Community-oriented policing in a multicultural milieu: the case of loitering and disorderly conduct in East Arlington, Texas

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Abstract

For the past several decades, an innovation in policing, often controversial, has been emerging in the US. Specifically, community-oriented policing has been used to supplement more traditional forms of police work in preventing and reducing crime. This paper examines a community-oriented policing programme implemented in Arlington, Texas. A national demonstration grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The purpose of the COPS project reported here was to assess a policing problem that, rather than actual crime, was ultimately about (1) multicultural conflict, (2) fear of crime and (3) the effectiveness of this community policing programme in combating both actual incidences and perceptions of crime. We draw several conclusions about the ability to utilise and apply the community policing model and our research findings in other locations. Furthermore, the findings of this paper should have broad utility of international scope.

INTRODUCTION

Community-oriented policing (COPS) has been evolving over the past 30 years (Siegel, 2000). In part, the impetus for community-oriented policing arose from what some have considered a failure of police-community relations, a crisis that peaked in the US during the 1960s. For example, Parks (1976) documents conflicts between many immigrant groups and police within the US, conflicts in which the police essentially saw their role as protecting white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants (WASPS) from members of the lower socioeconomic and ethnically diverse immigrant populations. The problem remained largely unresolved until the 1960s when events such as the 1968 Democratic Convention riots, the Attica Prison riot, and the shooting of students at Kent State during anti-Vietnam War protests all added middle-class pressures to the discontents of the urban lower classes with regard to dominant forms of policing and peacekeeping.

By the 1960s in the US, sociologists and criminologists began to conduct research on police work from a critical stance (see Skolnick, 1966). It was during this time in US history that the civil rights movement was under way, while violent crime was rising sharply. Skolnick's research addressed a need in a climate that wished to know how to eliminate racial bias from law enforcement and more effectively keep order for all Americans. In 1967, then US President

Lyndon B. Johnson had ordered a nation-wide study of civil disorder, policing, and efforts to make the police more responsive to the needs of minority populations (Winslow, 1968). This commission report demanded improvements in policing and community empowerment to help reduce crime (Winslow).

While progress has been made since the 1960s, it is easy to see that a perfect solution has not yet been found. For example, Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) indicted some police on matters of police deception, brutality, and what the authors called the 'blue wall of silence'. The beating of Rodney King in 1991 by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department led to a major riot and further demands that the police find a way to repair mistrust by minorities. Community-oriented policing has been a major strategy increasingly widely adopted in the US to try to meet the demands of these types of situations.

Community policing is defined as 'a philosophy, management style, and organizational strategy that promotes pro-active problem solving and police-community partnerships to deal with crime and fear, as well as other community issues' (CAGCP, 2003, p. 1).[1] Trojanowicz (1994) lists a number of the primary features of community policing, including the following. First, community policing must reassess who is responsible for public safety. Ultimately, it redefines the roles and relationships between the police and the community.

Secondly, community policing requires cooperation in solving community problems that should involve a close partnership between the police and the community. Both must also participate in decision-making and accountability. Community policing establishes new public expectations and measurement standards for police effectiveness. These measures range from emergency response times and arrest/crime statistics to more non-traditional assessment of quality of service, customer (community) satisfaction, responsiveness to community defined issues, and cultural sensitivity.

Thirdly, community policing shifts the focus of police work from responding to individual incidents to addressing specific problems identified by the community in addition to those noted by the police. It emphasises the use of problem-solving policing (POP) to supplement traditional law-enforcement methods. It requires constant flexibility to respond to all emerging issues and is proactive in style. In essence, the community policing strategy attempts to address the underlying conditions that cause community problems in order to prevent crime. As such, community policing strategy requires knowledge of available community resources and how to access and mobilise these resources. Also, the police must sometimes actually develop new resources within the community.

Finally, community policing often decentralises police services, operations, and management. It relaxes the traditional chain of command and often requires commitment to developing new skills through training. Examples of such skills would include problem-solving, networking, mediation, facilitation, conflict resolution, and increased cultural competency and literacy.

Trojanowicz (1994, pp. 14–17) also added a spatial element to the definition of community policing: 'Community policing is a philosophy of . . . policing where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems.' Trojanowicz's definition suggests why community policing seems often to be accompanied by an organisational shift towards geographic policing.[2] Additionally, community policing practices rely relatively less on arresting offenders and more on developing long-term ways to divert offenders, protect likely victims, and make

the premises, overflowing trash dumpsters, and rodent and insect infestations.

