

**PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING AND THE POTENTIAL
CONTRIBUTION OF CRIMINOLOGY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is less than twenty years since the concept of problem-oriented policing was first articulated by Herman Goldstein, but it has already been embraced by many of the largest police forces in the country. In addition, the recent federal crime legislation, which makes millions of dollars available to local police agencies for an additional 100,000 officers to undertake "community policing", calls for this to include a substantial "problem-oriented" component. This is emphasized in the written guidance emanating from the Office of Community Oriented Policing, the agency responsible for implementing the legislation.

Nevertheless many police observers, as well as Goldstein himself, have been disappointed with the efforts made to implement the concept in practice. Despite its enthusiastic reception, few projects consistent with Goldstein's original vision of problem-oriented policing have been reported. This involves a commitment at the highest level to the proactive analysis and solution of the substantive problems confronting the department on a routine daily basis. In many cases, police managers have failed to understand the substantial conceptual differences between problem-oriented policing and community policing and have uncritically embraced both models. In addition, most problem-oriented policing projects have been undertaken by beat officers and involve only limited analysis of problems, a use of traditional enforcement responses and little or no attempt to

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evaluate effectiveness. Many of these projects may employ problem-solving, but they fall far short of Goldstein's conception of problem-oriented policing.

Consequently, Goldstein has expressed concern that these superficial applications of problem-oriented policing may lead to the concept being discredited. This paper, intended to be an academic contribution, responds to this concern. It argues that problem-oriented policing needs the help of the academic community in defining the proper scope and methods of problem-oriented policing. Their help is also needed in the implementation of problem-oriented projects, which have generally been poorly conceived and conducted.

This help could be provided by "environmental criminologists" who are well-suited to working with the police in solving crime problems. Indeed, the main objective of this paper is to draw attention to their potential contribution. They have particular experience of undertaking crime analyses intended to uncover the environmental and situational factors influencing criminal decision making. They have developed concepts such as crime "hot spots" and "repeat victimization" that are directly applicable to analyzing the problems confronting police. They have also refined various methodologies (computer mapping, victim surveys and "crime audits" etc.) for use in analyzing these problems in the depth needed for the identification of practical solutions.

Environmental criminologists, employed by governments, have also been directly involved in the development of situational crime prevention. This shares

many of the same objectives as problem-oriented policing and, indeed, meets many of the same difficulties. An important difference, however, is that many more evaluations have been published of situational crime prevention. This is because of the involvement of environmental criminologists, who are keenly aware of the need for evaluation and who have the requisite methodological skills to undertake the necessary work.

Environmental criminologists could perform a similar role in regard to the development of problem-oriented policing and ways must now be found of engaging their interest. These would include the provision of research funds for collaborative work with the police, but more important would be to link problem-oriented policing more directly to the core theoretical interests of environmental criminologists. To do this would involve clarifying a fundamental difference in the goals of problem-oriented and community policing. The latter seeks to strengthen relationships with communities and engage their assistance in the fight against crime. Problem-oriented policing, on the other hand, like situational crime prevention, is mostly directed to reducing opportunities for crime through environmental changes and criminal or civil enforcement.

Sharpening this distinction would not only help to engage the interest of environmental criminologists, but would also have other benefits, as follows:

- It would provide a theory of behavior, based upon “opportunity” theories of routine activity and rational choice, to complement the organizational theory underpinning problem-oriented policing.
- The general claims of problem-oriented policing to being a valid and effective means of controlling crime would be strengthened as opportunity theory becomes more broadly accepted among criminologists.
- Closer association with situational crime prevention, with its substantial record of evaluated success, could only assist problem-oriented policing.
- A tangible example of this is provided by the knowledge gained about displacement, which has been studied in more than fifty situational crime prevention projects. Reviews of these studies have concluded that displacement is rarely a serious threat and, moreover, that there is frequently a “diffusion of benefits” such that crime reductions spread beyond the immediate focus of the preventive project.

If at the same time the problem-oriented policing literature began to make more direct use of concepts and techniques borrowed from environmental criminology, it would become more apparent why problem-oriented policing must be distinguished from the more limited concept of problem-solving. This would stimulate the development of more sophisticated “situational” varieties of problem-oriented policing. Equally important, it would also free problem-solving

to develop its own identity and status within policing. This is particularly important for the smaller police departments which may never be able to develop a problem-oriented policing capacity, but which must pursue a more proactive role in dealing with recurring problems.

Where agencies other than the police hold the key to solving these problems, financial disincentives may exist to undertaking inquiries or implementing solutions. For instance, it may be cheaper for local store owners to rely on the police to arrest shoplifters than to put preventive measures in place. This suggests that, if problem-oriented policing is to be widely implemented, ways will have to be found of increasing police willingness to take on the demanding task of analyzing local crime problems, and to persist with the often frustrating task of implementing solutions. They must somehow be held accountable for the continuance of crimes that are harming the community, even in the face of indifference or lack of cooperation. The police cannot go on blaming others, or society in general, for crime problems that persist in their jurisdictions.

Goldstein has always recognized that a commitment to problem-oriented policing requires a substantial in-house analytic and evaluative capacity, and the fact that most departments have not developed this capacity readily explains the lack of "situational" projects. The skills needed for such projects are essentially those of the well-trained social scientist and, if problem-oriented policing is to be pursued seriously, police departments will have to: (1) recruit more individuals

with such backgrounds; (2) provide them with substantial on-the-job training about the context of their operations; (3) allow them to exercise professional judgment about profitable lines of inquiry; and (4) develop an understanding of their professional motivations and objectives. Above all, the police must find ways of allowing such employees, who would usually be outside the direct chain of command, to assume responsibility for the management and direction of problem-oriented projects.

These employees would provide a natural conduit for information, as well as a point of contact, between police departments and environmental criminologists in the universities. Since there are rather few environmental criminologists, not all of whom may be able to communicate effectively with police managers, many of these employees will have to step beyond a brokering role and develop their own expertise in environmental criminology.

Improved rigor and creativity of problem-oriented policing projects

Environmental criminologists have methodological contributions to make at the four stages of a problem-oriented policing project encapsulated by the acronym SARA: scanning, analysis, response and assessment.

They have developed a number of concepts which can directly assist scanning, including crime "hot spots", a concept which is still being refined in ways that will be of value to the police. For example, drawing on routine activity

theory, a distinction has recently been made between “crime generators” (resulting from the natural convergence of large numbers of offenders and targets) and “crime attractors” (places that offenders seek out because of the presence of large numbers of suitable targets).

Each kind of hot spot requires a different response from the police, and any conceptual tool that helps classify hot spots and understand the variety of criminogenic forces at work will assist them in developing a wider repertoire of countermeasures. Other concepts developed by environmental criminologists that assist understanding of hot spots are: “awareness space” (what parts of the city may be familiar to the offender); the “journey to crime” (what characteristic search patterns are employed by criminal predators); and “criminal decision making” (what factors are weighed by criminals in choosing where and when to offend).

Another concept that can assist scanning is “repeat victimization”. This is most familiar to police in this country in the context of domestic violence, but environmental criminologists have now shown that individuals can be repeated victims of many other sorts of crime, including residential burglary, autotheft, obscene phone calls and racial attacks. Working with police in Britain, they have also shown that concentrating preventive resources on repeat victims can be highly productive.

At the analysis stage, most problem-oriented policing projects have relied on simple counts of UCR crime reports, sometimes by day of week and time of

day, or by geographical location. Rarely has there been the kind of detailed analysis routinely undertaken by environmental criminologists in which broad offense categories, such as robbery, are broken down into specific kinds of incidents (e.g. robberies at ATM machines, of drunks late at night, or of children on their way to school by other children), and in which each subcategory of incident is analyzed in terms of precipitating circumstances.

In undertaking these analyses, environmental criminologists have also shown that valuable data about problems can be obtained from victim surveys, through systematic direct observation, and by analysis of administrative records kept by other agencies. For example, maintenance records kept by transit companies or public housing authorities may provide useful data about vandalism and graffiti. In some cases, "safety audits" can be conducted. These involve enlisting local people to walk around particular locations (for example, downtown areas at night) to pinpoint the places provoking most fear and to elicit the reasons for fear. Finally, systematic interviews with offenders have often been found helpful in situational crime prevention projects in thinking about countermeasures.

In some recent problem-oriented projects, conventional law enforcement has been supplemented by enforcement of civil regulations in efforts to close down drug houses, to compel troublesome taverns to regulate the behavior of customers, and to force landlords to improve their management of apartment buildings. This a welcome development, but a much broader variety of responses has been

developed for use in situational crime prevention, many of which could also be used in problem-oriented policing. Using rational choice theory, these measures have recently been classified into sixteen categories falling under four basic means of reducing opportunities: by increasing the difficulties of crime, by increasing the risks, by reducing the rewards, and by removing excuses.

Reasons for the lack of published assessments are not difficult to understand. Much problem-solving is at beat level and it may be obvious that the problem has been eliminated or reduced. In any case, even quite straightforward evaluations require considerable technical knowledge. If more "situational" problem-oriented policing were undertaken, the quality and quantity of evaluations would substantially increase for a number of related reasons:

- The projects would originate at a higher level in the police organization and, particularly in those cases where the source was the research and statistics department, would more likely involve specialists with criminological or other social science training.
- The level of police effort involved would more often justify a substantial evaluative effort.
- The nature of the problems addressed are more likely to yield the volume of routine statistical data, concerning calls for service and crime reports, needed for any convincing study.

- Funding agencies would be more interested in evaluating efforts to deal with crime problems that were not merely local.

This being so, the question arises of the most suitable evaluative strategy to pursue. In situational crime prevention projects most evaluations fall under the heading of "quasi-experiments". This means that the effects of the preventive measures have been examined through the use of before-and-after measures, or by comparison with "control" data from an untreated site. These designs cannot prove beyond doubt that the preventive action has produced the fall in crime, but they are much easier to undertake in "real life" settings than true experimental designs which are more suited to the laboratory.

A suitable evaluative strategy for problem-oriented policing is therefore likely to be similar to that employed in situational crime prevention. This seeks, (1) to undertake as many evaluations as possible, (2) to compensate for weaker designs with detailed observation of the process of implementation, (3) to include information about the costs and practicability of the techniques studied, (4) to conduct periodic and systematic meta-analyses of results, and (5) to piece together the findings with reference to a systematic classification of situational techniques. This accumulating body of empirical results contributes to the development of robust principles of opportunity reduction, which might help police in developing tailor-made solutions for new problems arising in fresh circumstances.

