new, more effective style of policing.

The quantity and quality of formal training in the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing has, on the whole, been inadequate (Scott, 2000). To the extent that some police officers are given any training in problem-oriented policing at all, it is often confined to a couple-day seminar, or worse, to a brief discussion in the context of a community policing seminar.[4] Few police academies devote anywhere near the amount of time to problem solving that they devote to other aspects of police work, such as patrol tactics, legal issues, weapons, emergency response, or criminal investigation. So, many police officers are left to learn problem-oriented policing principles and methods through experimentation, reading publications they come across by chance, and occasionally exchanging information and ideas with one another and with experts at conferences.

Beyond the need for teaching police officers how to identify, analyze, respond to, and assess problems, it is equally important that police administrators understand how to integrate problem-solving methods with other operational policing methods into a coherent problem-oriented framework. They need to understand how the new demands of problem solving fit with existing demands that their

agencies respond to routine incidents and emergencies, investigate crimes, patrol territory, and provide other ancillary public services. With this understanding, the systems and routines essential for problem solving can better be developed and institutionalized within police organizations. Although the totality of the police function is so multidimensional and complex that it defies simple categorization, some attempt to conceptualize and contextualize police work is necessary (Goldstein, 1977; Bittner, 1970; Wilson, 1968). Police administrators need to understand the fundamental — and sometimes competing — objectives of policing, the various methods available to achieve those objectives, and how to mobilize resources at the various levels at which police agencies operate. An integrated model would help explain what the police are trying to achieve, how they are trying to achieve it, and on what scale they are operating.

Briefly, an integrated policing model recognizes that police have multiple *objectives,* summarized by Goldstein (1977) as follows:

(1) to prevent and control conduct threatening to life and property (including serious crime);

(2) to aid crime victims and protect people in danger of physical harm;

(3) to protect constitutional guarantees, such as the right to free speech and assembly;

(4) to facilitate the movement of people and vehicles;

(5) to assist those who cannot care for themselves, including the intoxicated, the addicted, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, the elderly, and the young;

(6) to resolve conflict between individuals, between groups, or between citizens and their government;

(7) to identify problems that have the potential for becoming more serious for individuals, the police or the government; and

(8) to create and maintain a feeling of security in the community.

The model further recognizes that police employ several broad *operational strategies* to achieve these objectives. These operational strategies (or modes of operation) can be conceptualized as follows:

(1) preventive patrol;

(2) routine incident response;

(3) emergency response;

(4) criminal investigation;

(5) problem solving; and,

(6) ancillary public services.

Problem solving, conceived of as an operational strategy, is, in an important respect, different from other operational strategies: the careful analysis of the police response to various crime and disorder problems that is embodied in problem solving serves to inform all other operational strategies. It helps the police to improve their patrol, routine incident response, emergency response, and criminal investigation tactics and strategies. In sum, it helps the police make better sense out of much of what they do.

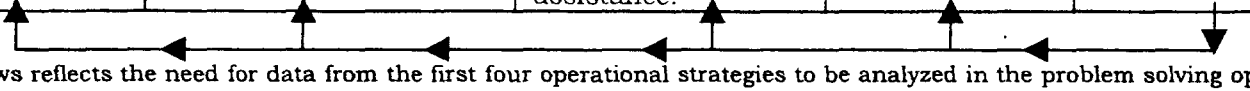
Finally, an integrated model recognizes that police work occurs at various levels of aggregation, or *operating levels,* ranging from highly localized work, such as that done by a single police officer addressing a problem at a single location, to communitywide work that implicates the policies and practices of the entire police agency. Examples of how the operating levels and operational strategies of police work relate are depicted in Figure 1 below. I explained this integrated model in more detail in an earlier publication (Scott, 2000, chapter 2).

Whether through this framework or some other, police officials, particularly administrators, need to develop a clearer understanding as to how the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing fit with the whole police function and how they can be integrated into the structure and systems of police organizations. Through this model, it is easier to recognize just how inadequate are the current structures and systems of police organizations for the purpose of advancing problem-oriented policing.