As a result of the problems in East Arlington, a new police substation was built there. The police had also implemented a new geographic policing programme. Officers were assigned to specific geographic areas within the community. The officers were responsible for getting to know the citizens in their respective geographic areas and learning about their community concerns. The City Manager's Office believed that the COPS grant would be helpful for increasing the community skills of the officer assigned to that station, and therefore sanctioned the COPS grant. The plan was highly publicised in the community in a series of newspaper articles about the sector plan in September of 1997 (Autrey 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d, 1997e, 1997f). As a part of the new community policing efforts, the new police substation included a 'community room' that was available to citizens for community meetings.

East Sector Leadership Committee

In 1996, the Arlington City Manager's Office approached Ms Sue Phillips, a long-time resident of East Arlington and a community activist, for assistance in forming the East Sector Leadership Committee (ESLC). To facilitate this, the City Manager's Office implemented Community Partner Teams (CPT). Each CPT consisted of approximately 10 members who were composed of (1) residents of a particular sector of the city, (2) relevant city employees, and (3) at least one city employee who lived in the target neighbourhood. The CPTs were appointed by the City Manager's Office. In East Arlington, the original CPT at the start of the project consisted of a community resident as chair of the team, three other community leaders active in the Citizens on Patrol programme, one apartment manager, one local small businessman, three

representatives of the Arlington Police Department East Arlington division, one representative of the city's code enforcement department, and one representative of the City Manager's Office who resided in East Arlington.

The community leaders were selected from those community residents who were a part of the existing 'Citizens on Patrol' groups already in existence. Citizens on Patrol represented a number of city residents who had attended some training by the police department, and assisted them in certain ways. Most particularly they watched for suspicious activity and then contacted the police dispatcher via hand-held radio to come to the scene.

The purpose of the East Sector Leadership Committee was to help assess the problems and the resources of that sector. Ms Phillips was already a founding member and president of the group known as the East Arlington Renewal Committee that had been formed in 1992 in order to address community problems. Ms Phillips helped to recruit other community activists to the ESLC. Many of the most vocal and active of these members were already members of Crime Watch and Citizens on Patrol groups in East Arlington. In all, a group of 23 community residents and city employees were recruited to serve on the ESLC.

By 1997, the ESLC, working in cooperation with the City Manager's Office and other city services, had identified 31 major objectives that needed to be addressed in East Arlington. These needs had been identified by use of surveys and focus groups. One of the objectives was to target apartments and rental properties to reduce code violations and crime. A sub-objective was to explore mandatory crime prevention activities at apartment complexes through registration programmes.

The ESLC had already implemented a very proactive programme of renewal by

implementing a strong city code enforcement programme in East Arlington. This tactic was intended to encourage the managers and owners of the low-income apartment complexes to clean up and maintain a minimal level of service in their properties.

COPS PROJECT

The US Department of Justice's 'Call for Proposals' had specified that community problems had to fit into one of four pre-specified areas. The problem area that fitted the Arlington project best was 'loitering and disorderly conduct'. This problem had been identified because a high percentage of calls for service for the whole city originated from the East Arlington apartment complexes. Grantees were required to have a community partner, a condition the ESLC fulfilled. Grantees were also required to have external evaluators to assess the impact of the project. To meet this condition of the grant, the APD partnered with local university faculty members with experience in evaluation research and community service projects.

The grantees were required to use a community problem-solving approach to address criminal behaviours. Consequently, police departments were encouraged to use non-traditional methods of reducing the targeted crimes; that is, doing something other than increasing the number of police officers in an area and making more arrests. Instead, police were encouraged to identify and address the root causes of crime problems. The grantees were also required to use the 'SARA model' (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment). Each of the four phases of this project is discussed below.

Scanning phase

Scanning involves a process whereby police officers, working with community residents, identify and select the problem or problems to be addressed. The grant proposal, submitted by the APD to the COPS program, indicated that the problems of 'loitering and disorderly conduct' in the nine target apartment complexes were identified as problems based primarily on repeated calls for service at the apartments, and by officer observations of the problem. Three major sources of information confirmed that 'loitering and disorderly conduct' in these apartments were also perceived as a priority for the community. These three sources were: (1) calls for service from citizens for problems in the target apartments; (2) increased requests from the apartment managers for police storefront offices located in the complexes; and (3) 'consistent complaints' from the surrounding neighbourhoods (Arlington Police Department, 1997).

After the grant funds were received, the evaluators on the projects toured the nine target apartment complexes, as well as the general East Arlington neighbourhood, with the police. The evaluators noted that the majority of the homeowners in the area were white, while most of the apartment residents were Hispanic or African American. It thus seemed to the evaluators that at least a part of the problem might involve a conflict of cultures between these three groups, especially the whites and the other two groups. This perception was reinforced when the evaluators had the first meeting with the ESLC. During this meeting, the members of the ESLC repeatedly referred to the fact that:

- crimes were most frequently committed by the minority residents in the apartments; and
- Hispanic language and cultural barriers created problems in the apartments.

