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INVESTIGATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY POLICING CONTEXT

Executive Summary

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FINAL REPORT

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INVESTIGATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY POLICING CONTEXT[1]
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mary Ann Wycoff and Colleen A. Cosgrove[2]

As with many current issues in community policing, concerns about the investigative function and detectives are not new, and not simply generated by the adoption of the community policing philosophy. Rather, they represent old issues brought back into focus by current rethinking about police service delivery.

Questions about the nature and structure of the investigative function constitute a central concern for administrators who are implementing community policing. The concerns are both substantive and political. Substantive questions address what the investigative function should encompass, who should perform it, and its relationship to citizens and other police personnel. Political questions pertain to redefining the roles for detectives and other personnel who may be involved in the investigative process. Detectives are commonly a highly organized workgroup-often perceived as conservative, insular and elitist and subsequently, administrators who attempt to change investigators' roles often expect to encounter substantial resistance to change.

When agencies consider new models of police service, questions pertaining to the role and function of detectives or investigators always arise. Because there are no easy answers, managers of change are looking

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for guidance on how the investigative function should be performed in a community policing context, and how to manage the change in a way that will not cause organizational turmoil.

Mike Masterson,[3] previously a detective bureau manager, has written:

While there has been a considerable amount of literature written on community policing, most of it has overlooked the important goal of getting everyone in an organization working together to create safer living environments and improved service to our citizens. For the most part, emphasis on the investigative functions and its contribution to those goals has been largely ignored. Has it been done deliberately to avoid the resistance of a deeply ingrained culture and the intolerance to change by vociferous, fiercely independent, and highly talented individuals?

Detective recalcitrance notwithstanding, there is a larger question of what the investigative function should be in a community policing context. Does the largely reactive role that detectives play traditionally represent the full potential of the investigative function? Or is a proactive approach, in which police anticipate crimes and work to prevent them or to intercept the criminals, more appropriate? Then there are coactive operations in which police, citizens and other agencies work together to prevent crime and control criminogenic conditions in the community. Is this a better model? It is evident that a primarily reactive investigative function supports only one element of community policing. What might the investigative function look like if it were designed to support the full range of community policing efforts?

The research reported here was designed to address these issues and fill an important gap in our knowledge about community policing implementation. This project considered three main questions:

1.   How are community policing agencies structuring the investigative function?

2.   How are they integrating the investigative function with other police services?

3.   How have they managed/are they managing the change process within this function?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was divided into two parts. The first portion consisted of a national mail survey of municipal police departments and sheriffs offices in all jurisdictions with populations of more than 50,000 *and*

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[3]Masterson, Michael F. (1995). *From Polarization to Partnership: Realigning the Investigative Function to Serve Neighborhood Needs.* Unpublished manuscript.

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100 or more sworn officers.[4] These selection criteria were based on the assumption that agencies with these characteristics would be large enough to have an investigative unit consisting of more than a handful of staff. Surveys were sent to 483 municipal departments and 405 were completed, producing a response rate of 83.9 percent. Completed surveys were received from 197 sheriffs offices, a response rate of 64.6 percent. (See footnote 4.)

The survey collected descriptive information about whether departments had implemented community policing, the organization of their investigative function, and the ways in which the investigative organizational structure or function may have been modified to accommodate a community policing approach.

Sixty-eight (12.4%) of the departments reported having implemented community policing *and* instituting some major changes in the definition or structure of the investigative function. To aid in the selection of sites for more in-depth study, this grouping of 68 departments was reduced to 41 by restricting eligibility to agencies that had at least 30 investigators, and that had implemented major changes at least two years prior to the survey. The number of investigators was set at 30 because the research team believed that a smaller number would limit the types of innovations that would be possible, thus restricting what might be learned from site visits. The two year time-frame helped ensure that the agencies had sufficient experience with changes in the investigative function to understand the process' strengths, weaknesses and results.

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[4]While it was easy to identify sheriffs offices that met the initial selection criteria, PERF anticipated that several of these agencies had neither patrol nor investigative functions. Rather, in some jurisdictions, the responsibilities of the sheriffs office are limited to certain court functions, maintaining the jail and executing warrants. Unfortunately, we were not able to identify these agencies in advance. Therefore, in the survey packets sent to the sheriffs, we included postcards asking the respondents to return the postcards if their agencies did not have patrol and/or investigation functions. Questionnaires were sent to 355 sheriffs offices, and 26 agencies returned postcards indicating that they were ineligible for the survey. Twenty-four other agencies were excluded as we obtained additional information. This reduced the sample population to 305 agencies, of which 197 (64.6%) completed the survey. Although this response rate is high, we would likely have obtained a higher rate if we had been able to identify eligible agencies with greater accuracy.

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The research team read each of the forty-one questionnaires and narrowed the candidates for site visits to fifteen. Telephone interviews were conducted with persons at each of these sites and a final selection was made of seven sites that represented innovation and advanced implementation. Site visit protocols were developed and sites were assigned to teams of two (a researcher in combination with a practitioner). Site visits typically lasted two days. Each site visit resulted in a written report that was drafted by one team member and then reviewed and revised by the other. The individual site reports are available as Appendix C of the project's technical report.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey produced a rich body of data that is available through NIJ's data archives. For the purposes of this project, however, the survey was conducted in order to identify the sites to be visited. The findings reported here are limited to those variables used for site identification.