In addition to educating police officials, it is increasingly important that others outside the police organization understand what problem-oriented policing is and what potential it holds for promoting safer communities. City and county administrators, local elected officials, judges, prosecutors, other criminal justice officials, community leaders, journalists, and nongovernmental organization leaders need to be exposed to the rationale for changing the present orientation of policing, the principles of problem-oriented policing, and examples of problem-oriented policing successfully practiced. Through their improved understanding they can in turn help shape the priorities of police officials and consider other changes in government and community systems that will facilitate and support problem-oriented policing.

Figure 1. Operating Levels and Operational Strategies of Police Work

Operating Level	Operational Strategy				
	Preventive Patrol	*Routine Incident Response*	*Emergency Response*	*Criminal Investigation*	*Problem Solving*
Macro	Patrol deployment plans.	Policies related to the routine handling of categories of incidents.	Policies related to categories of emergencies; e.g., responses to large scale disasters.	Policies and practices related to categories of crimes.	Policies and practices related to categories of problems affecting entire communities.
Intermediate	Directed patrols by groups of officers.	Handling of a large scale routine event; e.g., traffic control at large public event.	Response to an incident with multiple offenders or victims; e.g., a bar fight or multiple-vehicle accident.	Investigation of a pattern of crimes; e.g., a rash of burglaries in a neighborhood.	Problems affecting a neighborhood or district; e.g., prostitution on a commercial strip.
Micro	Routine preventive patrol by beat officers.	Handling of routine incidents; e.g., dispute, minor crime reporting, provision of directions, minor traffic accident investigation.	Response to a life-threatening incident; e.g., a traffic accident, with injuries; police officer in need of immediate assistance.	Investigation of a single crime; e.g., shoplifting; assault, with known suspect.	Problems concentrated at discrete locations; e.g., a single drug house.



Note: The flow of the arrows reflects the need for data from the first four operational strategies to be analyzed in the problem solving operational strategy, which in turn informs and improves the other operational strategies. For purposes of illustration, the number of operating levels is set here at three, but in reality, operating levels are on a continuum and vary depending on the size of the jurisdiction and police agency.

Developing the Skill Sets and Knowledge Bases To Support Problem-oriented Policing

Problem-oriented policing introduces a whole new analytical dimension to policing, a dimension that in some respects runs counter to more conventional dimensions of policing. Much of conventional policing is reactive, hurried, and oriented to action. Problem-oriented policing is proactive, deliberate, and oriented to analysis. Consequently, many of the skill sets and knowledge bases on which police have drawn to achieve their objectives through conventional operational strategies are ill suited to support problem-oriented policing.

To be sure, some conventional police skill sets and knowledge bases apply — indeed are essential — to effective problem solving, but not all. Conventional policing is geared for high-volume transactions under tight time constraints. There are many routine incidents to handle and emergencies to respond to, much territory to patrol, many crimes to investigate, and many citizens to serve. By contrast, problem solving contemplates carefully selecting out clusters of crimes and incidents from among this high-volume business, and carefully analyzing them as discrete problems. It calls for dedicating more time, attention and resources to studying problems than are typically devoted to handling incidents or investigating crimes. Problem-oriented policing calls for managing problem-solving projects over substantially longer time periods — months or years — than is typical for most incidents or criminal cases.

While the skills and resources necessary for effective criminal investigation most closely overlap those necessary for effective problem solving, the match is not perfect. Criminal investigators are under constant pressure to move cases along, either to drop them out of the formal system or to send them on to the next stage of the criminal justice system. They aren't typically expected to spend much time reflecting on how the investigation or prosecution of any single case, or even a class of cases, contributes to the overall safety of the community. It is nearly an article of faith that the more crimes solved, the more cases made, and the more offenders prosecuted, the safer the community will be.

Most obviously, police agencies seldom possess, or even have ready access to, the full set of research and analysis skills so critical to effective problem solving. Few have trained criminologists, methodologists, or statisticians on staff, and where there are research or crime analysts on staff, they seldom have a high degree of formal training. Where police agencies have working arrangements with outside researchers — at universities or private research organizations

— it is rare to find that those researchers share a problem-solving orientation to research. Action research of the sort envisioned by problem-oriented policing requires a different approach than conventional academic research (Kennedy, 1999; Goldstein and Susmilch, 1982). Consequently, it does not suffice just to bring in outside researchers and let them loose to evaluate police initiatives. Good action research typically involves the researcher in all phases of the initiative — defining the problem, analyzing it, developing alternative responses, choosing from among alternatives, monitoring the implementation of responses, and assessing outcomes.