As a result, the evaluators added two anthropology faculty members to the research team — a male and female — with

expertise and experience in working with the Hispanic communities. Both of the new team members were fluent in Spanish. A graduate student in sociology at one of the local universities assisted with observations with the African American residents.

A second task to be accomplished during the scanning phase was to identify the relevant stakeholders. At the first meeting of the ESLC, all the community residents at the meeting were white (non-Hispanic people of European descent). They were also primarily homeowners. No apartment residents were members of the ESLC. The members present did include one apartment manager. The apartment complex she managed was reputed to be the best managed of the nine target complexes. She had a good relationship with the police at the East Arlington substation. Other members of the ESLC included a local businessman, police officers, a representative from the City Manager's Office, and a representative from the City Code Enforcement office.

During the scanning phase, the ESLC was concerned with how to incorporate apartment residents into the problem-solving process. Barriers that were identified to participation by the apartment residents included: (1) apathy on the part of the apartment residents, (2) lack of time to attend meetings in the evenings because of other work and family obligations, (3) language barriers for the Spanish-speaking apartment residents, and (4) fear of the police and/or fear of deportation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for the undocumented Hispanic apartment residents.

Fear of the INS was not unrealistic. During the project, the INS implemented a retroactive programme to identify immigrants — including those who were legal permanent residents of the US — who had three or more arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol and deport them. These convictions could have been as long

ago as 10 years. Many of the 400 immigrants in the state who were identified in the first week of the initiative had dependent wives and children who were left in the US after the offenders were deported (Trejo, 1998). Given the difficulty of getting apartment dwellers involved in the project at the outset, a major goal of the project was to find a way to involve this population in the planning, a goal that the project eventually was able to achieve, although not in the way the project leaders could have anticipated.

At the end of the scanning phase, the COPS programme held a national-level training session near Washington, DC. The purpose of this meeting was for the police/evaluator partners to help coordinate the evaluation of the projects across the 15 sites that had by then been chosen to be evaluated in depth. During that meeting, a major task was to develop a common definition of the problem to be evaluated; in this case, loitering and disorderly conduct. According to Curtis (1998), the following common definition was developed:

- Loitering and disorderly conduct include general disruptive behaviour in public places or behaviour not in public that affects public places or is *perceived* to affect public safety or public order.
- Loitering and disorderly conduct include behaviour that is disturbing, annoying, or alarming to the public and may include activities outside of criminal behaviour.

After lengthy discussion in this national COPS training session, an overall definition of loitering and disorderly conduct included a list of 22 specific 'core behaviours'. These behaviours included: drug use and/or evidence of drug use, graffiti, indecent exposure, loud and/or offensive behaviours, lower level street assaults, nuisance behaviours, obstructing the flow of vehicular

traffic, offensive or provocative behaviour, aggressive panhandling (begging), public congregation, public drug sales, public intoxication and or/consumption of alcohol, public urination or defecation, solicitation, suspicious persons and/or behaviour, trespassing, vandalism, verbal harassment and/or gestures, and weapon display.

Analysis phase

During the analysis phase of the project, the ESLC task was to attempt to analyse the loitering and disorderly conduct problem so that interventions could be tailored to fit the problem.

Methodology

The ESLC members, including APD officers and the evaluators, worked together to develop a three-pronged methodological approach to gathering information during the analysis phase, and again during the assessment phase. The three methodologies included: (1) collection of police data on calls for service, (2) collecting data from community stakeholders using focus groups, and (3) collecting information from the apartment residents using participant observation. Data were collected from all three sources during the analysis phase, and again in the assessment phase. It was hoped this would allow the ESLC to determine if the responses to the problems of loitering and disorderly conduct had produced any effects.

A simultaneous major new initiative for the APD, funded by the grant, was the purchase of a GIS (Geographical Information System) software package. The GIS software was able to record and analyse calls for service based on the type of 'crime' reported and the geographical location of the crime. These data could then be mapped to show patterns in time and space. A technical assistant was hired and trained

in the use of this system. Police data were coded using the 22 specific categories developed at the COPS workshop in Crystal City, Virginia.

Focus groups were then conducted with stakeholders who were known to perceive loitering and disorderly conduct as a problem in the apartments. These stakeholder groups included homeowners in the neighbourhoods, businesses near the apartment complexes, the police, and apartment managers. Two focus groups were conducted with homeowners ($n = 3$, $n = 5$), and one focus group was conducted with each of the other three groups — police officers ($n = 7$), apartment managers ($n = 5$), and business managers ($n = 3$). The ESLC members assisted the evaluators in the focus group process by developing questions, recruiting participants, and by participating in finding sites and interpreting the results.