One consequence of a closer relationship between problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention will be to underline the fact that the police do not have a monopoly on crime prevention, similar to that on the deployment of force. Already, they are outnumbered by private security guards in providing basic patrol and surveillance functions. In some European countries, central government has also decided that the police may not be suited by training or temperament to deliver crime prevention at the local and community level. In these countries many municipalities have now appointed crime prevention officers to serve these roles. This suggests that, unless the police seize the opportunity presented by problem-oriented policing, and take "ownership" of crime problems, they may be left on the side lines, still clearing up after society's failures, while the really important challenges (and rewards) of preventing crime and improving society, are relinquished to others.

INTRODUCTION

In an number of recent papers and memoranda, Herman Goldstein (e.g. 1994a, 1994b, 1996a, 1996b) has expressed concern about the direction being taken by problem-oriented policing, the concept which he first articulated in the 1970's and which he continued to elaborate and refine through the 1980's (Goldstein, 1979, 1990). As he acknowledges, this concern may seem perverse, almost churlish given the recent successes of problem-oriented policing. It has now become part of the police vocabulary to an extent that he himself never envisaged. It has formally been embraced as a way of doing business by many of the largest police forces in the country and has been credited with helping to achieve the recent dramatic reduction in crime in New York City. Its reach has extended overseas, especially among police forces in Britain where the government has sponsored problem-oriented policing experiments (Leigh et al., 1996). Delegates to the annual POP conference organized jointly by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the San Diego Police Department have increased in number from less than 200 at the first conference to more than 1100 six year's later in 1996. Submissions for the PERF "Goldstein Award", which recognizes excellence in "individual" and "team" problem-oriented policing projects, have risen to nearly one hundred per year, many of which report apparently successful efforts. Above all, the recent federal crime legislation, which makes millions of dollars available to local police agencies for an additional 100,000 officers to undertake

“community policing”, calls for this to include a substantial “problem-oriented” component. This is duly emphasized in the written guidance emanating from the Office of Community Oriented Policing, the agency responsible for implementing the legislation.

As might be apparent from these successes, Goldstein’s concerns have little to do with the difficulties discussed in the literature to-date. These mostly relate, (1) to rank-and-file resistance to a model of policing that discounts traditional strategies of detection and arrest in favor of more proactive efforts to prevent the occurrence of crime and, (2) to the implementation of this new model, including ways to train, supervise and reward officers. While these difficulties pose a real challenge to managers (see for example, Braga, 1997; McElroy et al., 1993), the successes of problem-oriented policing demonstrate that solutions can be found.

In his recent writings, Goldstein is therefore less concerned with resistance to the concept than with its too ready acceptance. He worries that many police departments, caught up with enthusiasm for change, have declared a commitment to problem-oriented policing without properly understanding the implications for organizational change. In many cases, he fears that police managers have failed to understand the substantial conceptual differences between problem-oriented policing and community policing and have uncritically embraced both models. While pleased with the many solid beat-level “problem solving” efforts he has

learned about, and delighted by the enthusiasm and commitment of the officers concerned, he regrets that so few force-wide problem-oriented policing projects have been undertaken. He is also generally disappointed with the quality of reported evaluations of problem-oriented policing and, while welcoming the fact that police are beginning to focus their attention more upon the substantive crime problems that they repeatedly encounter (e.g. street prostitution, domestic violence, residential burglary, mugging, joyriding), he regrets that this has rarely led to detailed research on these problems. In short, he is worried that the version of problem-oriented policing that has been so quickly adopted is a watered-down, almost bowdlerized interpretation of his concept, the superficiality of which makes it vulnerable to attack or being discredited. In addition, while Goldstein may not express this concern himself, unless a more rigorous version can be implemented, problem-oriented policing may produce only disappointing results. After a brief and prolific flowering, it may therefore wither on the vine.

Perhaps any social scientist who has invested as much time in a particular concept and is so completely identified with it, will be disappointed with its reception: Even when it is broadly accepted, it is likely to be distorted and oversimplified. Perhaps like a possessive parent, he or she may also try unduly hard to protect the concept from undesirable influences and exploitation. In addition, problem-oriented policing may simply be in its first stage of development, characterized by experimentation and numerous false starts, before

settling down to a more stable maturity as an accepted way of doing much police business. Finally, there may also be a risk, as Goldstein himself acknowledges, of stifling the concept's natural development by too severe criticism of its early applications in practice.

This may suggest that Goldstein's concerns are premature and that the greater rigor he seeks will emerge in due course from the experimentation that has now begun. Judged by recent submissions for the Goldstein Award, however, this may be an unlikely outcome. (The Annex gives an analysis of these submissions). Some clarification of key conceptual issues must be achieved and greater rigor must be introduced at all stages of its implementation. These tasks will be difficult to accomplish without the assistance of the academic community since the police themselves rarely have the necessary background or skills. Without their accomplishment, the progress of problem-oriented policing will be slower and more uneven than necessary and the contribution that it can make to reducing crime and improving people's lives will be needlessly delayed.

In making this assessment and in seeking solutions, the development of situational crime prevention has provided a useful guide. As noted elsewhere (Eck and Spelman, 1987; Clarke, 1992, 1995; Hope, 1994), situational crime prevention and problem-oriented policing, though developed quite separately, are closely related concepts. Both make use of an action-research methodology (Lewin, 1947) in which clusterings of highly specific problems are identified and carefully

analyzed to reveal the immediate causes or facilitating circumstances. A wide range of possible preventive solutions are examined for their practicality before a response is designed and implemented. In the final stage, the results of the intervention are assessed and the lessons fed back into future practice. The major difference is that problem-oriented policing, which derives from Goldstein's analysis of the police function, is essentially a new way of organizing and managing police business (whether crime related or not¹), while situational crime prevention, which derives from an emerging strand of "opportunity" theory in Criminology, is a method of dealing with specific crime problems, open for use by any agency, public or private.

An important consequence of this difference is that problem-oriented policing has been much easier to "market" because the "consumers", the police, are a clearly identifiable group. Because the "market" for situational crime prevention is potentially so much larger -- including as it does such diverse professional groups as architects, town planners and accountants, as well as the managers of a host of public and private facilities such as hospitals, schools, public transit systems, entertainment venues, hotel chains, retail stores, factories, offices and banks -- situational crime prevention has been more difficult to "sell". Those

¹ It is important to note that problem-oriented policing is not simply concerned with crime. A problem-oriented approach is considered by Goldstein to be equally relevant in dealing with other major categories of police work, such as traffic accidents, and various forms of disorder and incivility. However, most of the

seeking to promote it, therefore, have had to become familiar with the culture and "business" of a wide variety of public and private enterprises. This implies a much longer time scale for situational crime prevention to become well known among the practitioners it is designed to assist.

On the other hand, the criminological origins of situational crime prevention have given it a powerful advantage, central to the concerns of this paper, relating to the rigor of the implementation efforts to-date. Anyone familiar with both fields cannot fail to notice -- it has certainly been lamented by Goldstein -- that there are comparatively few evaluated case studies in problem-oriented policing. Apart from the early Newport News studies reported by Eck and Spelman (1987), only a handful of problem-oriented policing evaluations have been published. In the case of situational crime prevention, however, there are many dozens of published studies that evaluate some application of its principles.² The main reason for this difference in the number of completed evaluations is that situational crime prevention was developed largely by criminologists employed in government, principally in Great Britain, The Netherlands and Sweden³. This has

problem-oriented projects reported to date have involved crime and the discussion in this paper is therefore focused on crime.

² In a recent review of preventive efforts focused on places, Eck (in preparation) identified more than 100 evaluated interventions, most of which were situational in character. While in some cases the authors seem not to have known about the theory of situational crime prevention or seem unfamiliar with the terminology, this does not prevent their findings being incorporated into the broader literature.

³ An important source of evaluations is the series of papers published by the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit (now published by the Police Research Group)

meant that most of its applications have been led by people keenly aware of the need for evaluation and who have the requisite methodological skills to undertake the necessary work.

Problem-oriented policing has been developed largely without the assistance of a group of criminologists with similar skills and outlook. But their help is now needed and ways must be found of engaging their interest and facilitating their contribution. Some suggestions about this are made below when reviewing some of the more pressing needs. These fall under two main headings:

- (1) clarification of key conceptual issues; and
- (2) the introduction of greater creativity and rigor in the implementation of problem-oriented policing.

The most pressing needs for conceptual clarification, addressed in the next section, are to distinguish problem-oriented policing from “problem-solving” and to distance it from “community policing”. In addition, its roles must be clarified in fulfilling the fundamental mission of policing and in serving society’s broader crime prevention goals. This involves asking some basic questions, including whether problem-oriented policing provides an alternative or a complementary way of doing police business, and the extent to which the police should take the lead in society’s efforts to prevent crime.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Goldstein has probably done as much as any single individual could to bring about the paradigm shift implied by problem-oriented policing. His vision of the future of policing, involving a planned, systematic attack on the substantive problems that police are called upon to deal with, is highly consistent with modern management principles. In anticipating a more central role for rational analysis and planning, it offers the police a route to greater effectiveness and enhanced professional status, a vision that has been greeted with enthusiasm by police leaders and rank-and-file officers. With a few exceptions, it has not evoked as much interest among police scholars. While they may treat it with respect, they have generally failed to subject it to the searching critique and analysis that is needed to refine and develop Goldstein's initial statement, for which he himself called (cf. Goldstein, 1990: 4). Without such analysis no new concept can acquire the status of a paradigm.

Academics are trained to be intolerant of conceptual confusion and will readily dismiss a concept on these grounds, but this is manifestly not the reason for their lack of engagement in the present case. Rather, the reason may lie in the undeveloped nature of police studies and its somewhat marginal status as a criminological specialty. It has not been a preferred route to professional advancement, being seen as too distant from the "core" theoretical concerns of the discipline. In addition, unless they assume a "critical" stance, involvement in

policing and crime control carries the risk for social scientists of having their liberal credentials impugned (Sherman, 1993). Somewhat paradoxically, however, perhaps more than any other criminological specialism, the ranks of police scholars contain a disproportionate number of prominent and influential individuals⁴. Indeed, this may be due to the field's marginal academic status: To be drawn to it, more than the usual self-confidence or ambition is required. For those with these attributes, however, it provides many reinforcements because it is easier to make an original contribution in an undeveloped field and, moreover, there is a ready "market" for any new ideas among the host of police practitioners. Indeed, in some cases, truly engaging with problem-oriented policing might require other scholars to question the basic assumptions of their own work and thus the value of their contributions. In such an environment, even a genuinely powerful concept such as problem-oriented policing will have difficulty taking hold among other police scholars, its prime audience, who are too occupied with their own agendas.