Police agencies, indeed the whole police field, sorely lack a substantial, coherent, organized, and accessible body of knowledge that would serve to guide police in addressing specific crime and disorder problems. Certainly when compared to many other professional fields, police have few reference materials to advise them about what tactics and strategies do and do not work — and under what conditions they do and do not work — for the many community problems they face. The theoretical models for how police can effectively reduce and prevent crime and disorder (see Clarke and Felson, 1993; Felson and Clarke, 1998; Tilley and Laycock, 2002; Sherman et al., 1997), and the accumulated knowledge from research and practice, have only recently begun to be assembled.[5] Much more work needs to be done to allow police to advance beyond ad hoc experimentation and crude emulation as the means by which they decide how to respond to particular community problems. Once accumulated, this body of knowledge must be made available to police, and police must become familiar with it in order for it to inform their practice.

Creating Incentives for Police To Adopt a Problem-oriented Approach

In most jurisdictions the practice of problem-oriented policing is sporadic at best. It is done — sometimes well, sometimes poorly — more as an exception than as a rule. Police officials may become engaged with problem-oriented policing after attending a training program or a conference and then become motivated to put the principles into practice to address particular problems. But that enthusiasm and commitment typically wanes after a few "POP projects" are completed. Some police officials become motivated to solve community problems for various reasons: because they are personally frustrated with the persistence of a particular problem or they see doing effective problem solving as a means to recognition and career enhancement. While there is nothing wrong with these sorts of motivations — indeed, they work to get police officials to do all sorts of im-

portant things — they are insufficient to sustain the practice of problem-oriented policing over the long term. No other method of police operation depends so heavily on the personal motivations of police officials for its routine practice.

At present, there are too few incentives operating on police administrators or line officers to routinely apply problem-oriented policing methods to the community crime and disorder problems they confront. For the most part, no one outside of police agencies is pressuring or encouraging police to produce high-quality problem-oriented work. Too few mayors and city managers insist upon careful analysis of crime and disorder problems to inform policies, programs, and legislation. Many of them concern themselves primarily with the political implications of police action rather than with the policy implications. Accordingly, many police initiatives are either endorsed or criticized by elected officials on the basis of scant analytical support. With some notable exceptions, prosecutors, the defense bar, and the criminal court judiciary remain preoccupied with the processing of individual cases to the exclusion of exploring systemic responses to problems.[6] The media have thus far not shown much interest in exploring the complexities of the police and community response to particular crime and disorder problems, all too often deferring to professionals' claims that they are doing all they can to deal with the problem. To a great extent, reporters have themselves bought into the myths and unsupported assumptions about how police can and should operate. Too many community groups rely on the police for information about crime and disorder problems and defer uncritically to police explanations of the causes of problems. Few community groups seriously challenge police to analyze problems and to develop new responses, all too often accepting as the best that can be done stock police responses to various crime and disorder problems such as extra police patrols, increased arrests, or the establishment of a Neighborhood Watch.

We can learn something about what incentives might be developed to promote the practice of problem-oriented policing by considering the incentives that promote the practice of other police operational strategies: preventive patrol, criminal investigations, emergency response, handling routine incidents, and providing ancillary support services. One way this can be done is to consider the interests of those who exert significant influence on police practices, particularly on the operational strategies the police adopt to achieve their objectives. Here we consider the interests of:

- prosecutors, the defense bar, and the judiciary;
- mayors, city managers and other elected officials;

- community groups;
- media;
- academia and police research organizations;
- government funding agencies; and
- private industry.

Why do police continue to invest so heavily in patrolling their jurisdictions through highly visible uniformed police officers and vehicles, even in the face of evidence that it is limited in what it achieves in terms of deterring crime and making communities feel safe? Why do police dedicate such effort to perpetuating the illusion that all crimes are investigated thoroughly and that they are investigated for the ultimate purpose of prosecuting the offenders? Why do police continue to have such difficulty resisting requests and demands that they handle such a wide range of incidents, both criminal and non-criminal? Why do police place such a high priority on maintaining response capabilities to all manner of emergencies? And why do police dedicate so many resources to providing a range of ancillary public services that are peripheral to their core functions and objectives?