Two of the evaluators who were familiar with Hispanic cultures from Mexico and Central America conducted participant/observation studies of the Hispanic apartment residents. A male was recruited to observe the Hispanic males and a female to work with the Hispanic women. An African American male conducted observations with the African American apartment residents.

Loitering and disorderly conduct

Table 1 contains a summary of the major problems as defined by each of the three methods. In the police calls for service, the major cause of calls for service was loud and/or offensive behaviour. Such problems had generated almost three times as many calls for service (159) in the six months before the grant began as did the second most common complaint. The second most common call for service was for suspicious persons and/or behaviour (59), with twice as many calls for this reason as for the third

Table 1: Major Loitering and Disorderly Conducy Activities as Defined by Each of the Three Methods, 1 October 1997–31 March 1998

APD Calls for Service	Focus Groups	Participant Observation
Loud/offensive behaviour (159 calls)	Noise/music (5 groups)	Alcohol abuse
Suspicious persons/behaviour (59 calls)	Criminal mischief/vandalism/graffiti (5 groups)	Property destruction
Vandalism (30 calls)	Litter (5 groups)	Trash
Lower level street assaults (25 calls)	Confrontational behaviour (4 groups)	
Public intoxication/consumption of alcohol (20 calls)	Alcohol (4 groups)	
Drug use/evidence of drug use (15 calls)	Offensive language (3 groups)	
Trespassing (11 calls)	Drugs (2 groups)	
Weapon display (10 calls)		
Verbal harassment/gestures (8 calls)		
Nuisance behaviour (8 calls)		
Public congregation (7 calls)		
Offensive or provocative contact (7 calls)		
Public drug sales (6 calls)		

most common reason. The next most common reasons for calls were vandalism (30), lower level street assaults (25), and public intoxication or consumption of alcohol (20).

In the focus groups, participants developed their own definitions of what was meant by 'loitering' and 'disorderly conduct'. Loitering was ultimately defined to mean 'hanging around, being in an area for no specific purpose or reason'. Disorderly conduct was defined as 'a disruption of the peace and tranquility of the neighbourhood that interfered with others' enjoyment of their neighbourhood'. It was also perceived to be 'a lack of respect and consideration for community and neighbours, a type of behaviour that leads to other crime, and creates a sense of uneasiness in others'.

The focus group participants reported that the three most common loitering and disorderly conduct (hereafter 'L/DC') problems with the residents of the apartment complexes were (1) noise and loud music, (2) criminal mischief (including vandalism), and (3) graffiti and litter. The next most commonly mentioned problems to emerge from the focus groups were: (1) confrontational behaviour and (2) public use and abuse of alcohol. Drug use and offensive language used by the apartment residents were also mentioned. The two groups of apartment residents that emerged as the predominant participants in loitering and disorderly conduct were: (1) adult Hispanic males, and (2) teenagers, especially boys, of all racial and ethnic groups.

The Hispanic males were reported to engage in loitering and disorderly conduct behaviours after 5 pm during the week as well as at the weekends. The teenagers were reported to engage in these behaviours before and after school hours. Both groups were reported to increase their rates of L/CD behaviours during warm weather. The Hispanic males were reportedly observed in parking lots and on apartment balconies, or, in the case of rental houses, in the front yards. The teenagers, by contrast, were

more transient. They often moved between apartment complexes, sometimes through fences that made it hard for patrol cars to follow. They also congregated around telephone booths, convenience stores, shopping centres, and car washes. The focus group participants reported that they believed that the reason for the L/CD conduct of the Hispanic males was that the patterns are a part of 'Hispanic culture'. The teenage behaviours were attributed to boredom, lack of parental supervision, insufficient parks, no public transportation, cost of recreational activities, and no teenage curfew in the city.

The observations by the participant observer researchers of the Hispanics in the apartment complexes revealed that alcohol abuse, property destruction and improper disposal of trash and litter were the major problems observed. The evaluator/observers reported that everyday use of alcohol and alcohol abuse are not normative behaviours in Mexico (where most of the Hispanic immigrants originated), and that such behaviour is considered offensive in Mexico as well as in the US.

The evaluators described the cultural patterns that are normative in a Mexican village and suggested that some of the behaviours that the Anglo homeowners and the police observed were being misinterpreted. For example, it is common in Mexican villages for men to gather after work in public areas of the village to socialise, to discuss events, and to solve community problems, such as helping the men find new or better-paying jobs (Rodeheaver, 1999). Drinking during these gatherings is usually reserved for holidays and weekends and typically occurs in public places rather than within the home. The home is reserved for cooking activities of the women, who often prepare food in a communal kitchen for consumption by a group of families. Lack of communal space in the apartment complexes, as well as in the city

in general, is frustrating for the Mexican immigrants.