Distinguishing between problem-oriented policing and community policing

It may be therefore be no coincidence that a number of other new "paradigms" are currently vying for attention with problem-oriented policing, in particular, "community policing", "order maintenance" (Kelling and Coles, 1996) -

⁴ This is especially true of those police scholars who are well-grounded in their

- which encompasses the earlier "broken windows" thesis (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) -- and, most recently, "third-party" policing (Buerger and Green, 1994). However, the differences between these concepts have been less emphasized in the literature than the similarities, which include the facts that they are oriented to prevention and rely as much on "community" as criminal justice powers. In particular, they are often all described as variants of a larger concept of "community policing". When new resources are plentiful, as they have been since passage of the recent federal legislation, this may be a reasonable strategy: Why quarrel when there is plenty for all? On the other hand, each new approach is an improvement upon the traditional, law enforcement model of policing and, to this extent, the various competing groups of advocates may be willing to suspend their differences.

This resembles the situation in crime prevention, where advocates of the competing "situational" and "social" models (with the former focused on reducing crime opportunities and the later on reducing criminal motivation) have generally avoided criticizing each other's positions since both approaches represent such an improvement on dominant crime policies (cf. Wikstrom et al., 1995). In the long run, however, this restraint cannot continue and the distinctions between these two fundamentally different approaches to prevention will have to be clarified, and

established disciplines, rather than the professors of police science.

comparative assessments of their roles and effectiveness will have to be made.⁵ Similarly, in the field of policing, it is important to sort out which of the approaches on offer are genuine paradigms, in the sense of being competing models of the police function, and which are simply new strategies or tactics. It is particularly important to make a clear distinction between problem-oriented policing and community policing since the inevitable disappointment with the latter must not be allowed to damage the former.

This is too large a project to undertake here, but a start can be made by noting that the fit between problem-oriented policing and "community policing" is less comfortable than with the other approaches. This is because "broken windows", order maintenance and third part policing are methods of dealing with specific crime problems and can be conceived of as falling within the repertoire of techniques open for use by problem-oriented policing. On the other hand, community policing (in the narrower sense) is a competing paradigm. While problem-oriented policing is a method of analyzing and solving the wide array of behavioral or crime problems that the police encounter on a routine, daily basis, community policing represents a solution to a particular difficulty of

⁵ Apart from anything else, this will serve to derail well-intentioned, but ultimately harmful efforts to find a way of combining the two approaches in "multiagency" crime prevention projects. As Gilling (1994, 1996) has argued, these efforts may garner political support in the short term for "social" interventions, but the more diffuse goals and longer time-scales of these measures inevitably mean that "situational" measures are usually the ones actually implemented. Much confusion and disappointment would be avoided if this were understood at the outset.

policing -- gaining the support of the local community in helping to prevent crime and disorder. This difficulty is redefined as the problem of policing. In short, community policing is inconsistent with problem-oriented policing because, (1) it is focused on the means not the ends of policing, (2) its starting point is a single highly general "problem" of conducting police business rather than the behavioral and crime problem clusters that constitute the substantive, routine business of policing, and (3) this "problem" is defined a priori rather than emerging from a careful analysis of the mix of problems constituting the everyday business of individual departments or units.

Even the one thing it apparently has in common with problem-oriented policing, a reliance on close working relationships with the "community", evaporates under closer scrutiny. A problem-oriented project rarely seeks partners among the community at large. Rather, partners are sought among a particular group of individuals whose direct assistance may be needed to deal with the problem in question. If this is a problem of assaults around bus stops, a necessary partner in developing a response is likely to be the local bus service. If it is a problem of drug use in parks, then the assistance of the parks service may be needed. If shoplifting, then the local merchants' association may need to cooperate. Sometimes the assistance of the citizenry may be required in implementing particular solutions (for example, in fitting deadbolts or in not giving money to panhandlers), but quite rarely would the help of local people be

needed in analyzing specific problems or in developing solutions. Community policing, on the other hand, depends heavily upon organizing whole communities and holding frequent meetings with these communities -- not around specific problems, but to explore problems in general.

The distinction between the two forms of policing is most likely to be confused when the focus of a problem-oriented project is a dilapidated neighborhood or housing project because these places are so easily re-defined as "communities" and lack of community commitment identified as "the problem". Whether a neighborhood or housing development can be the appropriate focus for a problem-oriented project is questionable but, assuming it can, the project should proceed by identifying the collection of individual problems that together make up the larger one. Rather than attempting to build a relationship with the community, which would be the objective of a community policing project, the problem-oriented project should be focused on solving the specific problems of, say, vandalism in the elevators, car thefts from the parking garage, drug dealing in the children's play grounds, and so forth. To the extent that members of the community become productively involved in solving these discrete problems, they may be a rather different group of individuals in each case.

These distinctions might readily be found in Goldstein's and others' writings (e.g. Goldstein, 1990: 21-27), but another, possibly more important, way of distinguishing between problem-oriented policing and community policing

derives from a fundamental separation made in the crime prevention literature. This is between the two theoretically distinct approaches mentioned above of, (1) reducing opportunities for crime (i.e. "situational prevention") and, (2) reducing the underlying motivation for crime (i.e. "social prevention"). A focus on specific crime problems generally results in adopting the first approach -- reducing opportunities -- and much of the reported experience of problem-oriented policing can be seen in this light. This will become apparent below, when discussing the measures taken in problem-oriented policing projects, which tend to consist mostly of variations on enforcement strategies.

Even so, opportunity-reduction has never been adopted explicitly as an underlying principle of problem-oriented policing. If it were, some distinct advantages would follow, in addition to that of helping distance it from community policing. First, it would provide a theory of behavior, or "theory of action" (cf. Cornish, 1993), based upon "opportunity" theory (cf. Clarke and Felson, 1993), to complement the organizational theory underpinning problem-oriented policing. It is quite possible that without this theory of action, problem-oriented policing might suffer the same academic fate as crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). This was the precursor to situational crime prevention, and while continuing to thrive in practice (Crowe, 1991), it fell into disrepute among criminologists and other academics partly because it lacked any firm theoretical basis (Clarke, 1995). Second, the adoption of this theory of behavior would help to

engage the interest of more criminologists in problem-oriented policing, since this would provide a familiar orienting framework for them to consider and evaluate the concept. As argued above, this interest has been lacking to date⁶. Third, the general claims of problem-oriented policing to being a valid and effective means of controlling crime would be strengthened as opportunity theory becomes more broadly accepted among criminologists. A fourth result would be the forging of an even closer link with situational crime prevention, which, given the latter's substantial record of evaluated success, could only assist problem-oriented policing. A tangible example of this is provided by the knowledge gained about displacement, which has been studied in more than fifty situational crime prevention projects (Hesseling, 1994). Reviews of these studies have concluded that displacement is rarely a serious threat (Gabor, 1990; Eck, 1993a; Hesseling, 1994) and, moreover, that there is frequently a "diffusion of benefits" (Clarke and Weisburd, 1994) such that crime reductions spread beyond the immediate focus of the preventive project. This knowledge is of direct relevance to problem-oriented policing, which is similarly open to criticism about possible displacement effects.

Making such a sharp distinction between problem-oriented policing and community policing carries the risk of losing some of the present federal government support for problem-oriented policing. Eschewing "social" and

⁶One advantage enjoyed by "broken windows" is that it is based, not just upon an analysis of the police function, but also on a theory of action in that "fixing broken

“community” interventions intended to reduce criminal motivation or bolster community ties, may also carry the risk of unnecessarily restricting the range of possible solutions. But these are risks worth taking if problem-oriented policing is to be placed upon a sounder scientific footing.

Clarifying the goals of problem-oriented policing

It was mentioned above that Goldstein had not foreseen that problem-oriented policing would first take hold at beat level and, indeed, has been somewhat perplexed by this development. Though some beat level projects have been imaginative and apparently successful, many are amateurish and ill-conceived. In most cases, only a rudimentary analysis has been undertaken before launching into solutions. These are mostly variations on traditional tactics of surveillance and directed patrol with arrest as the goal. Lastly, only the most cursory evaluation of project impact has usually been done with little attention to such threats as displacement and decay.

These efforts might represent an improvement over usual beat work -- though traditional police work has always included some “problem-solving”-- but they fall far short of Goldstein’s formulation of problem-oriented policing, which requires a careful analytic, almost scientific approach (cf. Buerger 1994). Thus they carry the danger of confusing *problem-solving* with *problem-oriented*

“windows” serves to halt the cycle of decay resulting when predators move into a

policing. In addition, they might subvert the need for police departments to make the necessary investment in analyzing and solving the higher order problems confronting the department as a whole, and they will not produce the evidence needed about effectiveness to justify further investment in the approach.

More generally, since these beat-level efforts may constitute as much as 90% of the problem-oriented policing undertaken (Goldstein, 1996b)⁷ and thus appear to represent the principal response of the police to the challenge of problem-oriented policing, they raise many questions about the application of Goldstein's vision. In particular, can problem-oriented policing be implemented, as he advocates, in such a way as to define and govern the approach to the business of the police at all levels of the organization? Or does it represent, rather, an idealized concept of organizational functioning that the police should constantly strive to meet, while at the same time performing their essentially reactive role. Or is it mostly a corrective to the excessive preoccupation with narrow law enforcement? Or might it not principally be a procedure and set of techniques for organizing preventive projects? If so, might it be most valuable when implemented at a higher-order level of responsibility in the organization?

In thinking about these questions, experience from the field of crime prevention may once again be instructive, particularly as it relates to the role of

neighborhood perceived to be in distress.

⁷ The proportion among submissions for the Goldstein Award in 1995 was lower (see Annex).

crime prevention in a broader crime policy. In defining this role, the societal institutions already in place, which are premised on the need for punishment, cannot be ignored. While prevention may reduce the need for punishment, it will never supplant it. The most that can be expected is a gradual shift over a long period of years in the balance of resources from punishment to prevention.

In fact, governments seeking to put more emphasis on prevention -- as in Great Britain, Sweden and Holland -- have all established small government or quasi-government units with strong research capabilities to promote crime prevention activity and to evaluate the experiments undertaken. Crime prevention has therefore been viewed as an activity complementary to the main business of the criminal justice system and the government investment has been small scale and experimental. Despite the many successes chalked up by the units, there is little sign of this investment approaching the levels made in the criminal justice system. For example, in the Netherlands, "where crime prevention has taken firm root in government policies", less than 2% of government spending on justice goes to prevention (Willemse, 1994: 44).

Set in the light of this experience, the magnitude of the challenge facing problem-oriented policing in bringing about wholesale change in policing may be more apparent. The existing investment of resources, experience and expertise in the usual way of doing business results in enormous institutional inertia. In any case, there will always be a large reactive element in policing -- responding

quickly to calls for assistance, arresting and processing offenders, clearing up after accidents, taking charge in civil emergencies and so forth. Even if police agencies wanted to become more problem-oriented, substantial progress could only be made in the long term and the motivation for change would have to be constantly reinforced with fresh evidence about the value of the problem-oriented approach.