One answer to these questions is that over time constituencies have developed for particular police methods. Not only do police develop constituencies for their *objectives* (i.e., to control crime, to facilitate the movement of people and vehicles, etc.), but they develop constituencies for their methods of achieving those objectives — their *operational strategies.* Important groups in society have come to expect that police will operate in certain ways, sometimes for the larger public good and sometimes also to serve more narrow interests. Groups and individuals outside the police agency find value in certain police operational strategies; either intrinsic value because those operational strategies effectively achieve certain social objectives, or indirect value because particular police operational strategies create opportunities and benefits for particular groups.[7] Indeed, why would police continue to adopt an operational strategy if it did not produce some value for which others were willing to exert their influence to preserve?[8] Conventional police strategies such as preventive patrol and criminal investigation also have powerful intuitive appeal. People believe they work well because their underlying rationale seems so logical and correct, even if ultimately it is not. The police have cultivated some of these constituencies partly to serve some of their own interests. Constituencies both *support* the police in their efforts to employ operational strategies and *demand* that police continue to

employ them. There is both a carrot and a stick quality to constituencies.

As yet, there are inadequate constituencies for the problem-solving operational strategy, and until those constituencies are well developed it is unlikely that police will take problem-oriented policing sufficiently seriously to alter their organizations, systems, routines, and practices. The capacity to effectively identify, analyze, respond to, and assess community problems is not yet seen as an essential police function. However, neither has it always been the case that preventive patrol, criminal investigation, or the handling of certain routine or critical incidents were understood to be essential to policing either: certainly not during the early eras of organized police forces, when police existed principally to serve political interests and only incidentally to control crime (Fogelson, 1977; see also Klockars, 1985 for a discussion of the evolution of the preventive patrol and detective roles). Each of the conventional police operational strategies evolved and developed over a long period of time, displacing other previously dominant operational strategies (Goldstein, 1977).

Before turning back to how a constituency might develop for problem solving as an operational strategy, let us consider the constituencies for other police operational strategies.

Criminal Investigation

Prosecutors, the criminal-defense bar, the criminal court judiciary, corrections agencies, and a host of other actors (bail bonding companies, pretrial service agencies, etc.) depend almost exclusively on police to arrest offenders for their own operations to thrive. This is not to suggest anything conspiratorial or untoward, but merely that an entire industry, of sorts, has developed that is predicated on police exercising their arrest powers sufficiently often to justify the enormous expenditures in what is commonly called the criminal justice system. An estimated $136 billion were spent in the United States in 1998 directly on police, corrections, and the judiciary (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). Regardless of whether police believe that criminal investigation and subsequent arrest is an effective operational strategy toward achieving their objectives, there are strong expectations that police will continue to investigate crimes and arrest offenders. Indeed, police have come to be popularly understood as existing for this very purpose. Criminal investigative work is widely seen as the most important work police do, and detectives are perceived as the police elite. Prosecutors, correctly or incorrectly, believe they are judged by the electorate principally on their conviction rates and how aggressive they appear to be in prosecuting

offenders. These and other factors place constant pressure on the police to investigate crimes well and to arrest offenders.

Preventive Patrol

Notwithstanding evidence that preventive patrol offers limited value for preventing crime and making communities feel safer, police continue to invest heavily in this operational strategy, so much so that it has become the default mode of operating for police. When they are not otherwise called to employ some other operational strategy, it is expected that police will provide a visible presence in their jurisdiction through various patrol methods. Filling beats and getting patrol cars "back in service" continue to preoccupy police supervisors. Public opinion surveys consistently reveal how strongly the public expects to see police patrolling. Neighborhoods clamor and compete with one another for extra police patrol. Police themselves perpetuate the belief that high visibility patrol is a sensible response to a wide range of crime and disorder problems. The media seldom challenge these claims, often merely content to report that police have "beefed up patrols" to respond to the latest crime concern.