Community policing implementation. Almost all (95.8%) of the responding municipal agencies reported that they have implemented or are implementing at least some aspects of community policing, compared with 80.7 percent of the sheriffs offices.

Extent of implementation. There was substantial variation in the extent to which survey agencies have implemented community policing, and the differences between the municipal agencies and sheriffs offices were marked. Among municipal police agencies that indicated they had implemented community policing, 52.3 percent reported that they were "three-quarters of the way" or "most objectives have been accomplished," compared with 33.9 percent of the corresponding sheriff respondents. Of agencies engaged in the community policing process, sheriffs offices were more likely still to be in the planning or early implementation phases. Specifically, as Table 1 indicates, 8.5 percent of the municipal agencies reported that they were in the beginning stages, compared with 21.4 percent of the sheriffs offices.

The nature of the community policing approaches is outlined in Table 2. Among the departments that identify themselves as community policing agencies, 67.8 percent say that community policing is "a

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Table 1. Extent of Implementation of Community Policing (N=547)

	Municipal		Sheriffs		Total	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Planning	4	1.0	4	2.5	8	1.5
Early Phase	29	7.5	30	18.9	59	10.8
One Quarter	47	12.1	23	14.5	70	12.8
Half Way	83	21.4	38	23.9	121	22.1
Three Quarters	75	19.3	16	10.0	91	16.6
Most Objectives Accomplished	128	33.0	38	23.9	166	30.4
Other	22	5.7	6	3.8	28	5.1
Missing	0	0.0	4	2.5	4	0.7
Total	388	100.0	159	100.0	547	100.0

Note: This table provides data only for departments that indicated that they had implemented community policing.

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philosophy that guides most department activities." Municipal departments are more likely to report that the entire agency is guided by the philosophy (71.6%) than are sheriffs offices (58.2%). Municipal departments are slightly more likely to report that all personnel are expected to engage in community policing (80.2%) than are sheriffs offices (74.7%). And municipal departments are slightly more likely to report that investigative personnel are expected to engage in community policing (55.2%) than are sheriffs offices (49.4%).

Redefining the role of detectives/ investigators. Table 3 illustrates that, among agencies that have implemented community policing, 14.4 percent indicated that they had made some major changes and 20.1 percent reported that they had made some initial changes in terms of redefining the role of detectives/investigators. Thus, more than a third of these agencies (34.5%) had implemented changes. Among sheriffs offices, 21.3 percent reported making either initial changes (13.8%) or major changes (7.5%). A small proportion of the municipal agencies (7%) and sheriffs offices (6.3%) stated that they were actively planning the redefinition and restructuring. Approximately 17 percent (17.3%) of the municipal agencies and 23.9 percent of sheriffs offices reported that this matter was currently under consideration. About one out of four municipal agencies and sheriffs offices indicated that their organizations had not yet considered redefining the role of detectives/investigators.

It is interesting to note that comparable proportions of the municipal agencies and sheriffs offices (17.8% and 18.9%, respectively) agreed with the statement, "We have considered this issue and concluded that the investigative function as currently defined and structured supports the organization's community policing goals."

Table 4 reports the current forms of organization of the investigative function in municipal and sheriffs agencies that identify themselves as engaged in community policing. While sheriffs offices are less likely to report having made major changes in the structure or function of investigations, Table 4 indicates that sheriffs offices are more likely to report that:

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Table 2. Summary of Responses on Features of Community Policing (n=547)

Questions	Municipal % (N)	Sheriff % (N)	Total % (N)
Philosophy that guides most department activities	71.6% (278)	58.2% (92)	67.8% (370)
Primarily a program	20.9% (81)	34.8% (55)	24.9% (136)
Implemented only in a section	22.9% (89)	20.9% (33)	22.3% (122)
Specific officers assigned to community policing	58.2% (226)	62.7% (99)	59.5% (325)
Community policing officers assigned to a unit	46.9% (182)	44.3% (70)	46.2% (252)
All officers expected to engage in community policing	74% (287)	70.3% (111)	72.9% (398)
Investigative personnel expected to engage in community policing	55.2% (214)	49.4% (78)	53.5% (292)
All personnel expected to engage in community policing	80.2% (311)	74.7% (118)	78.6% (429)

Note: This table provides data only for departments that indicated that they had implemented community policing.

Table 3. Department Status Regarding Redefining Roles of Detectives/Investigators (N=547)						
	Municipal		Sheriff		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The matter has *not yet been considered*	87	22.4	40	25.2	127	23.2
We *currently are considering* this matter	67	17.3	38	23.9	105	19.2
We are in the process of *actively planning* the redefinition or restructuring	27	7.0	10	6.3	37	6.8
We have implemented some *initial changes* in the definition or structure of the function	78	20.1	22	13.8	100	18.3
We have implemented some *major changes* in the definition or structure of the function	56	14.4	12	7.5	68	12.4
We have considered this issue and concluded that the investigative function as currently defined and structured supports the organization's community policing goal	69	17.8	30	18.9	99	18.1
Missing	4	1.0	7	4.4	11	2.0
Total	388	100.0	159	100.0	547	100.0

- investigative functions are shared between patrol and investigative bureaus/divisions;

- certain investigative functions are physically decentralized and investigators are assigned specific geographic areas;

- most detectives/investigators are generalists and investigate a variety of incidents; and

- detectives/investigators report to an area commander who is responsible for all police operations in a specific geographic area.