This underlines Goldstein's concerns about the lack of evaluation and suggests that ways must be found to strengthen the evaluative capability in police departments. One solution, as suggested above, would be to engage the interest of a larger number of appropriately trained criminologists in problem-oriented policing. But because of the expense, evaluation may only be justified when the problem being addressed is of sufficient importance, which would rule out most beat level efforts. At least during this early stage of the implementation of problem-oriented policing, experimentation perhaps ought to be concentrated at higher levels in the department.

The analogous experience of implementing crime prevention overseas, supports Goldstein's (1990: 161-62) call for the establishment of departmental policy units, with a strong research capability and reporting directly to the chief, whose role would be to initiate, manage and evaluate problem-oriented policing projects.⁸ This may mean that many small departments would simply not have the

⁸Though not employees of the police department, this was essentially the role performed by Eck and Spelman in Newport News, and it may be no coincidence

resources to engage in problem-oriented policing in any meaningful way, unless supported by a state government research capacity. It also implies a rather different, more active role than has generally been accorded to civilian specialists in police departments. The civilians in "research and planning" units are generally "on tap" to provide intelligence for police operations. In the role envisaged here, research and planning units would have the operational responsibility of directing and managing problem-oriented policing projects. Their success should be judged not simply in terms of the ability to produce timely and relevant data, but in terms of reductions in substantive problems confronting the police department.

This may be too revolutionary a concept for most police departments to accept. It may also be resisted by the civilian specialists, who would have less comfortable lives. Without this "top down" direction and support from properly trained social scientists, however, problem-oriented policing will not prosper and the many half-baked, beat-level projects with dubious results may provide grounds for abandoning the concept or leaving it to survive in residual form as a "problem-solving" technique for use at the discretion of individual officers.

Distinguishing between "problem solving" and "problem-oriented policing"

Eck and Spelman (1987) have distinguished between the department-wide commitment implied by problem-oriented policing and the problem-solving work

that the problem-oriented policing work undertaken there still consists of the bet

that might be undertaken by individuals or special units. Thus, if a beat officer persuades the family of a lonely, confused old man to find him professional care, and, as a result, the old man's daily calls for police assistance are eliminated, that is problem solving. On the other hand, if as the result of a scanning exercise, the police department becomes aware of a persistent and general problem, consuming many resources, of responding to calls for assistance from confused, older people living alone, this might constitute the beginnings of a problem-oriented policing project to develop general solutions. The first case shows that neither the recurrence of incidents nor the mobilization of community resources are sufficient defining attributes of problem-oriented policing. In addition, some aggregation of the problem is needed in terms of a variety of individual problem sites, of individual victims or individual offenders. Problem-oriented policing is designed to reduce the scale of a general problem, significantly impacting departmental resources and affecting the jurisdiction as a whole, and not merely to deal, however effectively or creatively, with an individual manifestation of the problem.

Once again, a parallel can be found in the crime prevention literature where a distinction has recently been made between "routine precautions" and situational crime prevention (Felson and Clarke, 1995). This distinction is illustrated by the following example. If someone purchases a car alarm after hearing about a rash of car theft in his neighborhood, he is not engaged in situational crime prevention, but

developed and most convincing set of case studies available in the literature.

is merely taking routine precautions. However, the Highway Loss Data Institute would be engaged in situational crime prevention if, (1) on the basis of its routine scanning of insurance claims it notified the manufacturer concerned that a particular model was being targeted for theft throughout the country, and (2) as a result, the manufacturer improved the model's security and, (3) follow-up analyses were undertaken to see if thefts of the model had declined, and (4) further action was initiated if thefts had not declined (cf. Hazelbaker, In press).

In practice, these distinctions are not always easy to make. For example, some action taken at beat level might genuinely be classified as problem-oriented policing. This could be the case if the focus were a major drug dealing location, or a gambling or prostitution strip encompassed by the beat. In such cases, however, the problem may be rather general in that there could be multiple service providers catering to dozens, perhaps hundreds of clients at the one location. The result of arresting the service providers will only be to interrupt the problem temporarily, not eliminate it or reduce it long term, since they will simply resume their activities when released or their place will be taken by others. To achieve a long-term reduction in the problem would require more fundamental environmental changes, identified through a careful problem-oriented analysis, to make the locations less desirable venues for the activities in question.

In other cases, there may be multiple problem sites extending over many beats -- say, robberies at ATM machines -- but these robberies may all be

committed by a single group of offenders. While arresting the group may reduce the problem over the entire jurisdiction, this is not problem-oriented policing because the basic underlying cause -- the existence of many tempting targets with little security -- has not been addressed. Under these conditions, it would only be a matter of time before another group of offenders began to prey upon the machines.

The purpose of clarifying the distinction between problem-oriented policing and problem-solving is to make apparent the nature of the commitment needed by police departments if they are to seriously engage in the former -- it is not to discredit the latter. It is clearly beneficial that officers engage in problem-solving if this avoids the expense of arrest and reduces the demand on police resources. A case therefore exists, quite independent of any larger commitment to problem-oriented policing, to provide improved training in problem-solving as well as to reward the exercise of these skills. Indeed, a greater commitment to problem-solving may be more realistic for many smaller departments than a commitment to problem-oriented policing.

The distinction between problem-solving and problem-oriented policing is obscured by the lack of a clear definition of the kind of "problems" for which the latter is designed. Some attributes of these problems have been mentioned, including: persistence of the problem; heavy resource costs; some level of aggregation by victims, sites and groups of offenders; a need for general solutions

often involving permanent environmental or system changes; and, finally, a degree of complexity requiring careful problem delineation and analysis.

However, a formal definition of such "problems" will not be attempted here because this would take up too much space in the present context. Indeed, the difficulties of such a definition seem equal to those of defining the "highly specific" crime problems that should be the foci of situational crime prevention projects. In practice, the issue has been avoided, leaving "highly specific" to be defined operationally, case by case. The rule of thumb seems to be that the targeted crimes ought not to be so highly specific that there are too few incidents to justify a situational crime prevention exercise. On the other hand, incidents that are quite unlike each other should not be aggregated, since this will only result in failure to develop effective opportunity-reducing measures.

Clarifying ownership of problems

Rather than spend more time on the operational definition of problems, the issue should be explored of the "ownership" of problems, and the associated motivation and responsibility for action. Goldstein (personal communication) has suggested that it may be futile, in fact, to talk about who owns a problem since in most cases a whole range of groups in the community are affected by it. Driving while intoxicated, for example, is as much a problem for citizens (both offenders and victims), for hospitals and social workers, for taverns and clubs, and for the

courts and correctional services, as it is for the police. Goldstein believes, therefore, that it may be more productive to talk, first, about ownership of the *inquiry* into a problem, and then discuss ownership of whatever *response* to the problem has been identified during the course of that inquiry. Viewed in this light, the main issues seem to be, (1) how to encourage the police to take on responsibility for such inquiries, (2) how to equip them to conduct inquiries of the necessary depth and, (3) how to train them to obtain the required cooperation in implementing solutions.

In essence, these are the familiar difficulties of making police more proactive and preventive-oriented, but there are in addition some murky issues of determining police responsibilities in respect of certain problems they encounter. In many cases -- say, muggings in the downtown area, or suburban street prostitution -- the responsibility for initiating action might clearly fall to the police. Local citizens pay the police to take care of such problems, and no other agency, public or private, is in a better position to deal with them. In other cases -- say, bank robberies or insurance scams -- other local agencies or enterprises may be the principal victims. They may also have access to the most relevant data about the problem and, furthermore, may hold the key to its solution. It is unclear whether these agencies should therefore be expected to undertake their own prevention, without involving the police to any significant extent. While this might save public

money, it may on the other hand diminish the police role in crime prevention -- with unfortunate results discussed in the Conclusions.

Where agencies other than the police hold the key to the problem, financial or other disincentives may exist to undertaking inquiries or implementing solutions. For instance, it may be cheaper for local store owners to rely on the police to arrest shoplifters than to put preventive measures in place. The police could respond by withholding cooperation until some basic preventive measures have been put in place, or they could seek other ways to pressurize or compel the store owners to take action. They might just as likely, however, wash their hands of the problem on the grounds that those most affected are unwilling to cooperate in taking the necessary action.

This suggests that if problem-oriented policing is to be widely implemented ways will have to be found of increasing police willingness to take on the demanding task of analyzing local crime problems, and to persist with the often frustrating task of implementing solutions. They must somehow be held accountable for the continuance of crimes that are harming the community, even in the face of indifference or lack of cooperation. The police cannot go on blaming others, or society in general, for crime problems that persist in their jurisdictions. (To Commissioner Bratton's credit, this was the message he sent to his precinct commanders in New York). This means that a complex message will have to be communicated to the public, one that holds the police as being principally

responsible for crime reduction, but at the same time as being critically dependent for their effectiveness on the cooperation of others.

One example of the greater need for police persistence in solving crime problems, (and the need to be held accountable for failures), can be found in Bichler and Clarke's (1996) account of measures taken at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan to eliminate a massive problem of toll fraud at the public telephones. While the police tried for some time to arrest those using the phones for fraud, evidence of their activities was difficult to obtain. Those arrested were usually released on bail and were quickly back in the building resuming their activities. The police soon became discouraged and largely abandoned their efforts to deal with the problem. Newspaper reports describe officers standing around watching the toll fraud business continue. The problem was only solved when the building managers took control. They commissioned a careful problem analysis by outside consultants, which resulted in the introduction of measures that entirely eliminated the problem. (These were mainly technological modifications to restrict access from the pay phones to toll lines.)

It might be concluded that the building managers acted because they were the real "owners" of the problem in that they were footing the bill for toll fraud. However, this was not the case. Under the terms of the contract with the pay phone providers, the terminal received a percentage of the charges made for all toll calls, fraudulent or not. Consequently, the terminal's income from the fraudulent calls

was substantial -- about \$2.5 million in 1990 -- which, under other circumstances, might have constituted a powerful disincentive to deal with the problem.

A similar disincentive existed for the long distance providers (whose cooperation in solving the problem was notably lacking) since they were carrying few of the costs involved. Instead, these costs were being charged to the businesses whose PBX and other telephone systems were being accessed from the pay phones to make the fraudulent calls. In many cases, the businesses were completely unaware of this activity or, because the costs for any single business were often small, they simply wrote these off. However, the building's managers were the ones most embarrassed by the notoriety of the terminal and by the frequent criticisms made of it by the New York Times and other news media (Felson, 1996). In this sense, they "owned" the problem and this ownership provided the impetus for action.