Arlington is a large city of more than 250,000 people, located within a larger metropolitan area of nearly six million people, but it has traditionally rejected attempts to implement mass transit systems. The result is that residents are often not readily able to leave their apartment complexes. They use the public parking areas as a substitute for the communal space in the village square that they would have used if still in Mexico. The observers also pointed out that in Mexico, there are two kinds of public parks, one for families to use for picnics and children's activities, and a second park for male sports activities. The men find it frustrating that they do not have similar separate parks in the US and do not consider it appropriate to use school playgrounds for sports activities.

Finally, language creates a serious barrier for the immigrants. The men are not able to participate in city-organised sports because they only speak Spanish. Because they do not speak English well or at all, the women have difficulty getting jobs and shopping, as well as helping their children with school activities.

The observers also noted a circular migration pattern in some of the apartments, associated with a return to Mexico in December and January for religious holidays, and in the summer months for agricultural work at home. This creates seasonal periods of high and low occupancy in some of the apartment complexes. Stereotypes of the Mexicans in the apartment complexes held that they were transient. The researchers found that to a great degree this was untrue. Instead, each apartment complex tended to correspond to a separate village in Mexico. Many residents in each complex had lived in that complex with stable neighbours for many years. Some might return to Mexico seasonally, and take a new apartment when they returned, but

even then they typically returned to the same apartment complex they had been living in beforehand.

Fear of crime

Focus group participants were asked about their fear of crime as a result of loitering and disorderly conduct. There was consensus that the residents and staff of the apartments, as well as the homeowners in the neighbourhood, were afraid to report offenders because of a fear of retaliation. There was a general concern for the safety of children playing outside both within the apartment complexes and in the neighbourhoods. People reported that they were afraid to use public parks, that they routinely locked their doors when at home, and that they stayed home at night because of their fear of crime.

Quality of life

Focus group participants were asked about their quality of life in East Arlington as a result of the loitering and disorderly conduct. They reported that they believed that it made living and working in the community less pleasant. They believed that it had resulted in a decline of the reputation of the community. They emphasised that it limited the freedom of the community residents.

Financial costs of loitering and disorderly conduct

The focus groups participants were asked to identify the costs associated with the L/CD behaviours in East Arlington. Costs mentioned included decreases in property values, lower rental rates for rental property, cost to clean up trash and graffiti in affected neighbourhoods, loss of tax revenues to businesses, and expenditures of tax funds for police to respond to calls for service in the area.

Response phase

Data collected using the three methodologies were shared with the ESLC. Participants reviewed the data on the perceptions of the problem, and brain-stormed possible solutions to the problems they had defined. As a result of their analysis, the ESLC identified six problems and developed specific responses tailored to those problems.

Insufficient police coverage

Insufficient police coverage in the apartment complexes was identified as the first problem to be addressed. The Arlington Police Department began to use two-person patrols.

Lack of responsibility by apartment owners

While several of the apartment managers attended the ESLC meetings over the course of the project, the owners never did take an active part. Most of the apartment complexes were owned by absentee landlords or corporations. Many owners were disinclined to make improvements in their complexes. They seemed aware that the immigrant population was fearful of the police and INS and they, therefore, could largely ignore their dissatisfaction with poor housing conditions. The major implemented solution was for the ESLC to send letters to the apartment owners, explaining the project to them and inviting them to participate. The ESLC also began a 'secret shopper' programme, wherein members would anonymously go through a complex as if looking over the property to live there. They would make lists of inadequacies they identified. These lists were eventually shared with the managers. It was hoped that managers would then pressure the owners to make improvements. However, it was important to reassure the managers that it was the owners whom the police and code enforcement officials sought to pressure. Otherwise, managers would become

increasingly fearful of the police and the whole notion of community policing would be subverted.

Poor lighting and poor visibility of addresses within the complexes

Police officers and others often commented on the difficulty of finding the right address in response to calls for service from the apartments. In response to these problems, the ESLC recommended that the apartment managers improve the lighting around the complexes and improve the visibility of the addresses within the complexes. The apartment manager who served on the ESLC was instrumental in preparing written documentation that installing new lighting or upgrading ageing systems is often cost efficient and can save owners considerable money.

Insufficient parks, youth activities and transportation

The ESLC members discussed the need for more parks in East Arlington, especially parks for children and parks with soccer fields that the Hispanic men could use. They also noted that it was difficult for teenagers in East Arlington to get to other parts of Arlington to participate in recreation activities because Arlington has no public transportation. The Arlington Youth Services programme was approached to provide more transportation from the apartment complexes for the young people.