As we shall see in the next section, these arrangements are among those that characterize agencies that report having made major changes in the structure or function of investigations. It is likely that the necessity for sheriffs offices to cover large geographical areas has resulted in the structuring of investigations in ways supportive of community policing even before community policing was adopted as an operational philosophy. As a result, sheriffs offices may have had less need to make major changes in order to support community policing.

MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND SITE SELECTION

After reading the questionnaires for each of the forty-one eligible agencies[5]; the research team discussed and categorized various characteristics of the investigative function that could be identified from the survey. The most prominent difference among these forty-one had to do with the physical structure of investigations as reported in Figure 1. Investigators were either physically centralized or physically decentralized. Other important differences included area vs. city-wide responsibility and bifurcated vs. unified chain of command. In a bifurcated chain of command, physically decentralized investigators report through an investigative chain of command while patrol officers report through a patrol chain of command. In a unified chain of command, everyone assigned to the geographic area reports through the area commander. Four models or "clusters of changes," representing these three factors were identified among the forty-one sites. A fourth factor, identified as generalization vs. specialization of investigative assignments, is

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[5]Having more than 30 investigators and having made changes at least two years prior to the survey.

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Table 4.	Organization of the Investigative Function in Community Policing Departments			
		Municipal (N=388) % (N)	Sheriffs (N=158) % (N)	Total (N=546) % (N)
Organizational Structure				
Almost all investigative functions are located within the investigative bureau/division		76.8% (298)	69.6% (110)	74.7% (408)
Most investigative functions are located within the patrol division		4.9% (19)	5.7% (9)	5.1% (28)
Investigative functions are shared between patrol and investigative bureaus/divisions		25.5% (99)	40.5% (64)	29.9% (163)
Location and Assignment				
Most investigative personnel are *physically centralized*		39.4% (153)	47.5% (75)	41.8% (228)
Most are *physically centralized* and have *citywide* responsibilities		47.2% (183)	30.4% (48)	42.3% (231)
Most investigators are *physically centralized,* but they may work *specific geographic areas*		24.5% (95)	25.3% (40)	24.7% (135)
A core of investigators is *physically centralized,* and is responsible for *specific types of crimes* of a *citywide nature*		51.3% (199)	41.1% (65)	48.4% (264)
Certain investigative functions are *physically decentralized*		22.2% (86)	26.6% (42)	23.4% (128)
Certain investigative functions are *physically decentralized* and investigators are assigned *specific geographic areas*		11.6% (45)	23.4% (37)	15% (82)
Certain investigative functions are *physically decentralized,* and investigators are assigned *specific geographic areas* and *specific types of crimes*		21.1% (82)	32.9% (52)	24.5% (134)
Specialization				
Most detectives/investigators are generalists and investigate a variety of incidents		39.4% (153)	50.6% (80)	42.7% (233)
Most detectives/investigators are specialists and investigate specific types of crimes within their area of expertise		52.6% (204)	39.2% (62)	48.7% (266)
Most *centralized* investigators are specialists, while most *decentralized* investigators are generalists		14.2% (55)	16.5% (26)	14.8% (81)

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Rank			
Detectives/investigators have a rank or pay scale equivalent to patrol officers	60.6% (235)	49.4% (78)	57.3% (313)
Detectives/investigators have a rank or pay scale above patrol officers	41% (159)	52.5% (83)	44.3% (242)
Relationship with Patrol			
Patrol officers have *no* investigative responsibility other than taking the initial report	15.7% (61)	8.9% (14)	13.7% (75)
Patrol officers *may* have investigative or follow-up responsibilities that extend beyond the initial report	82.2% (319)	89.2% (141)	84.2% (460)
Detectives/investigators work in teams with patrol officers	14.7% (57)	16.5% (26)	15.2% (83)
Detectives/investigators with specific geographic assignments function as part of the patrol operation	8.5% (33)	10.8% (17)	9.2% (50)
Chain of Command			
Detectives/investigators report to an area commander (e.g., precinct or division commander) who is responsible for *patrol* operations in a specific geographic area	6.2% (24)	13.3% (21)	8.2% (45)
Detectives/investigators report to an area commander who is responsible for all police operations in a specific geographic area	3.6% (14)	14.6% (23)	6.8% (37)
Detectives/investigators with specific geographic assignments report through an investigative chain of command	17.3% (67)	17.1% (27)	17.2% (94)
All detectives/investigators, regardless of geographic location, report through an investigative chain-of-command	83.8% (325)	74.7% (118)	81.1% (443)

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represented in the sites selected for visits but is not explicit in the four models set forth in Figure 1--a decision made solely to simplify the models. It is important to remember as one reads this report that these models may not apply to the entire site. In some jurisdictions, particularly those with large investigative units, various combinations of centralization/decentralization, geographic assignment and chain of command may be used. These types of organizational structures are "mixed models." For example, the Mesa, Arizona Police Department divides investigators into four divisions, only one of which has physically decentralized detectives. The other detectives are physically centralized although many are responsible for specific geographic areas. So, the four models are best viewed as heuristic devices rather than as literal descriptors of the current world of investigations.

The research team then rated the forty-one sites in terms of their "interest" and innovativeness and narrowed the list of site visit candidates to fifteen agencies. Telephone interviews were conducted with persons at each of these sites and a final selection was made of seven sites (Figure 1) that were considered to best represent innovation and advanced implementation.