From the perspective of problem-oriented policing, this story is at once both encouraging and disappointing. Encouraging, because it provides further compelling evidence of the power of the problem-oriented approach in reducing crime problems -- in this case, one involving losses of millions of dollars. Disappointing, because there was nothing done by the building managers that could not have been done by the police. Instead, the police missed the opportunity to achieve a spectacular success by taking ownership of the problem and developing the solutions.

Little purpose would be served in speculating about the reasons for the police failure in this particular case. The police managers clearly had a narrow law-enforcement conception of their role and may have had little understanding of the problem-oriented approach. In addition, the rank-and-file officers may have had little incentive to deal with problems because of the loss of overtime money that would have resulted. These are the familiar difficulties of implementing problem-oriented policing and this case provides one more example, to set against the recent record of achievement, of just how much work remains to be done in establishing problem-oriented policing as a routine way of doing police business.

IMPROVED RIGOR AND CREATIVITY

It has been argued above that problem-oriented policing has lacked the critical attention of the academic community, because there are too few scholars specializing on the police and because criminologists in general are not interested in police organization. Criminologists would become more interested in problem-oriented policing if it were linked more directly to their core theoretical concerns. This could be done by clarifying a fundamental difference in the goals of problem-oriented and community policing, which is that most action under the latter is intended to strengthen relationships with communities and engage their assistance in the fight against crime, while that under the former is mostly directed to reducing opportunities for crime through criminal or civil enforcement and

environmental changes. Sharpening this distinction would not only help to define an explicit preventive role for problem-oriented policing, but would also help align it more directly with situational crime prevention. As a result, those criminologists interested in situational crime prevention, as well as in the underlying routine activity and rational choice theories of crime, would more naturally be drawn to problem oriented policing and might therefore begin to assist in its development.

Apart from the conceptual work they might undertake, their assistance would be invaluable in the implementation of problem-oriented policing projects. To date, many of these projects have been poorly conceived and conducted. They lack analytic rigor in exploring the problems to be addressed, they show little creativity in formulating responses and reveal limited understanding of the need for these to provide long-term preventive solutions. Finally, they mostly ignore the need for evaluation.

Many of the skills needed to undertake problem-oriented policing projects are, in fact, the standard analytic and research skills of trained social scientists, but there is a small group of "environmental criminologists" who have particular experience of undertaking detailed analyses of the spatial and temporal distribution of specific kinds of crime. They also have experience in analyzing the environments in which these crimes occur and in assessing the effect of environmental change, including crime prevention interventions. The police in general cannot be expected to become familiar with these skills and comfortable in

their use, though this could be expected of the specialist units that should be charged with responsibility for implementing problem-oriented projects. These units would provide a natural conduit for information, as well as a point of contact, between police departments and environmental criminologists in the universities. Since there are rather few environmental criminologists, not all of whom may be able to communicate effectively with police managers, many of these units might have to step beyond a brokering role and develop their own expertise in environmental criminology.

The implementation benefits that should result from the greater involvement of environmental criminologists will be discussed below with reference to the so-called SARA model, the acronym for scanning, analysis, response and assessment, which are the four stages of a problem-oriented policing project identified by Eck and Spelman (1987). Goldstein believes that the SARA model should be used only temporarily, like training wheels on a child's cycle, and that those who continue to rely heavily upon it are never likely to achieve the necessary depth, breadth and rigor in their work. On the other hand, the SARA model does present a constant reminder of the rational analytic method needed if problem-oriented projects are to succeed. It also represents the beginnings of what might be called a "technology" of problem-oriented policing, a set of formal procedures and methodologies that can be communicated and learned. Not only does this assist training, but technological expertise confers professional status,

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Table 1 here

convergences in time and space of large numbers of likely offenders with suitable targets, in the absence of capable guardians. On the other hand, crime attractors (for example, subway stations serving large numbers of tourists) result from likely offenders being specifically drawn to these places by the number of suitable targets they present. Each different kind of hot spot will require a different response from the police, and any conceptual tool that helps to classify hot spots and understand the variety of criminogenic forces at work will assist them in developing a wider repertoire of countermeasures.

Other concepts developed by environmental criminologists that may assist in understanding hot spots are: "awareness space" (what parts of the city may be familiar to the offender); the "journey to crime" (what characteristic search patterns are employed by criminal predators); and "criminal decision making" (what factors are weighed by criminals in choosing where and when to offend). Not only might these concepts assist in undertaking problem-oriented projects, but their routine application might expose the need for further refinement of the concepts and thus act as a valuable impetus to undertaking fresh criminological studies.

As for repeat victimization, this concept is most familiar to police in this country in the context of domestic violence. However, environmental criminologists in Britain have now shown that individuals can be repeated victims of many other sorts of crime, including residential burglary, autotheft, obscene

phone calls and racial attacks (Farrell and Pease, 1993). Individual businesses can also be repeatedly victimized by racial harassment, shoplifting, credit card frauds and commercial burglaries. Moreover, the proportion of all reported crime that is accounted for by repeat victims is very substantial. For example, using 1982 British Crime Survey data, a national victimization survey involving at least 10,000 individual respondents, Farrell and Pease (1993: 7) show that, "...the 3% of the population who experience five or more crimes suffered almost a quarter of all crime reported".

Stimulated by this research, a series of recent projects in British towns has shown that concentrating police preventive resources on repeat victims of burglary can achieve substantial reductions in recorded incidents of this offense (Anderson et al., 1995). The same may be true of concentrating on other kinds of repeat victims and, moreover, it appears that measuring the extent of repeat victimization can provide a useful new measure of police productivity, complementary to those of clearance rate and response time. The promise of the work undertaken overseas on prevention of repeat burglaries has recently led the National Institute of Justice to fund a replication to be undertaken in three cities in the United States by the Police Executive Research Forum (Grant# 96-IJ-CX-0042).

Analysis

The work on repeat victimization has carried the additional benefit of improving police data systems, since the British researchers found that these were not usually able to provide sufficiently accurate information about repeat victims (this was also found here in the course of exploratory work for the new PERF research mentioned above). Correcting this will involve the development of more sophisticated data capture and programming routines for the police computers. The research has also revealed that failures in the reporting and recording of crime are compounded for repeat victimization, which has contributed to the delayed understanding of the importance of the phenomenon for police workload.

This is just one example of the ways in which environmental criminologists might help police in analyzing substantive crime problems. Most problem-oriented policing projects to date have relied on straightforward counts of UCR crime reports, sometimes by day of week or time of day, and sometimes also by geographical location. Rarely has there been the kind of fine-grained analysis undertaken by environmental criminologists (cf. Poyner, 1986), in which broad offense categories, such as robbery, are systematically broken down into specific kinds of incidents (e.g. robberies at ATM machines, of drunks late at night, of children on their way to school by other children, of convenience stores, of gas stations and so forth), and in which each subcategory of incident identified is explored in terms of precipitating or facilitating circumstances. This requires knowing not just when and where these incidents occur, but much more about the

situations involved -- levels of lighting, pedestrian and vehicle traffic, proximity to other local trouble spots, the policies of responsible individuals at those places, etc. (Eck, 1995; Felson, 1995). Without such analysis, it is difficult to acquire the depth of understanding of the problems needed to devise preventive measures. This analysis will be greatly assisted by the continued refinement of computer mapping systems (Weisburd and McEwen, In Press) and, if this ever becomes widely implemented, the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

This is not to say that recorded crime data are the only, or the best source of information about specific problems. Depending on its nature, valuable data might be obtained about from victim surveys (to get a more complete information about the extent of the problem and of what actually occurred), by systematic direct observation (for example of violent altercations in pubs, e.g. Homel and Clark, 1994) or by analysis of administrative records kept by other agencies. As for the latter, "shrinkage" data kept by stores may be valuable in analyzing shoplifting, maintenance records kept by transit companies or public housing authorities may provide useful data about vandalism and graffiti, and schools' disciplinary records may provide useful in studying assaults on staff or bullying of children.

In some cases, especially where fear is an important component of the problem, "safety audits" can be conducted (Wekerle and Whitzman, 1995). These involve enlisting local people to walk around particular locations (for example, subway stations, public housing estates, or downtown areas at night) to pinpoint

the places provoking most fear and to elicit the reasons for this, whether poor lighting, isolation or lack of guardianship. Finally, interviews with offenders have often been found helpful in thinking about countermeasures (Ekblom, 1991). This is true particularly of burglary (e.g. Bennett and Wright, 1984; Biron and Ladouceur, 1991; Cromwell et al., 1991; Maguire, 1982; Nee and Taylor, 1988; Rengert and Wasilchick, 1985), shoplifting (e.g. Carroll and Weaver, 1986), autotheft (e.g. Light et al., 1993; McCulloch et al., 1990; Spencer, 1992), violent assaults (e.g. Indermaur, 1996; Morrison and O'Donnell, 1996); mugging (e.g. Lejeune, 1977), bank robbery (e.g. Kube, 1988; Nugent et al., 1989), and convenience store robbery (e.g. Feeney, 1986).

This does not exhaust the possible data sources or methods of analysis that have been used in a variety of crime specific studies by environmental criminologists. It would be unrealistic to expect police officers to become familiar with these methods or to anticipate their routine use in all problem-oriented policing projects. However, they do illustrate the potential contribution to crime analysis that might be made by environmental criminologists if they were to become more involved in problem-oriented policing.

Response

Braga (1997: 179) has noted that: "Many evaluations of problem-solving efforts have documented a preponderance of traditional policing tactics (see e.g.

Cordner, 1994; Capowich and Roehl, 1994). Indeed, traditional tactics can be appropriate responses to problems (Goldstein, 1990; Eck and Spelman, 1987), but some observers believe that, absent adequate training in problem-solving methods, police officers tend to choose strategies familiar to them, such as the traditional ones of high visibility patrol, issuing summons, and making arrests (see McElroy, Cosgrove and Sadd, 1993)⁹.

Eck (1993b) has characterized efforts relying on traditional strategies (and frequently on superficial problem analysis) as the "enforcement" model of problem-oriented policing, which he distinguishes from the "situational" model¹⁰, which is closer to Goldstein's original vision, and which involves a thorough analysis of crime problems and a broad search for solutions. In some recent problem-oriented projects traditional tactics have been supplemented by enforcement of civil regulations in efforts to close down drug houses (Hope; 1993; Green, 1996), to compel managers of troublesome taverns and motels to regulate the behavior of customers and guests, and to force private landlords to improve their management of rental apartment buildings (Clarke and Bichler, In preparation). This use of the civil law -- variously described as "third party policing" or "civil remedies" (Buerger and Green, 1994) -- may represent a rather

⁹ See also Bennett (1996).