Lack of parental involvement

The ESLC noted that parents, particularly Hispanic parents seemed not to be very involved with their children's school activities. Some solutions that were discussed included fining the parents when the children got into trouble or calling Child Protective Services (sometimes called 'the welfare department') and having the children removed from neglectful parents.

Another suggestion was to develop parenting classes. Also mentioned was the idea of educating parents about the needs of their children, particularly the Hispanic immigrant parents who were unfamiliar with the norms and values of the larger community. The solutions that the ESLC actually implemented included development of a school programme to increase parental awareness of the problems of loitering and disorderly conduct among teenagers. They also suggested increased family activities in the community in general. However, the real breakthrough in the entire project occurred serendipitously at this point in the project.

Amigos en Azul

Officer Henry Hernandez, a bilingual sergeant of Mexican American heritage, had been assigned to the police storefront office for the apartments. The storefront was located in one of the apartment complexes. 'Storefronts' seek to place one or two officers in the community in spots other than police stations or patrol cars. Sometimes a vacant apartment was used.

The APD leadership believed that it would be helpful to have an officer with a Hispanic heritage to occupy this position, especially an officer who spoke Spanish. Officer Hernandez was asked to take on the assignment, but he had never been comfortable with his role in the storefront. He often commented in the ESLC meetings that he became a police officer so that he 'could fight crime, not be a babysitter'. As a part of his duties as a storefront officer, he was expected to work the evening shift, and to attend community meetings related to the daily lives of the residents of the apartment complexes. This involved attending Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at the local schools.

In the course of attending his first PTA meeting, Officer Hernandez discovered that the Mexican mothers in attendance could

not understand the presentations that were being given in English. To help them, he gathered them around him and he began translating for them. When they discovered he was bilingual, they began to ask him questions that they had not been able to ask anyone else. Officer Hernandez was touched by their genuine concern for their children and by the difficulties they had adjusting to life in this new country. As a result of that meeting, Officer Hernandez organised a group of more than 40 Mexican American officers. They created a volunteer organization known as *Amigos en Azul* ('Friends in Blue').

These officers began to volunteer their time to work with the young Mexican children and teenagers, to help them learn about the culture of the US, to get them organised into sports, to help provide them with Christmas gifts, and to help them appreciate the value of getting an education, especially a college education. Since its inception, this initiative has expanded to include faculty and students at one of the local area universities who are now volunteering to help the organisation

and to provide mentoring and financial aid to promising members of the immigrant community.

Impact Assessment

Impact was assessed using measures that were parallel to measures used in the scanning and analysis phases of the project. These included data from the police calls for service, focus groups, and participant observation reports from apartment residents.

Calls for service

Overall, calls for service for specific behaviours defined as loitering and disorderly conduct increased from 373 calls in the baseline period to 444 calls in the impact assessment period, as shown in Table 2. However, if one looks at the specific behaviours targeted by the Arlington community, the picture is more positive. Calls for service for loud and/or offensive behaviour, the most common call for service during the baseline period, decreased by 21.4 per cent from the baseline to the impact assessment period.

Table 2: Arlington Police Department Calls for Service

Behaviour	Baseline Measures 1 Oct. 1997–31 Mar. 1998 N	Impact Assessment 1 Oct. 1998–31 Mar. 1999 N	Per cent Change
Loud/offensive behaviour	159	125	–21.4
Suspicious persons/behaviour	59	80	35.6
Vandalism	30	57	90.0
Lower level street assaults	25	63	152.0
Public intoxication/consumption of alcohol	20	3	–85.0
Drug use/evidence of drug use	15	22	46.7
Trespassing	11	5	–54.5
Weapon display	10	9	–10.0
Verbal harassment/gestures	8	18	125.0
Nuisance behaviour	8	23	187.5
Public congregation	7	10	42.9
Offensive or provocative contact	7	6	–14.3
Public drug sales	6	1	–83.3

Another of the top five specific reasons for calls for service in the baseline period was 'public intoxication and consumption of alcohol'. Inappropriate use of alcohol had been one of the top five complaints from the community stakeholders' focus groups, and had been the major offence observed among the Hispanic male apartment residents by the participant observers. Calls for service for alcohol related behaviours were reduced by 85 per cent from the baseline to the impact assessment period. Other calls for service that decreased from the baseline to the impact assessment period were trespassing, weapon displays, offensive or provocative behaviour, and public drug sales. Calls that showed increases were suspicious persons and/or behaviour, vandalism, lower level street assaults, drug use or evidence of drug use, verbal harassment and/or gestures, nuisance behaviours, and public congregation.

Discussions with police officers indicated that they believed that the COPS model and increased police presence in the apartment complexes had made some residents feel more comfortable calling the police to report loud and disorderly conduct behaviours, thus increasing calls for service overall. This suggestion is consistent with many studies that show when relations with the police improve official statistics increase due to a greater willingness to report (Siegel, 2000).