Figure 1: Structural Models for Seven Selected Sites		
	Structure	**Sites Selected**
1	Physical centralization of detectives who have citywide responsibilities	No sites selected[6]
2	Physical centralization of detectives; Assignment to specific geographic areas	Arapahoe County Colorado Sheriffs Office[7]
3	Physical decentralization of detectives who report through an investigative chain of command	Mesa, Arizona Police Department Sacramento, California Police Department Spokane County, Washington Sheriffs Office
4	Physical decentralization of detectives who report through area command	Arlington, Texas Police Department Boston, Massachusetts Police Department San Diego, California Police Department

OBSERVATIONS FROM SITE VISITS

The site visits confirmed that departments have adopted a variety of innovative methods for integrating investigative and patrol operations. The visits expanded the researchers' knowledge about the kinds of changes that have been made. Beyond the structural and procedural changes represented in the four models, additional procedural changes were observed and a group of functional changes also was identified. The visits provided considerable insight into the organizational, administrative and logistical problems confronted by detectives.

The changes are discussed below by type of change. Examples are provided from selected sites of changes that may have occurred in other sites, as well.

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[6]No site was selected for this model since it is a common structure, involving no changes that might provide new ideas for other agencies.

[7]Only one department was selected to represent this model because it tended to be less of a "mixed" model; the dominant structural innovation was the key feature. In Model #3 and #4 there tended to be other changes in various combinations with the main structural feature.

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Structural Changes

Physical Decentralization. The primary structural change involved the physical decentralization of investigators from a central location (typically, police headquarters) to area or district stations where investigators and patrol officers had closer contact with each other and the opportunity to have closer and more frequent contacts with citizens. Physical decentralization was always paired with responsibility for crimes in a geographically specified area of the city or county. With the exception of the Arapahoe County, Colorado Sheriffs Office, all of the visited sites made use of physically decentralized investigators; all of the sites except Arapahoe county retained some centralized investigators who handled special types of crimes.

Chain of Command. Among the six sites in which at least some investigators have been physically decentralized, there are three in which the decentralized investigators report through an investigative chain of command (Mesa, Arizona; Sacramento, California and Spokane County, Washington) and three in which decentralized investigators report through an area command (Arlington, Texas; Boston, Massachusetts and San Diego, California).

Procedural Changes or Developments

Many sites had not only made structural changes, but had also modified procedures; they were performing investigations differently. These changes or modifications were grouped into seven categories: 1) area responsibility, 2) generalization, 3) teamwork, 4) prioritization of cases, 5) involvement of citizen volunteers in investigations, 6) interagency linkages, and 7) technology. The following sections highlight examples of these changes, as observed during site visits, without including all of the sites that may use these procedures.

Area Responsibility/Geographic Assignment. In all seven of the sites, at least some investigators have responsibility for investigating crimes in a specific geographic area. In most cases these investigators are physically decentralized. In the Arapahoe County, Colorado Sheriffs Office, investigators are physically

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centralized but have responsibility for specific geographic areas and are in close contact with patrol officers who work those areas.

Generalization. Some detectives, whether physically centralized or decentralized, are crime generalists who investigate a wide variety of crimes that occur in their areas of responsibility. In all cases, investigators with area responsibility handle property crimes but in many sites (e.g., Arapahoe County, Colorado; Arlington, Texas; Boston, Massachusetts; Mesa, Arizona; San Diego, California), assaults and street robberies are also assigned to area investigators. In one district in San Diego, the street drug unit, too, is assigned to the area commander.

Proponents of generalization contend that criminals tend not to specialize in specific crime types and therefore detectives should not. In the Arapahoe County Sheriffs Office, all investigators are generalists. This agency has invested substantial time and financial resources in investigator training, with an emphasis on cross-training for different types of crimes. The investigative personnel interviewed report that the emphasis on generalization coupled with geographic assignments has been very successful. Arapahoe County detectives believe that fewer criminals are "slipping through the cracks" now that detectives are focusing on area crime patterns rather than crime types.

Teamwork (Officers, Citizens, and Agencies). In some agencies, detectives work in either formal or informal teams with officers, citizens, and/or other agencies. In Arlington, Boston, San Diego and Arapahoe County, for example, the teams are formal. Officers and detectives on the "team" may or may not have the same supervisor (i.e., participants may report through different chains of command), but detectives know "their" patrol officer and officers know "their" detective. The arrangement in Arlington is interesting in that there is an area team sergeant and an investigative sergeant. Both sergeants report to the area commander. The area sergeant directs activities for the whole team; the investigative sergeant functions more as a coach, trainer, facilitator, and subject matter specialist for the investigators. The patrol sergeant and the detective

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sergeant both attend community meetings. In Spokane County, Washington informal groups of detectives and citizen volunteers have become teams because they work in the same small neighborhood office.

Case Prioritization. The Spokane County Sheriffs Office was the only site visited where detectives are changing their system for prioritizing cases. Property detectives are assigned to neighborhood storefront offices staffed and managed by neighborhood citizen volunteers. The detectives' goal is to become community-oriented and problemoriented rather than case-driven. Rather than prioritizing cases based solely on solvability factors, they are attempting to identify neighborhood problems and to give priority to cases related to the underlying problems and community concerns. These detectives read all property crime incident reports for their area and prioritize their own cases. In this way, the detectives develop a more in-depth understanding of crime patterns and trends than if the sergeant screened and prioritized cases. Additionally, in some instances, citizen associates in the storefronts also read the cases and provide second opinions about the problem-relevance of particular complaints.