¹⁰ Eck's distinction between the enforcement and situational models may be just another way of distinguishing between problem-solving by rank-and-file officers (the enforcement model) and problem-oriented policing undertaken by an

small step for the police and, while nonetheless welcome, still falls under Eck's "enforcement" model.

It is important to note that the broader search for solutions will not of necessity push the situational model beyond the opportunity-reducing premises of the enforcement model. It is not the premises that are at fault, but their limited interpretation. This is clearly apparent from a strand of work undertaken in situational crime prevention to classify and describe the variety of opportunity reducing methods available (cf. Hough et al., 1980; Clarke, 1992). The latest classification proposed by Clarke and Homel (In Press), which is based on the rational choice perspective, identifies four basic means of reducing opportunities: by increasing the difficulty of crime, by increasing the risks, by reducing the rewards, and by removing excuses so as to increase associated shame and guilt. Under each of these four headings, four specific opportunity-reducing categories are identified, making a total of sixteen (see Table 2).

The traditional tactics of the enforcement model mostly fall under just the one category of "formal surveillance", while "rule setting" would encompass much of the civil enforcement work. The crime prevention advice sometimes provided by specialist police officers in problem-oriented projects, even when it includes recommendations drawn from Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), would generally be encompassed by four further categories: "target

appropriately trained and supported unit located at a higher level in the police

Table 2 here

department (the situational model).

hardening”, “access control”, “natural surveillance” and “identifying property”. Rarely are problem-oriented policing solutions drawn from the ten remaining categories of opportunity-reducing measures, which suggests how much police would gain from studying ways in which these measures have been applied in a wide range of situational crime prevention projects.

Clarke and Homel expected that their classification, like those before it, would be superseded and, already, an expansion of its treatment of shame and guilt has been proposed by Wortley (1996). Indeed, one purpose of classifying existing opportunity-reducing measures is to stimulate their development. This tends to occur where the classification has been stretched to accommodate some unusual instance of opportunity reduction within an existing category. As a result of further experimentation, or through technological innovation, this one seemingly unusual instance of opportunity-reduction can sometimes be generalized for use in other contexts or in dealing with other specific kinds of crime, and a new category of measures is thus created.

Besides serving some other general purposes of systematizing and communicating knowledge, Clarke and Homel’s classification is also intended to clarify the link between, on the one hand, the criminological work on rational choice and routine activity theory and, on the other, the practical set of procedures that make up situational crime prevention. In this sense, the classification therefore represents another attempt, like the SARA model, to expand the “technology” of

opportunity-reduction. This provides an additional reason to adopt the classification for use in problem-oriented policing.

Assessment

Given the large number of police departments said to be undertaking problem-oriented policing (see Annex), the lack of published evaluations is disappointing even though the reasons are not difficult to understand. Most problem-solving is at beat or district level and in many cases it will be obvious that the action has eliminated or reduced the problem. If a troublesome bar or motel is closed down or a drug market eliminated the benefits may be clear to all. So long as the local community is satisfied, the officers are praised in the local press and some commendatory letters are received, there is little incentive for the police to devote effort to documenting the results. In any case, even quite straightforward evaluations require more technical knowledge than most police officers possess. When some consideration of displacement is required, the difficulties pose a challenge even to well-trained social scientists, especially when publication is the goal.

The reason for the existence of so many more evaluations of situational crime prevention is that trained researchers, working for government, have taken the lead in promoting situational prevention and have recognized the need for evaluation. This also explains why the best source of evaluated case studies in

problem-oriented policing is still the Newport News work (Eck and Spelman, 1987), which was undertaken by the Police Executive Research Forum, was funded by the National Institute of Justice, and was led by two highly-qualified social scientists.

If more "situational" problem-oriented policing were undertaken, the quality and quantity of evaluations would substantially increase for a number of related reasons. First, the projects would originate at a higher level in the police organization and, particularly in those cases where the source was the research and statistics department, would more likely involve specialists with criminological or other social science training. Second, the level of police effort involved would more often justify a substantial evaluative effort. Third, the nature of the problems addressed are more likely to yield the volume of routine statistical data, concerning calls for service and crime reports, needed for any convincing study. Fourth, funding agencies would be more interested in evaluating efforts to deal with crime problems that were not merely local.

This being so, the question arises of the most suitable evaluative strategy to pursue at this stage in the development of problem-oriented policing. Once again, a look at situational crime prevention and the nature of the evaluations undertaken in that field may prove instructive. By and large, most of these would fall under the heading of "quasi-experiments", or "natural experiments". This means that the researchers have taken advantage of the implementation of preventive measures to

examine the effects on crime through use of time series data, or a comparison with "control" data from an untreated site. In many cases, the selection of controls will attempt to take account of, or indeed measure, the possibility of displacement effects and also, in more recent studies, of possible diffusion of benefits (which is the spread of a beneficial effect of the intervention beyond the immediate focus of the project).

These evaluations, many reporting substantial reductions in targeted crimes, are not unproblematic (Clarke, 1995). For example, it is often impossible to be confident about the durability of success because the follow-ups were brief, sometimes less than one year. In many of the studies, several preventive measures were deployed simultaneously and their relative contributions to the outcome are unknown. Evidence on displacement and diffusion is frequently absent or difficult to evaluate. In general, competing explanations for reported reductions in crime (other than as the result of the situational measures introduced) have not been sufficiently excluded in this body of studies.

The difficulty of ruling out competing explanations is a particular drawback of quasi-experiments, leading to calls for more use of true experimental designs, involving random assignment of preventive measures between treatment and control groups (Sherman, 1996; Weisburd, 1997). The principal obstacle to the greater use of these designs is that, while suited to the laboratory, they often involve serious ethical problems and are difficult and costly to implement in the

real world. It can be difficult enough to institute new preventive measures without at the same time trying to control the implementation process. Sherman's (1996) domestic violence studies show that such difficulties can be overcome, and that experimental designs can be utilized in this field. However, he himself recognizes that in most cases such effort would not be justified, and that to insist on the highest standards of evaluation in all cases would be counterproductive:

“If problem-solving succeeds in becoming the predominant strategy of American policing, there may be far too many problems addressed for an independent review of every police result in any depth. [It] .. is right to seek a middle ground between no assessment at all, on the one hand, and complex or costly research , on the other. The vital question.....is what the middle ground should be like” (Sherman, 1991: 706).

In answering this “vital question”, the key issue is, given their difficulties, how much use should be made of experimental designs. In other words, quite how much extra certainty is produced by their use and when does this additional certainty justify the extra cost?

While the many threats to the validity of quasi-experimental designs are well-known, and have been summarized by Sherman (1991) in the context of his

discussion quoted above of problem-oriented policing¹¹, those of experimental designs in this field are no less serious, though perhaps less well known (for general discussions of experimental designs in criminal justice, see Clarke and Cornish, 1972; Farrington, 1983). These include:

- attempts by the practitioners involved, who may already be convinced of the value or otherwise of the intervention, to subvert randomization;
- the reactive effects of the experiment, in particular that it may be difficult to conceal the fact that some areas or groups are receiving new or innovative treatments, with the resulting danger of "hawthorne effects";
- the fact that even when those receiving the experimental treatment are unaware of this, those administering it will not be, and the latter's enthusiasm, or lack of it, may play an important role in the results;
- differential rates of attrition that may ultimately result in the non-comparability of randomly selected experimental and control groups;
- unplanned or unknown changes over time in the treatment administered during the course of the experiment;
- ethical problems involved in providing different levels of service to experimental and control groups or areas.

¹¹ The nature of these competing explanations has recently been summarized by Sherman (1991) in his detailed critique of the work on convenience store robbery

The most serious methodological difficulty, perhaps, is that policing or crime prevention interventions are not like a drugs, i.e. treatments with precisely measurable and controllable chemical constituents. Rather, they usually consist of a complex interaction of several related social and physical elements. This makes it impossible be certain about the precise cause of any effect demonstrated by the experiment. An example of this is provided by one of the only experiments reported in the situational crime prevention literature, concerned with shoplifting (Farrington et al., 1993), in which three measures (electronic tagging, redesign of merchandise layout, and security guards) were systematically compared for their effectiveness. Each measure was introduced by the research team in two stores selling electronic merchandise, while three other stores where no new measures were introduced served as controls. It was concluded that electronic tags were effective in reducing shoplifting (at least during the somewhat brief follow-up period of three to six weeks), and that redesign was also effective, but that the latter's value was undermined by further changes made by store clerks in order to increase sales. The security guards, on the other hand, were not found to be effective though the researchers acknowledged that this may have been to store layouts which prevented adequate oversight of customers, or to the inexperience,

resulting in the "two clerk" legislation in Florida.

advanced age, unimpressive physiques and lack of training of the particular individuals concerned.

Similar caveats were made by Farrington and his colleagues about the nature of the tagging and redesign measures employed in their research, and it is clear that the findings of what was a careful study must be heavily qualified. While it is true that greater uncertainty may have attended the results of a quasi-experimental design, it is doubtful that reducing this uncertainty would have justified the additional costs and difficulty of an experimental design. Indeed, it is instructive to compare the results about electronic tagging from this research, relying on just two electronic retail stores and a follow-up of only a few weeks, with those of a more recent quasi-experimental study of electronic tagging. This utilized five year's worth of company "shortage" data (i.e. the difference between the amount of merchandise present in a store at a given time and the amount that should be present according to the statement of accounts) to compare thefts between eight apparel stores with electronic tagging and eight stores from the same retail chain without tagging (DiLonardo, 1996). It was found that shortage in the tagged stores decreased by 17% over the five year period, whereas in the control stores it increased by 30%. These results were supported by two further studies included in the same report, one examining the shortage patterns in a single store where electronic tagging was introduced, removed and then reintroduced, and the other examining six year's worth of shortage data to track the results of the

piecemeal introduction of electronic tagging in 21 of 46 stores in an East Coast department store chain.

These data, based upon three separate studies involving a large number of stores studied over considerable periods of time, seem more convincing and are more informative than those yielded by Farrington et al.'s equally careful study, yet they were derived, not from an experiment, but from an analysis of time series data from three quasi-experiments. Since the data used were routinely available stock-taking records, the expense and effort of the study consisted mainly of the analytic time and effort expended by the author. This seems a better use of scarce research resources.

To return to Farrington et al.'s speculations about the security guards' lack of effectiveness in their study (small stature, unimpressive appearance, lack of training, etc.), it is highly doubtful that exploring the validity of these within the confines of a rigorous experimental methodology would be a practicable proposition. Few if any retail chains would tolerate the interference in their operations demanded by the experiments (or, more likely, series of experiments). Unless employed to do so, few criminologists would want to devote so much effort to sorting out the minutiae of security guard effectiveness in preventing just one shoplifting problem in particular kinds of stores. Many other, more rewarding problems beckon them. Add to this the difficulties of studying displacement and diffusion effects, which experimental designs do not necessarily solve and may

even exacerbate because of the greater interference in the real world that may be required, and it becomes clear that these designs will have to be reserved for use in cases where it is imperative to achieve as much certainty as possible.