Emergency Response

Police have traditionally responded to a variety of emergencies: crimes in progress, traffic crashes with injuries, suicidal persons, and so forth. Some police agencies also handle medical emergencies, training police officers as emergency medical technicians or transporting victims and patients to medical facilities. Some police agencies assume emergency response capabilities for large-scale disasters such as building or bridge collapses. In some communities, both police and fire agencies have developed sophisticated emergency response capabilities, and to some extent, they vie with one another for this important public function. Police have assumed such a large role in emergency response functions for several reasons. One reason is that the equipment, training, and legal authority that police require to perform some of their other functions are readily adapted for emergency responses. It is also the case that the emergency response function offers more immediate and tangible rewards to those who practice it. It allows police to perform a role for which the public is nearly universally grateful, something that cannot be said about many other police functions. It is an important function for establishing and maintaining public goodwill, a goodwill that helps sustain public support in the face of other more confrontational and controversial police functions. The recent experiences of the American po-

lice with respect to international terrorism reveal just how important their emergency response capabilities are to bolstering public support for the police institution. Police are quickly seeking to expand even further their capabilities to respond to new types of emergencies such as biological terrorism, that until recently seemed rather remote.

Ancillary Public Services

Most police agencies provide a variety of ancillary services to citizens, services that are only tangentially or generally related to achieving core police objectives. They run education and recreation programs for youth, conduct citizen police academies, provide copies of police reports, fingerprint citizens for official records, teach gun safety courses, store and dispose of found property, provide broad-based crime prevention programs and services, organize community cleanups, coordinate charitable programs, control animals, and so forth. Many of these programs and services are important to a community's welfare, but they are often only loosely justifiable in terms of how they contribute to core police objectives. The programs and services seldom are developed as a response to specific crime and disorder problems on the basis of a thorough analysis. The point here is not that these programs and services should be discontinued, but rather that among the purposes of these programs and services is the cultivation of a constituency of support for the police agency and the police institution. Many of these programs and services have become tremendously popular regardless of whether they are deemed effective in any specific sense.

The conventional operational strategies employed by police — routine and emergency incident response, criminal investigation, preventive patrol, and ancillary public services — continue to dominate overall police strategy and resources largely because important groups in society would miss them if they were gone, and less because they have demonstrated their value in achieving core police objectives and enhancing public safety.

This is not to say that police agencies always engage in preventive patrol, investigate crimes, or handle routine incidents and emergencies effectively. Individual police officers and the organizational systems designed to support these operational strategies fail from time to time and from place to place in implementing these operational strategies just as they fail with respect to the problem-solving operational strategy. Communities are not always faithfully patrolled, criminal cases do not always receive the investigative attention some feel they deserve, and some routine and critical incidents are mis-

handled. However, nearly all police agencies and police administrators aspire to be able to perform these operational strategies on a routine basis and have firmly established systems in place to see that they are at least minimally performed. One can scarcely imagine a police administrator claiming that the agency he or she runs doesn't routinely investigate crimes, patrol the jurisdiction, or respond to emergencies. It is well understood that these operational strategies are essential to running — indeed nearly the very purpose for having — a police agency. The same cannot yet be said about problem solving as an operational strategy. Few people would be as distressed to learn that their local police agency had no problem analysis function as they would be to learn that it had no criminal investigation or patrol function.

In the present state of affairs, the constituency for problem-oriented policing is weak. There are a handful of academics, researchers, and consultants who are strongly dedicated to advancing problem-oriented policing. There are similarly a handful of police executives who are committed to advancing problem-oriented policing within the situational opportunities presented to them, and a few prosecutors and local government executives who have demonstrated some commitment to the concept. The U.S. Department of Justice's COPS Office and the U.K.'s Home Office have invested resources in developing and promoting problem-oriented policing, though that objective is but a relatively small part of their organizations' overall missions. The Police Executive Research Forum's annual conference on problem-oriented policing and its Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing, along with the U.K.'s parallel annual conference and parallel Nick Tilley Award, have done much to advance problem-oriented policing and serve as incentives for some police officials and agencies to engage in this work. But awards, modest grant programs, and the personal commitment of a small number of champions will inevitably be insufficient to sustain this work over the long term.

So how might an external constituency for problem-oriented police work develop, one more powerful than that which exists today? We can consider this question for each of several major groups that might comprise such constituencies.