In this jurisdiction, centralized homicide, sex crime and drug/gang detectives also prioritize their own cases. This approach allows for a problem orientation that is difficult to achieve when cases are assigned according to solvability factors alone, or by a supervisor who may not be familiar with a neighborhood's particular problems and crime patterns. It must be noted that when the self-assignment system began, property crime detectives tended to take on too many cases and become overloaded-a tendency well-known to officers assigned to neighborhood stations or storefronts. As they became more familiar with this procedure, however, they were better able to manage their caseload.

Citizen Volunteer Involvement in Investigations. In both Spokane County and San Diego, citizen volunteers assist detectives in investigations. For example, these community members may lift prints from stolen/abandoned automobiles that previously may not have been processed. They may also photograph graffiti or make follow-up calls to victims to inform them of the status of their cases or to seek additional

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information. Additionally, they may attend community meetings and work on citizen surveys. In Spokane County, citizen volunteers assist some detectives in establishing investigative priorities.

Interagency Linkages. Interagency drug task forces and other collaborative efforts designed to address drug problems are now common in many departments, including the visited sites. However, certain sites have applied this strategy to other crimes as well. The Mesa Police Department provides an excellent example. Two detectives from this department were instrumental in researching and obtaining city council and grant funding for what became the Center Against Family Violence (CAFV). This unit, operated by the police department, provides an aggressive, proactive, multipronged approach to handling cases involving physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence and, in some instances, elder abuse. Several detectives with expertise in domestic violence investigations and related matters are assigned to this unit. These detectives work closely with civilian victim services personnel who provide immediate, on-site intervention and long-term counseling. As part of this program, the detectives have established strong links with both the city and county prosecutors' offices, private therapeutic programs, area doctors and hospitals, and the state Child Protective Services. Anecdotal and interview data gathered during the site visit suggest that CAFV provides a systematic, humane and effective method for handling these very difficult situations. The cooperative efforts between the police department and the prosecutors have enabled these agencies to develop strong cases resulting in high conviction rates and, in certain cases, substantial prison sentences.

Technology. All of the departments visited are on the brink of major technological advances, many of which were funded by grants from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) of the U.S. Department of Justice. When the new systems are in place, detectives and officers in recipient agencies will have crime analysis capabilities that were previously not available to cash-strapped crime analysis units. In San Diego, for example, all officers and detectives will have laptop computers that facilitate automated field reporting. They will also have access to geographic information systems (GIS) capabilities that will allow

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them to conduct their own analyses of the data for their areas. Additionally, many of the problems often associated with decentralization-being outside the information/communications loop, having to file reports at headquarters, not having access to crime analysis data-will be solved. Detectives will be able to retrieve the information they need through the computer, and e-mail will provide for fast and easy communication. Other departments are upgrading their computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems and reconciling and integrating disparate manual and automated databases. The Mesa Police Department is acquiring Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) software for tracking evidence as it is processed through the crime laboratory, the identification unit, and into evidence storage. Arlington, Spokane County and Arapahoe County are also introducing highly sophisticated data entry and retrieval systems.

In the interim, some agencies have made more effective use of currently available technology. In Arapahoe County, voice mail, pagers and cell phones have greatly enhanced communication both between officers and detectives, and among detectives. Both groups indicated that they were more likely to share the "small" pieces of information when they could simply leave a message, rather than having to search out the person they needed to contact.

Functional Changes and Developments

In contrast to procedural developments--detectives conducting investigations in a new or different manner-the term "functional developments" refers to tasks that detectives may not have undertaken in the past. The site visits revealed a number of functional changes that were to support community policing. These can be grouped into two often interrelated areas--1) problem solving and 2) community outreach and crime prevention--which, together, represent the core elements of community policing. It should be emphasized that these functional areas may not be new to a police department or a sheriffs office, but they may be new to detectives. Moreover, in some instances, detectives may have assumed responsibilities that had previously been assigned to another specialized unit. While a number of the visited sites have implemented one of

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these functional changes, three sites were particularly noteworthy: the Arapahoe County Sheriffs Office, the Mesa Police Department, and the Spokane County Sheriffs Office.

Problem Solving. In most of the visited sites, the primary problem-solving function is assigned to the patrol division, with detectives expected to assist. In the Spokane County Sheriffs Office, however, detectives have been given the primary organizational responsibility for problem solving. Detectives were assigned this function because the administration believed detectives had the most flexible schedules and the most complete and readily accessible information (all the case reports) about crime problems in any given area. Some property detectives have been decentralized to neighborhood storefronts and are attempting to select cases for investigation using priorities that reflect the problems of greatest concern to the neighborhoods in which they are working.

While detectives in the Arapahoe County Sheriffs Office do not have the primary organizational responsibility for problem solving, the department has developed an innovative approach called the "45 Day Plan" to promote problem solving by investigators. Detectives are encouraged to submit plans to conduct research, investigate an unsolved case, or focus on an identified problem. If the plan is approved by the captain, the detective is freed from the regular caseload for up to 45 days to implement the plan. Other detectives assigned to that geographic area will assume the problem solver's caseload for the requisite period of time.

Community Outreach and Crime Prevention. Many police departments and sheriffs offices throughout the country have detectives actively engaged in community outreach, often through attendance at community meetings. The sites visited were no exception. One dramatic example of outreach is the pairing of detectives with citizens in Spokane County's storefront offices, as discussed previously.