The "middle ground" evaluative strategy that Sherman seeks for problem-oriented policing is therefore likely to be much the same as that being employed in situational crime prevention. This recognizes that the value of particular situational measures is highly contingent on the nature of the problem and the circumstances in which it arises. Something that works in one situation will not necessarily work in another. What is needed is some quick, and occasionally rough, indication of whether a newly-introduced measure is working. Since situational crime prevention measures often achieve large reductions in crime, a simple time series or a comparison with a control group will frequently suffice. Where measures appear not to have worked, some possible explanations for this are also needed. Armed with this information, the action-researcher knows whether something else should be tried and also, perhaps, what this should be.

Given the vast number of natural experiments being conducted in all manner of settings, the optimal strategy therefore seems to be: (1) to undertake as many evaluations as possible, (2) to compensate for weaker designs with detailed observation of the process of implementation (the value of which is illustrated by Farrington et al.'s observations about the caliber of their security guards), (3) to include as much information as possible about the costs and practicability of the

techniques studied, (4) to conduct periodic and systematic meta-analyses of results (for examples see Poyner, 1993, Hesseling, 1994, and Eck, In preparation), and (5) slowly to piece together the findings with reference to a systematic classification of situational techniques. This accumulating body of empirical results is (6) interpreted within the context of, and indeed contributes to the development of, crime prevention theory based upon reducing opportunities for crime. This strategy seems consistent with other recent writings about the need to for theory-based evaluations of community initiatives (Connell et al., Weiss, 1995)

The ultimate objective of the empirical evaluations is therefore not to document the precise value of particular interventions (say, electronic tagging) observed under particular circumstances, but to build our detailed understanding of the principles of effective opportunity-reduction. Since situational crime prevention practitioners are constantly called upon to provide tailor-made solutions for new problems arising in fresh circumstances, they will be helped more by a robust and detailed theory of opportunity reduction, than by attempts to catalogue the effectiveness of the host of possible variations on specific crime prevention measures. This is particularly true at present, when so little is known about the effects of current preventive measures, and when technological progress is resulting in the development of so many new ones. The volume of research that would be needed to explore the effectiveness of each of these measures, in all their various forms, would be quite beyond the research resources available or likely to

become available in this field. As said, in some cases a particular measure may be so potentially valuable that a considerable investment of research will be justified in exploring its effectiveness. This will sometimes include the use of experimental designs. In most cases, however, substantially less evaluative effort will be appropriate so long as existing principles of opportunity reduction can be used to assist in the judgment about effectiveness.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Most commentators would agree with Goldstein's somber assessment, with which this paper began, of the current state of problem-oriented policing. Despite its enthusiastic reception by police, few of the projects undertaken in the name of problem-oriented policing reflect a genuine commitment to this new way of doing police business or, indeed, reveal much understanding of the concept. Most of these projects have been undertaken at beat level by rank-and-file officers and involve only superficial analysis of problems, a use of traditional enforcement responses and little or no attempt to evaluate effectiveness.

This situation reflects widespread confusion about the nature of problem-oriented policing. Important distinctions have become blurred, on the one hand, between problem-oriented and "community policing", and, on the other, between problem-oriented policing and problem solving. The latter is a lower level activity frequently requiring little analysis or evaluation. Few projects consistent with

Goldstein's original vision have been reported. This involves a commitment at the highest levels of the police department to the proactive analysis and solution of the substantive problems confronting police on a routine everyday basis.

Goldstein has always recognized that this commitment requires a substantial in-house analytic and evaluative capacity, and the fact that most departments have not developed this capacity readily explains the lack of "situational" projects. The skills needed for such projects are essentially those of the well-trained social scientist and, if problem-oriented policing is to be pursued seriously, police departments will have to: (1) recruit individuals with such backgrounds; (2) provide them with substantial on-the-job training about the context of their operations; (3) allow them to exercise professional judgment about profitable lines of inquiry; and (4) develop an understanding of their professional motivations and objectives. Above all, the police must find ways of allowing such employees, who would usually be outside the direct chain of command, to assume responsibility for the management and direction of problem-oriented projects.

In turn, the social scientists employed must be prepared to step outside their traditional, somewhat comfortable roles of providing expert advice based on statistical and other information. They must redefine their own objectives in terms of developing practical solutions to substantive police problems and must submit to being judged in this light. Not all social scientists would be comfortable in this role. Criminologists, in particular, have generally seen themselves, not as problem

solvers, but rather as philosopher-sociologists seeking to understand and comment upon the nature of society.

Many criminologists also lack the methodological skills needed for the required analytic and evaluative work, but there is a small group of "environmental criminologists", who are well-suited to work with the police in solving crime problems, and, indeed, the main objective of this paper has been to draw attention to their potential contribution. To date, their work has consisted mainly of detailed analyses of specific categories of crime with the purpose of understanding the ways in which environmental and situational influences affect criminal motivation and decision making (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1991). In the course of this work, however, numerous concepts have been developed (such as, crime "hot spots", repeat victimization, "criminal awareness space", "the journey to crime") that are directly applicable to analyzing the substantive problems confronting police. Various methodologies (computer mapping of crime, victim surveys, "crime audits", offender interviews, etc.) have also been refined for use in analyzing these problems in the depth needed for the identification of practical solutions.

Many environmental criminologists have also been directly involved in the development of CPTED and situational crime prevention. The latter, in particular, has numerous lessons for problem-oriented policing in that it shares many of the same objectives and assumptions and, indeed, encounters many of the same

problems. For example, both approaches have difficulties in defining the scope of their roles, in the one case, within the overall policing mission, and in the other, within a broader societal crime control policy. Both encounter problems in distinguishing themselves from vaguer but related concepts, in the one case of community policing, and in the other of "social" crime prevention. Both share a common difficulty of defining the focus of projects -- what is meant by a "problem", in the one case, and by a "highly specific" crime type, in the other. And both are mistakenly identified with lower level applications of their basic approaches, in one case with problem-solving and in the other with routine precautions. Pooling of experience in dealing with these and other common difficulties would bring considerable benefits in the application of both concepts.

The greater involvement of environmental criminologists in problem-oriented policing might also help fill the need for greater scholarly attention to the concept. As argued above, problem-oriented policing must be subject to considerably more analysis and critique by the scholarly community if it is to acquire the status of a new paradigm. But environmental criminologists have not generally paid much attention to policing; in particular, they have not shown themselves interested in its organizational aspects or role in society, which are the issues underlying the development of problem-oriented policing. While the opportunity for paid employment or funded research will attract some to the topic, this will not be the case for those less dependent on these forms of support. For them, there

must be sound intellectual reasons for paying attention to problem-oriented policing. As suggested above, these reasons might become more apparent if problem-oriented policing were to become linked explicitly to situational crime prevention. In particular, if the underlying objective of problem-oriented policing were formally defined as the reduction of opportunities for crime, this would result in its being drawn into a more general movement within Criminology -- a movement that involves a shift of theoretical and policy attention away from the sources of criminal motivation to the situational determinants of crime.

This would also lead to the clearer separation of problem-oriented policing from the rest of community policing, which is focused less on reducing opportunities for crime, as on improving relationships with the community so as to engage its assistance in fighting crime and, ultimately, to more effectively police itself. If at the same time the problem-oriented policing literature began to make more direct use of concepts and techniques borrowed from environmental criminology, it would become more apparent why problem-oriented policing must be distinguished from the more limited concept of problem-solving. Not only would this spur the development of "situational" varieties of the former, but would free the latter to develop its own identity and status within policing. This is particularly important for the smaller police departments which may never be able to develop a problem-oriented policing capacity, but which must pursue a more proactive role in dealing with recurring problems.

In conclusion, lest this paper has given the mistaken impression of a complete identity of interest between problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention, reasons preventing a merger of the two approaches should be noted. These include important differences in their purposes and points of origin. Situational crime prevention is principally designed to augment society's existing array of crime control approaches. Because it is explicitly formulated for use by any agency, private or public, that wishes to solve an identifiable, persistent crime problem, it has much wider application than just to the business of policing. Problem-oriented policing, on the other hand, is principally concerned with reforming the police institution. Goldstein wishes policing to be more focused upon ends than means so that function determine forms, not the other way about as in current organizational models. One consequence of this is that problem-oriented policing has application not just to crime, but to other spheres of police activity, which draw little from the experience of situational crime prevention. It is only when applied to solving individual crime problems, that the method is essentially the same as situational crime prevention. Thus the overlap of interest between the two approaches is rather narrow. Indeed, a closer identification with problem-oriented policing would be resisted by many advocates of situational crime prevention, because its independence from the criminal justice system, widely regarded as inefficient and overly punitive, has been an important advantage in promoting situational crime prevention at a high policy level.

Nonetheless, the relationship between problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention will continue to develop because of the many advantages discussed above. One consequence of this growing relationship will be to underline the fact that the police do not have a monopoly on crime prevention, similar to that on the deployment of force. Already, they are outnumbered by private security guards in providing basic patrol and surveillance functions. In some countries, central government has also decided that the police may not be suited by training or temperament to deliver crime prevention at the local and community level. In the Netherlands, many municipalities have now appointed crime prevention officers to serve these roles, and in Britain "community workers" have been appointed to manage crime prevention projects under large government crime prevention schemes such as the "Safer Cities" initiative. This suggests that, unless the police seize the opportunity presented by problem-oriented policing, and take "ownership" of crime problems, they may be left on the side lines, still clearing up after society's failures, while the really important challenges (and rewards) of preventing crime and improving society, are relinquished to others.

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ANNEX: ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS FOR THE PERF
GOLDSTEIN AWARD IN 1995

As part of a separate effort to identify reports of problem-oriented policing projects that might be developed into publishable case studies, an analysis was undertaken of submissions for the Police Executive Research Forum's "Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem-Solving Award" in 1995.

Employees of governmental policing agencies in the United States and Canada with a direct service delivery role are eligible for the awards, which are presented at the annual problem-oriented policing conferences arranged jointly by PERF and the San Diego Police Department. Two categories of award are made, "for individual and team problem-solving efforts". The call for submissions in 1995 instructed nominees to address the following questions:

"What was the problem? For whom was it a problem? Who was affected by the problem and how were they affected? How did the department handle the problem in the past? What information was collected about the problem? Were there any difficulties in getting the information? What was the goal of the problem-solving effort? What strategies were developed to reach that goal? What agencies helped the police department in achieving the goal? Was the goal accomplished?"