Prosecutors, the Defense Bar and the Judiciary

The movements toward community prosecution and problem-solving courts hold some significant potential to reinforce problem-oriented policing (Berman and Feinblatt, 2002). If judges were to adopt the habit and the mechanisms for exploring the larger context

in which individual cases come into their courts, and to press prosecutors (and by extension, police) and defense counsel to consider the efficacy of current practices, policies, and programs with respect to specific crime and disorder problems, police agencies might be more inclined to undertake more sophisticated analyses of problems so that they (through prosecutors) might be better informed and prepared to respond to judges' inquiries. For example, if a criminal court judge, faced with an influx of street-level drug arrests, were in a position to inquire of the prosecutor how the prosecution of a large volume of such cases were contributing to a more effective overall response to problems created by street-level drug dealing, that prosecutor would have an incentive to have prepared a thoughtful analysis of the problem as it is experienced in the community. Defense counsel's role might expand beyond merely protecting the rights of his or her individual client to offering some additional insight into how street-level drug dealing problems might best be addressed systemically. Police officials might well find themselves testifying in court not merely about individual cases, but about whole classes of problems and their analysis of and responses to those problems. While we don't typically think of courts as public policy forums, they might in fact serve this function quite well. So-called drug courts have clearly adopted a more holistic approach to the problems associated with drug use and trafficking.

Mayors, City Managers and Other Elected and Appointed Officials

Elected and appointed government officials have been quick to embrace the concept of community policing, largely because it has such popular appeal to their constituents. Their engagement, however, with the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing, as distinct from community policing, has been less robust. But, particularly with city managers and other professionally-trained government leaders, there is little reason that must remain so. The field of city management is well positioned to embrace the analytical dimensions of problem-oriented policing. It is what the entire field is dedicated to: using analysis to inform government structure, policies and practices.[9] Rigorous analyses that inform city managers on such local governance issues as water management, environmental protection, community and economic development, public health, and disaster preparedness are standard. What is remarkable is that, to date, the city management profession has tolerated such weak analytical capacity from police or, at a minimum, have restricted their expectations to conventional crime analysis designed to predict

crimes and apprehend offenders. It is to be hoped that if the professional city management field were better exposed to the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing and examples of good problem-oriented analysis, professional local government leaders would increasingly insist upon similar work in their own communities. One could imagine local governments creating a problem-oriented analysis function to inform the government executive and elected officials, or at a minimum, to support police departments in building that internal capacity.

Local government authorities in the U.K., through national legislation, appear to have gone further than their counterparts in the U.S. in promoting the idea that crime and disorder problems ought to be viewed as community problems rather than solely as police problems, which problems call for a higher degree of interagency and community partnership than has been customary in the past (Phillips et al., 2002). While this new spirit of partnership has not always translated into effective problem analysis in the U.K., it is an important start.

Academia and Police Research Organizations

Academics interested in crime and the police have generally responded favorably to the problem-oriented policing concept. But, there is now a need for interested academics to move beyond exploring the concept and the organizational implications it holds for police agencies and become more engaged working with police to practice problem-oriented policing by applying its principles and methods to actual crime and disorder problems. The relatively small field of environmental criminology has demonstrated significant interest in problem-oriented policing in recent years, and its growing body of literature in situational crime prevention has been helpful in advancing our understanding of how various crime and disorder problems can be effectively addressed. There is a need to continue developing theories of how police problems arise and how police can effectively address them. Good theories might draw more academic researchers into studying how police and others address problems.

Given that publication is the lifeblood of academia, it will be important to create and support scholarly publication opportunities related to the practice of problem-oriented policing. At present, there is no publication venue dedicated exclusively or even primarily to the practice of problem-oriented policing. Without such publication opportunities, potentially interested academics will shy away from engaging in this sort of research.

Government Funding Agencies

Providing research funding is equally important toward developing a constituency for problem-oriented work. To a certain extent, federal and state agencies that fund research into crime control and policing shape the academic and private police research agenda. In the U.K., the Home Office has a far more impressive publication record on how police can address crime and disorder problems than its U.S. equivalents.

Private organizations that conduct research on crime and policing, such as the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), the Police Foundation, Abt Associates, the Institute for Law & Justice, and the Rand Corporation, could contribute to building the body of knowledge on which problem-oriented policing so heavily depends. Both PERF and the Police Foundation in their early years conducted important research into the effectiveness of police responses to various crime and disorder problems. The advancement of problem-oriented policing would be well served if both organizations renewed their commitment to such a research agenda.