Additionally, detectives in several of the project sites are participating in a broad range of crime prevention activities. For example, detectives in the Mesa Police Department have assumed responsibility for

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a number of "crime free" projects. As part of the Crime Free Housing program, the detectives organize

property owners/managers or residents in multi-unit housing and educate them about their roles in preventing

crime and quality-of-life problems. Additionally, the detectives provide program participants with training in

the principles of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). Interviewees stated that this

project's success is reflected in the 70 to 80 percent reduction in calls for service from certain properties. The

"crime free" approach provided the framework for the Crime Free Mini-Storage program, designed to address

problems of burglary and the existence of drug labs in mini-warehouse (rental storage) units. This program

was designed by detectives and signaled the introduction of community-oriented policing principles into the

Criminal Investigation Division. Again, detectives trained owners and managers of mini-storage facilities in

CPTED principles, and in the first year of the program, burglaries dropped 86 percent. This approach is also

reflected in the department's Crime Free Mini-Warehouse program and the Crime Free Hotel/Motel program.

The Arapahoe County Home Check program is another example of a crime prevention program that

focuses on interventions other than arrest, and provides an alternative to placing young offenders in the

juvenile justice system. Specifically, the detective deputies have received court authorization to implement

the Home Check program for juvenile offenders who are "at risk," including youths who are suspects in active

cases, have active warrants, or are identified as repeat runaways, habitually truant, or "wanna be" gang

associates. Detectives make "cold calls" during the evening to the youths' homes to discuss their problems

with them and their families. The detectives may provide referrals to counseling or other social service

agencies, or may require that the youth perform community service or make restitution. The detectives also

identify the associates of the at-risk youths and visit them as well, informing them that they are known to the

sheriffs office and warning them of the probable consequences of their behavior. This program is designed as

a form of "caring intervention," and interviewees indicated that many parents and targeted youths have been

grateful for the contacts and the referrals. Arapahoe County Social Services, County Probation and the

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district attorney's office participate with the sheriffs office in this collaborative effort. The Sheriffs Office views the program as a successful prevention and intervention effort that has resulted in reductions in juvenile criminal activity and the number of juveniles arrested.

Community education efforts are often part of crime prevention and community outreach programs. An Arapahoe County detective assigned to a specific neighborhood launched an initiative that combined all of these elements. This neighborhood had school-related traffic problems, and the residents formed a council to lobby for greater assistance from local authorities. The detective attended a council meeting and taught participants the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) model of problem solving. Following this training, citizens used this model to address their traffic problem, with some technical assistance from the sheriffs office. The detective explained, "We help people change their habits so that the [sheriffs office] is part of the solution, not *the* solution. We teach the citizens to do for themselves." Mesa's various Crime Free projects are another example of community education used as a central element of the problem-solving process.

Training and Cross-training. This third new "function" has developed in some of the sites to support the problem solving and crime prevention functions. In decentralized settings in which detectives have specific geographic assignments, an informal training process often evolves whereby detectives and patrol officers train each other. Specifically, detectives can educate or train officers in the types of information they should be collecting to assist in various types of cases, while officers can educate detectives about the assortment of crime problems, suspects, and victims in their area. An interesting variation on this theme is provided by Spokane County, where a neighborhood prosecutor and a neighborhood detective share the same office and exchange mutually beneficial information about evidence retrieval, evidentiary standards and case-building techniques.

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As another example, when the detectives in Arapahoe County became generalists in 1992, they were initially cross-trained, and property investigators were then paired with persons investigators for on-the-job training. Moreover, all investigators receive training in community policing and problem solving.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In considering these conclusions, it is important to bear in mind that this study was descriptive in nature and did not attempt to conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of any of the changes observed. Instead, the objective was to describe innovative approaches to the structural, procedural and functional aspects of the investigative process that appeared to be effective in the seven sites included in the research.

Structural Changes

Physical Decentralization. There are things lost and things gained with physical decentralization. Physical decentralization enhances the advantages of the procedural change of geographic assignment by promoting a sense of "turf" and proprietorship. It provides the opportunity for in-depth knowledge of crime patterns, local suspects, and 'good people" in the community who may assist in the investigative process. It also contributes to a sense of shared ownership on the part of patrol officers and detectives, which should increase levels of cooperation and facilitate team-building. Detectives, like patrol officers, may feel greater satisfaction in seeing their efforts contribute to the welfare of an area with which they identify.

But these advantages are not cost-free. Physically decentralized detectives may feel isolated at an outpost, separated from the mainstream of detective work, especially if they perceive their prior success as dependent on close interpersonal communication with other detectives. They almost surely will lose some ease of within-group communication. There is good reason to expect that this loss of peer information will be offset by other sources of information, including a detective's increased familiarity with an area, its problems, its residents, its resources, and its trouble-makers. The detective will also benefit from increased contact with

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patrol officers, community members and other service providers in the geographic area of responsibility. These new contacts do not happen overnight, however, and until they are established, the newly decentralized detectives will probably feel that their resources are diminished.