Focus groups

Five focus groups were conducted in the impact assessment period with the same four groups of stakeholders as in the baseline period. Participants in the focus groups were kept as similar as possible in the baseline and impact assessment groups, with changes occurring only where key personnel had changed (the police) or a new player with a new agenda had become prominent (neighbourhood residents).

Perceptions of loitering and disorderly conduct

Most perceptions concerning loitering and disorderly conduct remained constant from the baseline to the impact assessment measures. During the baseline period, the predominant groups perceived to be engaged in L/DC behaviours were Hispanic adult males and teenagers. In the impact assessment period, three of the five groups (homeowners, police, and apartment managers) mentioned a new group — a white, transient adult male homeless population — as a significant part of the L/DC problem. Loitering by this group was centered on businesses, particularly businesses that sell alcohol, and temporary employment agencies.

Police officers involved in the project confirmed that there has been a very noticeable increase in homeless males in East Arlington due to the expansion of services to the homeless, and to the opening of temporary day labour offices associated with a religious charitable organisation in that sector. Day labour centers are places where men wait to meet employers who hire them by the day, so the men looking for work would be hanging around that office from early in the morning until evening. The police report that the residents affected by this problem were outraged and very vocal, more so than was ever the case with the L/DC problems in the target apartment complexes. They say that this is because the homeless population is much closer to the area in which the focus group participants themselves live, and therefore affects their daily lives much more than the behaviour in the apartment complexes.

Fear of crime

71 per cent of the focus group participants thought that their neighbourhood was safer as a result of the COPS project. Reasons cited by participants for the increased safety included added security, additional lighting

in apartments, apartment managers 'walking' their properties to-check on residents and behaviour, community involvement in solving the problem, increased community awareness of the problems of L/DC, increased communication with the police, and consistent responses to problems from the police.

Quality of life

For all five focus groups, there was the perception that there has been some improvement in the quality of life. Use of two-person police patrols in the apartments was evaluated very positively. The police officers said that the two-person patrols resulted in increased arrests because the officers were more willing to approach and arrest offenders in two-person patrols as compared with single-officer patrols. The police officers also said that the project had encouraged some of the least responsible apartment owners to sell their property to new owners. Officer Henry Hernandez's efforts to establish a police volunteer organisation to work with the Mexican youth was evaluated particularly positively by all the participants.

Participant observations

Apartment residents

The observers found that the residents in the apartments in East Arlington continue to reside in what may be described as 'ethnic enclaves'; groupings of residents, based on kinship and on communities of origin in Mexico. They state that 90 per cent of the residents of apartments in East Arlington are Hispanic. The observers found that the Hispanic apartment residents were never aware of the COPS project. In spite of frequent suggestions by the evaluators that this would be a desirable strategy, apartment residents were never brought into the community problem-solving process and never attended meetings of the

ESLC related to COPS.[5] The inability of the apartment residents to correlate the COPS programme culturally with anything within their cultural knowledge base, coupled with the fear or retribution over their participation, remained strong despite the presence of Latino police officers, improved services within their apartment complexes, and conversations with the anthropologists on the project. This is not an uncommon problem in urban areas where a distinct cultural neighbourhood is not visible and Mexican immigrants remain on the periphery culturally, linguistically, and politically. The general consensus of the residents of the apartments who were interviewed is that there had been no change in crime or in the quality of their lives over the 18 months of the project. Some residents noted that there seemed to be more of a police presence than before, although the apartment managers and custodial staff were more aware of this change than the residents. In general, the apartment residents stated that they were most concerned with making a decent living and 'getting by'. When there were specific complaints, they tended to draw more attention to problems associated with housing conditions.

Arlington Police Department

The observers believe that the police have developed a deeper appreciation of the complexity of the issues of cultural diversity in East Arlington. The observers made three major observations about the effect of the COPS project on the APD. First, there was an increased police presence in the neighbourhoods and this presence was perceived by many residents to be less hostile. Secondly, the project created and established new links and opportunities between the APD and the concerned neighbourhood residents and apartment managers. Thirdly, the project provided the opportunity for the foundation of the 'Friends in Blue' organisation initiated by Officer Henry Hernandez

which was leaning towards the creation of primary social control from within the immigrant population.

East Sector Leadership Committee

The observers noted that the ESLC was not successful in bringing the Hispanic apartment residents into the community building process. The observers believed that this was because the apartment residents were different culturally and ethnically from the ESLC members, and that the Hispanics were predominantly Spanish-speaking. The observers did note a certain amount of hostility toward the immigrants from some of the ESLC members. As pointed out by one of the anthropologists on the research team, the dominant culture in any situation almost always tries either to expel or isolate a population that is different, and failing this they try to absorb them through cultural assimilation. The response of the stakeholder groups as represented by the focus groups is entirely consistent with this observation. There was little recognition that the Hispanic population group would soon become the most numerous ethnic group in Texas and that this may require accommodation rather than assimilation in the long run.