To the extent that police officials are motivated to contribute to research knowledge, increasing the volume of funding and publication opportunities for problem-oriented research will help create a constituency within academia and the research community for problem-oriented police work. Many police executives are willing to open their agencies' doors to researchers and to participate in research projects they deem worthwhile, but all too often researchers approach them with research interests that do not speak directly to the police response to crime and disorder problems. There is little reason to think that police executives would not be open to the sort of action research envisioned by problem-oriented policing, which would actually help them better manage crime and disorder problems faced by their agencies. Several recent funding programs — the U.S. Department of Justice's Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiatives (SACSI), Locally Initiated Research Partnerships in Policing (LIRPP), Problem solving Partnerships Program, School-Based Partnerships Program; and the U.K. Home Office's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships — are at least broadly speaking, examples of the sort of action research that can potentially add to the body of knowledge so lacking in policing today.

The Media

The media coverage of problem-oriented policing and engagement with the complex issues of crime and disorder control has been dis-

appointing on the whole. The concept has received some important national media coverage in the U.S. — by U.S. News & World Report while the Newport News project was underway, and on a couple of occasions by the New York Times (Malcolm, 1990; Butterfield, 2000, 1999) — and, of course, more regional and local coverage. But the extent and depth of the media's treatment of complex policing issues has done little to advance problem-oriented policing. Admittedly, conveying a set of ideas about something as complex as crime control and policing to a mass audience is not easy. Some of the nation's best journalists have struggled to come to grips with the basic premises on which problem-oriented policing is built.

Police officials are seldom pressed by journalists to provide careful analyses of crime and disorder problems: a few memorable quotes will usually suffice. Occasionally, a news reporter will analyze a crime or disorder problem in an illuminating and helpful way, but then fail to explore why police agencies themselves don't routinely analyze problems thoroughly.

While it is probably too much to expect journalists to sort through and understand all the fundamental issues underlying problem-oriented policing (after all, few police executives do so), the most sensible strategy to engage the media in problem-oriented police work is to continually provide them with examples of problem-oriented policing in practice. The growing body of case studies in problem solving should be distributed to media outlets while they are fresh. Well-written case studies make for compelling reading to those interested in crime, police and local government. Media coverage of the Boston Police Department's problem-oriented policing initiative on youth gun violence is a good example of how good policy made good copy.

Private Industry

By private industry, I refer to those industries that manufacture and market products for police agencies. One need only visit the vendors' *bazaar* at large police conferences to appreciate how sizable this industry is. Though much of that industry manufactures and markets products that have little relevance to problem-oriented policing — weapons, vehicles, uniforms, duty equipment, and so forth — there is a growing market for information technology, some of which can be quite useful to problem analysis. We have already begun to see private companies develop software and hardware that improves the capacity of police agencies to manage data. And while the manufacturers might at first have only a vague idea, or a misguided idea, about how police might use this technology, smart vendors will be eager to exploit the opportunities that problem-oriented policing po-

tentially presents. When problem-oriented policing experts begin to collaborate with information technology vendors in designing and marketing products that better support problem analysis, the supply of those products will generate some of its own demand as police officials shop for new products in catalogues and at conventions. Private industry has certainly capitalized on other police operational strategies — on emergency response, criminal investigation, and computer-aided dispatching products — and there can be little doubt that the police demand for, and private industry's supply of, these products feed one another. Thus, that sector of private industry that markets to police can become yet another constituency for problem-oriented policing.

Community Groups

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the public at large represents a constituency for problem-oriented policing yet to be fully developed. The public has long been accustomed to conforming its expectations of police to what police officials have told them is reasonable. The advent of community policing has reshaped some of those expectations. Citizens and community groups have adjusted their expectations of what police can and should do to help them control crime and disorder. In jurisdictions where community policing has been adopted for a number of years, citizens have become more willing to work with police to address crime and disorder and at the same time less tolerant of police excuses for inaction. In Chicago, for example, a neighborhood umbrella group (the Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety) became a forceful constituency in support of community policing, and the community problem-solving training provided to citizens by the police and the Chicago Alliance reinforced that constituency (Skogan et al., 1999). Slowly, the public is beginning to realize that the possibilities for effectively addressing and preventing crime and disorder are considerable; that the range of possible actions extends well beyond simply enforcing the criminal law. As the public gains greater access to data and information about crime and disorder and how it has been effectively addressed in other places, it is to be expected that it will put greater pressure on their local police to make use of that data to develop new response strategies.[10]