Decentralized detectives may also need to drive long distances to deliver routine reports to a central office, attend meetings or line-ups, and obtain crime analysis data that would be available if they were at headquarters. Some believe that they are out of the "information loop," or "out of sight, out of mind." Interviewees indicated that they may miss out on training opportunities, including the opportunity to learn from more experienced colleagues. They may miss opportunities to participate in larger scale investigations that may aid their individual investigations and professional development. And they fear that citizens will suffer if detectives lose or fail to see information about perpetrators who range across district boundaries

Computer technology plays a major role in the loss/gain equation for decentralization, and will play an even greater role in the near future. Almost all of the departments visited are in the process of installing powerful information and communication systems that will give all personnel-patrol officers and detectives, centralized or decentralized-astonishingly greater and faster access to information and to each other. Most detectives have not even begun to envision the potential of these systems. Information about career criminals involved in a variety of criminal activities and operating across district boundaries will not be lost. It will become easier for certain analysts to be assigned the responsibility of analyzing these criminals' movements. Until such systems are in place, however, decentralized detectives who must invest substantial travel time to do their work may feel they are wasting time they could be spending on cases, or may fear they are losing valuable information. Are these costs offset by ready access to patrol officers and local information? It probably depends on the department. But it is almost certain that new technologies will soon minimize these physical location problems in many departments.

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In very low-tech settings, the problem of transferring reports between sites can be addressed by assigning couriers (citizen volunteers, perhaps) who make regular runs between department facilities. If a department does choose to physically decentralize before implementing new information and communication technology, managers need to anticipate the burdens of physical separation and devise ways to address these problems.

Chain of Command. Among departments with geographic assignment and/or physical decentralization, some have a separate chain of command for investigators, while others have a unified, area-based chain of command through which both patrol and investigative personnel report. The disadvantage of a bifurcated or dual chain of command is the difficulty it poses for developing unified objectives for a geographic area. In one department, decentralized detectives were on guard against the area commander using them for "his purposes." Clearly they felt conflicted about which boss to serve. The possible disadvantage of a unified chain of command is that investigators may be left on their own, without a supervisor who has had investigative experience. Arlington appears to have solved this problem by using investigative sergeants as facilitators, coaches, trainers and content specialists for investigators. The area (or patrol) sergeant may have more to say about what gets done by the team; the investigative sergeant helps investigators do the job better.

Procedural Changes and Developments

Degrees of Decentralization. In departments in which some detectives have been physically decentralized and/or given geographic assignments, the crimes most commonly associated with these structural arrangements are property crimes, although this varied across the departments in the survey and site studies. Arapahoe County has assigned all crimes geographically; some have geographically assigned and/or physically decentralized most crimes, and others have geographically assigned and/or physically

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decentralized only property crimes. The crime investigation types that are most commonly centralized are homicides, robberies, sex crimes, juvenile crimes, and fraud.

Sex crimes seem to pose the greatest challenge for geographic assignments. One department reported that centralization of sex crime investigations is required by state statute. Juvenile crimes pose similar issues.

Degrees of Generalization. In most of the sites, investigators assigned to geographic areas were area specialists and crime generalists. The "degree" of generalization depended on the agency; all except Arapahoe County still retain a group of centralized specialists, although the crimes defined as "special" vary across agencies.

Interviews during site visits left the strong impression that generalist detectives enjoy being generalists-not only for the variety this approach brings to their work but also for the sense it gives of providing a wide range of service to the community. They also tend to believe that few of the criminals operating in their districts are specialists; they see them as opportunists willing to commit a variety of crimes. The few complaints raised about the generalist approach tended to come from specialized investigators who may have felt the need to champion and protect the value of their special roles. For example, some centralized specialists suspected that generalists, if given a choice, would prefer to spend their time on the more exciting personal crimes to the neglect of property crimes. We heard of no data to support or refute this argument but, certainly, good supervision at the area level could control this tendency if it were to develop.

Functional Changes and Developments

The survey data suggest that, to date, most efforts to integrate investigations into a community policing approach have involved changes that are physical (decentralization) or procedural (geographic responsibility). Mesa, Spokane County, and Arapahoe County were selected for site visits largely because they reported changes in the functions of at least some detectives, but they are exceptions rather than the

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rule. Most other agencies have not yet explored functional changes, but it seems likely that more such innovations may result from physical and procedural changes. As detectives become more closely identified with small areas and begin to work in teams with officers who are expected to be community-oriented problem solvers, they may come to see for themselves the potential for broader functions. This appears to have happened in Mesa and Arapahoe Counties. The nontraditional activities that detectives have undertaken resulted from detectives being in a better position to see the needs and to know the needy.

Training. Detectives and investigators need to receive training in the principles, strategies and tactics of problem solving and community policing if they are expected to incorporate these practices into the investigative process. They need information not only about the operations of detective units in other jurisdictions, but also about investigative and programmatic approaches to address specific problems such as domestic violence, gangs and quality-of-life problems.[8] Although training may be expensive, labor intensive and time consuming, the benefits derived may be substantial and greatly enhance an agency's capacity to address community concerns.

Finally, Is There One Best Model?

Is there one best model? Probably not. This exploratory research was not intended to provide an evaluation of whether one model is preferable to another. However, based on the site visits, the approach that combines physical decentralization and area responsibility reporting through an area command appears to be an especially strong one. It promotes a coordinated approach at the local level (e.g., district, precinct), investigator knowledge of the territory, consistency and continuity in case and problem priorities, and information sharing and teamwork between and among investigators and patrol officers. The sense of identification with an area and its people may heighten a detective's motivation. Still, detectives may perceive

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[8]A substantial amount of literature containing practical information about programs in these areas is available free of charge from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (www.ncjrs.org) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice. Additionally, detectives/investigators may obtain a great deal of practical information from site visits to other agencies or through peer-exchange programs.

a disadvantage to this model if they feel that physical and/or reporting separation places them outside the information loop and perhaps deprives them of equal consideration for choice assignments and other rewards within the investigative division.