CONCLUSIONS

The COPS project in East Arlington was successful in a number of ways. First, the project was largely successful in developing a community problem solving model that included community residents, the police, and other civil servants, working together to try to solve community problems at their source, using non-traditional solutions.

Secondly, the project was successful in getting the changing race and ethnic composition of East Arlington on the public agenda. For example, one Anglo homeowner who had been particularly intolerant of Hispanic immigrants at the beginning of the project was subsequently overheard lecturing other community homeowners on Mexican culture and their (the homeowners') need for cultural tolerance.

Thirdly, at least one successful volunteer organisation has been formed by the Hispanic police officers, showing promise of bridging the cultural barriers between the Anglos and Mexican Americans on the one hand, and the new Mexican immigrants on the other. Organisations like 'Amigos en Azul' can help young immigrants and their parents in the process of adaptation and assimilation. The 'Amigos en Azul' project is reaching out to other partners that can potentially increase its success, including a local university with a strong commitment to increasing the educational attainment of the Hispanic population in the local area. This university has recently opened a Centre for Mexican American Studies and the new Director has taken a genuine interest in Officer Hernandez's work.

As noted above, a major strength of this project is that it occurred within the context of a larger effort at urban renewal in the city of Arlington that has broad-based political and community support. Because of that support, this project did not end when the COPS grant ended, but continues to affect the planning process in East Arlington.

Many police departments in the US are not yet involved in community-oriented and problem-oriented policing. The current study suggests that COP/POP approaches are valuable additions to the traditional set of tools available to the police. Traditional law enforcement is not well designed to address many of today's peacekeeping difficulties. This is especially true of those difficulties that arise because of rapid social change and pervasive increases in social diversity. While traditional policing models cannot, and should not, be abandoned in preference solely for COP/POP

approaches, police administrators and political officials ignore these new tools at the peril of their overall success.

However, in spite of certain successes, there were limitations. First, only one officer was involved in the programme. No additional police resources were used in the programme, nor could more resources be brought to bear for fiscal reasons. Secondly, the 'homeowner' residents (ie, stakeholders) in the ESLC were predominantly white, while the 'apartment' residents were mostly Latino. None of the apartment residents was included as a member of the ESLC. These Anglo homeowners/'stakeholders' made the decisions in concert with the police, with no input from the apartment residents. Thirdly, the methodology was different for the stakeholders who participated in focus groups; whereas the Latino apartment residents were 'observed' and, whenever possible, questioned by researchers.

While the current study is geographically narrow in scope, the findings should nonetheless be highly meaningful in many locations around the globe. The pace and magnitude of global migration is increasing rapidly around the world. Police in many places will be increasingly confronted with problems that do not grow out of deviant or inadequate personal socialisation, mental disorder, or individual greed. Instead they will confront more and more public order and peacekeeping issues arising out of new confrontations between long-established cultural traditions that will clash in new and unexpected ways. The use of COP/POP methods has the potential to identify such cultural discomfitures and plan interventions to deal with them early. Surely this is better than waiting until after the worst has happened and the only choice is to respond with the traditional, and less desirable policing methods.

END NOTES

(1) The origins of community-oriented policing may be traced to the work of criminologists, Herman Goldstein (1990) and Robert C. Trojanowicz (1994). For example, in 1983, Trojanowicz founded the National Center for Community Policing at Michigan State University and served as its director until his death in 1994. Trojanowicz wrote several textbooks outlining community policing, culminating in his 1994 book.

(2) Geographic policing refers to the use of crime mapping and analysis of data from these maps. This is combined with assigning officers to areas on a geographic basis ('natural areas' in the Chicago School urban sociology). For a detailed online description of geographic policing, see Burton (2002).

(3) Much of the following discussion is based on earlier reports which may be found in Eve et al. (1998), Eve, Burton, et al. (1999) and Eve, Eve, et al. (1999).

(4) SARA is an acronym standing for the four stages of problem-solving projects: Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment (US Department of Justice, 1996).

(5) We suggest that this may be a major flaw in this project's design. The 'homeowner' residents (ie, stakeholders) in the ESLC were predominantly white, while the 'apartment' residents were primarily Latino. No apartment residents were included as members of the ESLC. These stakeholders made the decisions in concert with the police. The stakeholders were surveyed as part of focus groups. The Latino apartment residents were 'observed' and, when possible, questioned by researchers.

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