Before presenting the results of the analysis, the question of representativeness should be considered. Given the prominence and visibility of the award, there is little doubt that the submissions include what is believed by police to be best practice in problem-oriented policing. Some exemplary projects completed in 1995 were probably not submitted, and some that were not problem-oriented may have been submitted simply because chiefs felt that the projects and officers concerned merited recognition. However, it is unlikely that there were a substantial number of better problem-oriented policing projects not submitted. With the caveat therefore that these projects may represent best practice, rather than the generality of practice in North America, they provide a useful snapshot of the current status of problem-oriented policing.

Nature of the Submissions

Eighty-eight projects in total were submitted for the award in 1995 from 59 police forces¹². A preliminary examination of the submission documents by the present author identified 25 projects that did not meet the criterion of a focused, crime prevention project. These included: 4 projects designed to reduce traffic problems; 4 projects designed to reduce police workloads (including a jail privatization project, a project to deal with the problem of false burglar alarms, a

¹² There was a marked regional imbalance in the submissions, with the Western and Southern states being over-represented. Submissions from California comprised nearly a third of the total (26 out of 88). The Eastern seaboard was poorly represented.

new system of following-up on bad checks, and the resolution of a jurisdictional boundary problem); 9 essentially public relations projects (including summer programs for kids, little league football, martial arts, a community job fair and citizen patrols); 7 submissions that described the implementation of force-wide programs/systems (including an autotheft task force, a sex offenders' register, tenant screening for public housing, and a youth diversion program); and one unclassifiable project.

Of the remaining 63 projects meeting the criterion of a focused crime prevention project, 33 were selected as appearing to meet the definition of problem-oriented policing (focused opportunity-reducing preventive measures, sometimes also including interdiction and arrest). The 33 projects were then rated independently by a graduate student familiar with the problem-oriented policing literature and differences were reconciled in discussion. This resulted in a final determination that 30 of the 63 crime prevention projects were in fact problem-oriented policing projects. Of the remaining projects (see Table 1A), 28 were considered to be principally community policing efforts (essentially "hearts and minds" activities intended to strengthen relationships with communities and engage their assistance in the fight against crime, though sometimes including problem-solving elements) and 5 were classified as conventional enforcement projects (patrol and surveillance, principally directed to arresting perpetrators).

Table 1A: Classification of 87 Projects Submitted
for the PERF Goldstein Award in 1995*

<u>Focused Crime Prevention Projects (63)</u>		<u>N</u>
Problem-Oriented Policing		30
Community Policing	28	
Conventional Enforcement		5
<u>Other projects</u>		
Public Relations		9
Force wide systems or programs		7
Workload reduction		4
Traffic**		4
TOTAL		<u>87</u>

* One additional project was unclassifiable

** Three of the traffic projects were problem-oriented policing

As shown in Table A2, the 30 problem-oriented policing projects concerned with crime fell into two main groups, focused respectively on, (1) **crime types** (e.g. panhandling; public drunkenness; prostitution and massage parlors; car thefts; prescription frauds; illegal sales of alcohol to juveniles; graffiti and tagging) and (2), **places** (e.g. deprived neighborhoods; parks; individual premises such as motels, bars, and pool rooms; and street blocks/intersections).

Table A2: Focus of 30 Problem-Oriented Policing Projects
Submitted for Goldstein Award in 1995

<u>Specific Crime Type</u>	14
<u>Specific Place (16)</u>	
Individual Premises	7
Street Intersection/Block	4

Deprived Neighborhood	3
Park/Recreation Area	2
TOTAL	30

Though the classification was made by two independent raters familiar with the concept of problem-oriented policing, it cannot be assumed to be error-free. However, it does suggest certain conclusions which, if treated as provisional, might point the way to more detailed inquiry. These are as follows:

1. Less than half the submissions for the Goldstein Award, 33 out of 88 (30 with a crime focus and 3 with a traffic focus), appeared to be problem-oriented policing projects. There were almost as many projects (28) submitted that were more readily classified as community policing. This suggests one of two things: Either that understanding of problem-oriented policing is inadequate, even among its principal police advocates; or that police often find it convenient in practice to combine elements of problem-oriented and community policing.
2. Certain foci seemed more likely to produce a problem-oriented project. When the focus was a specific crime type, most submissions reported problem-oriented projects. Exceptions were projects focused on "juvenile" problems such as graffiti and gang activity. When the focus was a place, a problem-oriented project was more likely to result when these were confined and specific -- individual premises, street blocks or intersections and parks. A residential focus, such as a deprived neighborhood or

troublesome apartment complex, was much more likely to result in a community policing focus.

3. While projects focused on specific premises were beat level, those focused on specific crime types were jurisdiction-wide or department-wide.

4. Submissions for the "individual award" were much more likely to be problem-oriented (20 out of 28) than those submitted for the "team" award (10 out of 69).

Features of the 30 Problem-oriented Policing Submissions

The analysis reported in this section was undertaken by the graduate student assisting the present author. Because the original objective was to identify projects that might be turned into publishable case studies, it focuses on the four stages of a problem-oriented policing project as encapsulated by SARA: Scanning, Assessment, Response and Assessment. Space limitations (there was a ten-page limit on submissions, though this frequently exceeded) meant that rather little detailed information for any of these stages was usually provided. Indeed, it may be significant that only 11 of the 30 projects made explicit reference to SARA.

Only sparse information was provided in the submissions about the scanning stage. The most significant finding, perhaps, was that in only three of the 30 cases was the problem identified by "police management", suggesting that systematic scanning is rarely practiced by police departments. Most cases were said to be identified by the "community" (13), and by "rank and file officers" (8).

Information about the analysis stage was a little more complete. Some projects reported fairly broad inquiries into the problem, involving in total a wide range of factors (see Table A3).

Table A3: Information Elements Considered at the Analysis Stage in 30 Problem-Oriented Policing Projects

<u>Information Element</u>	<u>N</u>
The offenders	27
The victims	23
Others involved	21
Environmental factors (time & place of events, etc)	23
History of the problem	26
Scope of the problem	26
Motivations and gains of offenders	17
Losses to victims	22
Gains and losses of all other parties	13
Causes and underlying conditions	23
Results of community responses	24
Social costs to the community	26

Less impressive, however, was the number of, or variation in, data and information sources used by individual projects to acquire the information in Table A3. On average, each project used only three of the data or information sources listed in Table A4 to understand their problem. There was also little sign of anything but the most basic analyses of these data being conducted and, altogether, little evidence of analytic thinking.

Table A4: Data/Information Sources Used at the Analysis Stage
in 30 Problem-Oriented Policing Projects

<u>Data/Information Source</u>	<u>N</u>
Calls-for-service data	16
Arrest/crime incident data	10
Citizen letters or phone calls	12
Patrol officer/unit reports	11
Investigation officer/unit reports	7
Elected official concerns	2
Local government agency reports/concerns	4
School reports/concerns	2
Business group reports/concerns	5
Newspapers and others news media	1
Community surveys	4
Interview those with direct knowledge of the problem	17
Literature search conducted	3

Using information provided about responses, an attempt was made to classify the projects using Eck's (1993) distinction between "enforcement" and "situational" problem-oriented projects, defined as follows:

- Enforcement** "Most problems are addressed by enforcement tactics. Officer's performance is judged by quick handling of problems and immediate results of enforcement".
- Situational** "... a wide array of responses are applied to problems. Officer's performance is judged by effectiveness of solutions and minimum use of sanctions".

As mentioned in the body of the report, the current literature consistently reports a much higher proportion of enforcement than situational projects. This seems less evident for the present sample. Only two of the 30 projects were readily classifiable as enforcement projects. A further 18 did make use of arrest, and

twelve made use of conventional surveillance (see Table A5), but in all these cases additional response were also employed. In fact, the average number of responses per project was five. In ten cases, no use was made of arrest or surveillance. This suggests that, among these submissions for the Goldstein Award, there were far fewer purely "enforcement" projects than have been generally been reported by other observers; indeed, only two of the 30 could be classified as "enforcement".

Table A5: Most Common Responses Used in the
30 Problem-Oriented Policing Projects

<u>Response Alternative</u>	<u>N</u>
Surveillance	12
Arrest	20
Interagency coordination	25
Convey information	18
Mobilize community	16
Alter physical environment	17
Increased regulation through statutes or ordinances	16
More discriminate use of the criminal justice system (re: investigation, arrest, prosecution, etc)	9

It is a little more difficult to classify the remainder. According to Eck's classification, 10 were exclusively "situational", while the remaining 18 could probably best be classified as hybrid "enforcement/situational" projects. It should be noted, however, that Eck's classification focusses mostly on the nature of the response and it cannot be assumed that even the 10 "situational" projects genuinely were examples of problem-oriented policing. Because many were "beat level" efforts, they might, indeed, be more readily classified as "problem-solving"

projects (see text of main report for the distinction between problem-solving and problem-oriented policing).

Given that these assessments were made by a single rater, caution must be exercised in drawing firm conclusions. The lack of agreement with previous assessments may reflect the fact that all these projects were candidates for an award and they may have been nominated precisely because they did not exclusively employ "enforcement" responses. Alternatively, and more optimistically, these projects may be more truly representative of current practice. and it may be the case that police engaged in problem-solving are becoming more adept in employing a wider range of preventive responses.

Findings concerning the assessment stage contained few surprises and, from the point of view of developing publishable case studies, this was the most disappointing stage of all. Nine out of the 30 projects made no formal attempt to assess the impact of their intervention (though in one or two cases this would have been redundant as when a troublesome motel was bulldozed). Eighteen of the projects undertook pre/post comparisons of data (most commonly calls-for-service), and two provided time series data (i.e. for more than just two points in time). In none of these 20 cases, however, was a control group employed and no formal study of possible displacement was made.

Nevertheless, a considerable degree of success was claimed. The problem was said to have been totally eliminated in 7 projects, while the number of

incidents was said be reduced in a further 19 projects. In seven of these 19, the seriousness of incidents was also reduced. Twelve projects reported that better methods for handling incidents were devised.

Partly because of lack of information (itself partly the result of length constraints on submission documents), and partly because of weaknesses in evaluation and lack of originality of responses, very few of these 30 problem-oriented policing projects could have been turned into useful case studies. The effort needed to retrieve data and construct evaluations that would meet basic scientific requirements would have been better expended on designing prospective evaluations of new projects. The analysis confirms that the police need considerable assistance in the design and conduct of evaluations. They also need help with scanning which seems not be undertaken systematically, as well as with analysis which seems to be conducted at a fairly rudimentary level, at least compared with most published accounts of situational crime prevention projects. There are encouraging signs, however, of the use of a greater variety of situational preventive measures and of reduced reliance upon traditional enforcement responses.

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