With regard to specialization, the "detective as generalist" model has the advantage of broadening an investigator's knowledge of a geographic area and may also provide more varied and interesting workloads for many investigators. In Arapahoe County, it was also a way of equalizing the workload between persons detectives and property detectives. Nevertheless, the value of generalization may depend on the jurisdiction's volume, type and geographic distribution of crimes, and whether an agency has the financial and personnel resources for the necessary cross-training. The "detective as generalist" model need not be a "pure" model; several departments have given area-specific investigators broad general investigative responsibility while retaining a group of centralized detectives who are specialists in certain types of crimes.

In general, it appears that the value of any of these approaches depends on the department's characteristics, its goals, and the community it serves. In a small community, where physical decentralization may not seem necessary to ensure accountability and quality service, detectives might remain physically centralized but be given area responsibility and a unified chain of command through an area commander. A bifurcated chain of command might work if *the separate commands are in accord*, as appears to be the case in Arapahoe County, Colorado. Some cities are geographically large, therefore, physical decentralization of all basic police services may be appropriate. In these settings, decisions about the chain of command issue should probably be based on a review of the department's goals. If decentralization of investigators is done for the primary purpose of making them more effective at what they have always done (i.e., the investigation of crimes), then two chains of command may not be dysfunctional. Detectives can associate more easily with officers, citizens and others who are knowledgeable about the community, thereby expanding sources of

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information-all within the traditional investigative chain of command.[9] If the primary reason for decentralizing detectives is to create an area-based service team that is working together to prevent crimes, solve crimes, and provide both a better and broader police service, then it seems critical to have an area commander who has control over all of his or her resources. Unity of purpose and effort is difficult to achieve within the context of a bifurcated chain of command.

Resistance to Change

The kinds of changes observed are not made easily. However, it is apparent that not all detectives are resistant to change, and many may be less resistant than some police chiefs and sheriffs expect. Specifically, the research indicates that some detectives not only welcome changes in structures, procedures, and functions, but may even initiate changes themselves to address perceived departmental deficiencies in responses to crime and quality-of-life problems. Moreover, while change in some agencies was met initially with skepticism or resistance, many detectives not only adjusted, but several agreed that they did not want to go back to the traditional approach. Thus, detectives are willing to change and, when provided with the opportunity (or mandate) to modify procedures or functions, they will adapt.

Change is easier, of course, when personnel are prepared for it and are given a rationale for the new approaches. In one of the most graceful transitions in this study, Arapahoe County detectives initially were prepared by being given articles to read about community policing and problem solving. They were engaged in this reading while officers in the patrol division were actively involved in the transition. Detectives began to wonder where they would fit into the overall community policing picture so that, by the time organizational attention was turned to them, they were unsurprised and were intellectually prepared for change. This

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[9]In one site, geographically decentralized detectives who reported through the investigative chain of command appeared to be confused and frustrated by lack of clear direction. They felt the need to "protect" themselves from what they considered the area commander's inappropriate expectations.

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preliminary preparation was then strongly reinforced with formal training in both community policing and problem solving.[10]

Careful preparation might help alleviate the stresses and strains of change. In many departments, patrol officers have been included in the process for planning the transition to community policing. It would be a good idea to include detectives in this same process. If, as is the case in many departments, patrol has made the move to community policing before the decision has been made to incorporate investigations, detectives can be part of this second planning process. It could be beneficial, if budget allows, to have some detectives visit one or more of the sites included in this study.

Recommendations

With this project, we have only begun to explore an area that is ripe for additional research. As indicated previously, the work of this project has been descriptive and does not represent an effort to evaluate the new approaches that were identified-beyond indicating some of their apparent strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation research would be a logical next step.

There is a need to develop new types of performance measures to capture some of the work being done in the seven sites in this project. But, even in the absence of new measures, it would be useful to evaluate these new approaches in terms of traditional measures of investigative performance, for instance, crime rates, arrests, case closures, time to closure, and convictions. Within sites and over time, these rates could be compared for property and persons crimes to see whether the new deployment strategies are resulting in differential handling of cases. At the same time, some measures of the quality of cases should be incorporated into this research, including the number of informants identified and the amount of information

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[10]In contrast, in another department (not one of the sites visited), several months after decentralization, detectives were still asking with genuine concern, "But what do you want us to do differently?" The change was made because department leaders believed that decentralization provided structural support for community policing. Many detectives in this department supported the idea of decentralization for patrol, but had not been given a sufficient rationale for their own decentralization. As they moved into the change, they could only imagine the disadvantages, not the advantages, for their job performance.

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provided about suspects. In jurisdictions in which detectives are working on prevention and alternatives to arrests, there would be the reasonable expectation that arrest rates would decline over time and explanations should be provided for these changes.

Much more attention could be given to determining the extent and nature of the involvement of detectives in problem solving than was possible in this project. An important question is whether they are better suited to be primary problem solvers or to work in a support capacity with patrol officers.

Surveys should be done in selected sites to determine levels of victim satisfaction with the new approaches. These could be especially interesting in communities in which some areas already are being served by physically decentralized investigators while other areas continue to be served by centralized investigators until additional decentralized facilities can be constructed.

Personnel surveys could be conducted to assess patrol officer and detective responses to the ʻanges.

There have been as many questions as answers identified in the current project, and the next generation of research could provide significant information about these important issues that are of great interest to police managers.