CONCLUSION

The perhaps flip, but probably true, answer to the question of what needs to be done to get police to take problem-oriented policing

seriously is: everything. That is, everything that is done to align police organizations in a conventional direction must be done to align them in a problem-oriented direction. The whole of the police structure, systems, and culture must ultimately align with a problem-oriented perspective for it to take root (Goldstein, 1990; Bayley, 2001). This might be very difficult to do, but it is rather simple to understand. There isn't one thing that needs to be done, everything needs to be done. Not everything needs to be changed, but everything needs to be aligned, consistent, and coherent. The police organization cannot be made to be working against itself, at cross-purposes.

Police organizations, like most, will align themselves to suit their own interests if their external constituencies are not able to effectively communicate their needs to the organization and create sufficient pressures and incentives so that the organization meets those needs. Therein lies the challenge for the next 20 years of problem-oriented policing: to develop multiple external constituencies for problem-oriented police work such that it will become as unthinkable that police would not have the capacity to analyze problems and implement effective responses as it is that they would not have the capacity to respond to emergencies, handle routine incidents, or investigate crimes. It is perhaps the case that police officials and agencies have taken problem-oriented policing as far as they feel they need to. Without stronger external constituencies, we may have reached the limits of what internal constituencies can and will achieve.

By attending to these three elements of systemic organizational change — improving understanding of the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing and how they relate to the whole police function, enhancing necessary skills sets and knowledge bases, and creating incentives to police in a problem-oriented way through external constituencies — this theoretically-sound concept will have a better chance of achieving its promise.

Address correspondence to: Michael S. Scott, 421 Abercorn Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401. E-mail: <mscott7225@aol.com>.

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NOTES

1. Goldstein and others have described the basic elements elsewhere with greater and lesser specificity, so there is nothing definitive about the number 10.

2. Examples of contributing factors to many crime and disorder problems include mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse, and drug trafficking.

3. Large numbers of calls for police service are coded as "disturbances," "suspicious persons," or "noise complaints," thereby masking many different types of problems.

4. See Buerger (1998) for a discussion of the limits of conventional police training methods in achieving significant reform.

5. A new publication series of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police,* attempts to synthesize available research and practice related to the police response to specific crime and disorder problems. To date, the series includes guides on the following problems: assaults in and around bars, street prostitution, speeding in residential areas, drug dealing in privately-owned apartment complexes, false burglar alarms, disorderly youth in public places, loud car stereos, robbery at automated teller machines, graffiti, thefts of and from cars in parking facilities, shoplifting, bullying in schools, burglary of retail establishments, burglary of single-family houses, acquaintance rape of college students, panhandling, rave parties, clandestine drug labs, and misuse and abuse of 911.

6. A small, but growing number of jurisdictions are experimenting with practices that are referred to as community prosecution and problem-solving courts: courts that specialize in drug, gun, domestic violence,

mental illness, or public disorder cases and which emphasize alternative sanctions to incarceration (Feinblatt et al., 2000).

7. The police, like the military, do not decide upon strategy in a purely scientific realm; they operate in a political realm in which they see advantages to controlling access to important information that might be used to criticize or compromise their strategic decisions. See Walt (1987) and Morison (1966) for parallel discussions of how military strategy is powerfully shaped by organizational interests, often times in the face of scientific evidence.

8. Moore and Stephens (1991) consider how police administrators might apply a corporate strategy to shape their police agencies' mission and methods of achieving that mission. They describe how organizations naturally seek to provide value to external constituencies in order to maintain or enhance their share of a market, including the market for providing public services.

9. One of the declared ideals of the International City/County Management Association is to: "Develop responsive, dynamic local government organizations that continuously assess their purpose and seek the most effective techniques and technologies for serving the community" (ICMA, 2002).

10. A notable effort is being made by police in St. Louis, MO. to develop a website that makes it easier for the public to access detailed information on crimes and calls for police service such that anyone can begin to analyze that information and perhaps press the police to analyze it and develop more effective responses.*