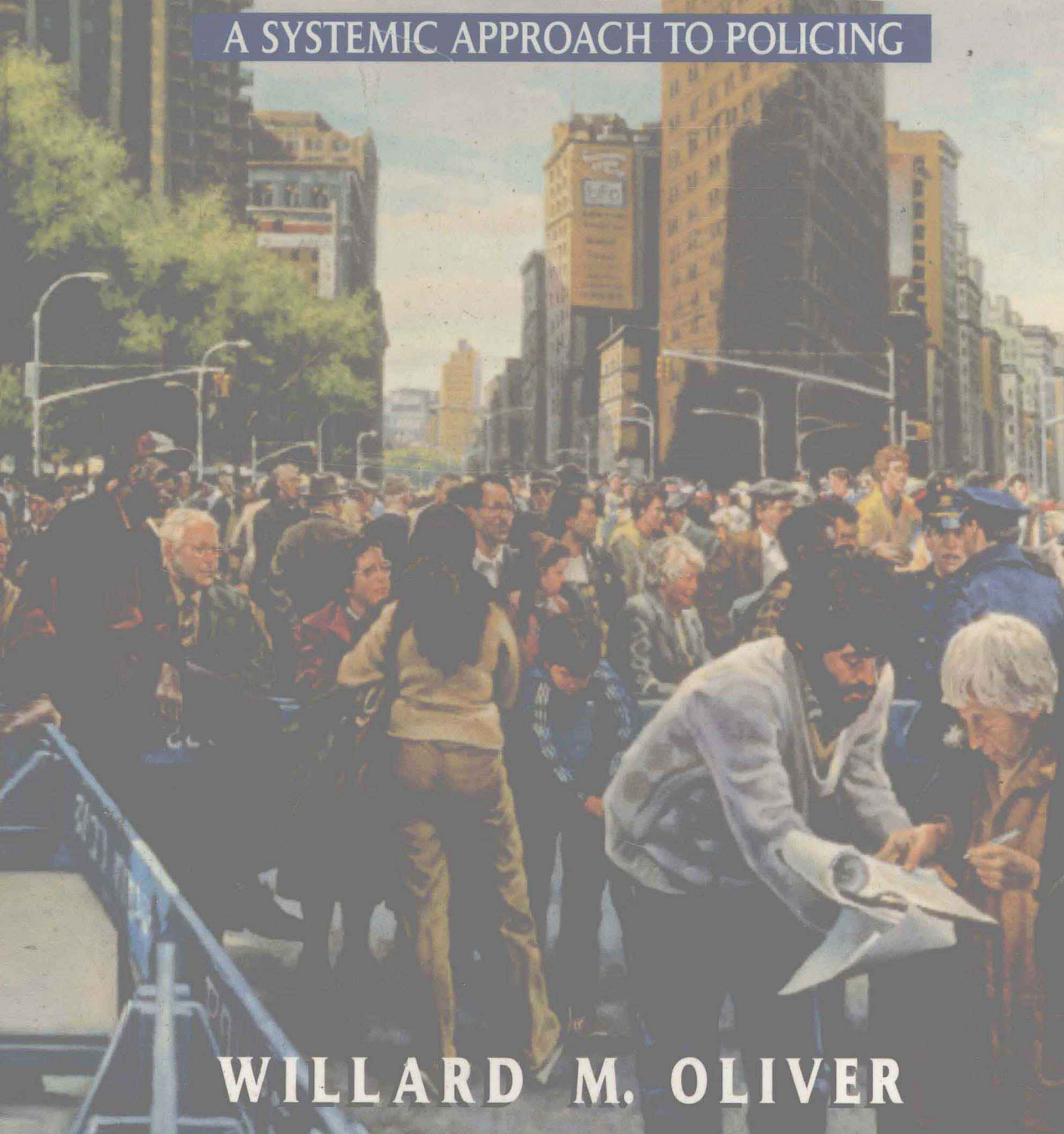


COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO POLICING



WILLARD M. OLIVER

COMMUNITY- ORIENTED POLICING

A Systemic Approach
to Policing

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GLENVILLE STATE COLLEGE



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*Dedicated to my beloved wife Judy,
who most importantly is my best friend,*

and

To Paul, who in death, through God, gave life

FOREWORD

No doubt, the concept of community policing has been riding a tidal wave of popularity in recent years. Nor has that momentum been overlooked in textbook publishing. Authors eager to join the community policing bandwagon have been churning out a proliferation of books. But just as there may be as many different variations of community policing as there are departments implementing it, the quality of publications on this topic also varies widely.

It is no exaggeration to state that this book stands out among a very few of the community policing efforts that have captured my highest levels of praise and admiration. In over thirty years of reviewing and editorial advising for Prentice Hall, I have rarely seen a manuscript surface and survive that measures up to the standards which this author sets. Not only is the subject an extremely timely one, but more importantly, the author addresses the uniqueness of community-oriented policing, while still acknowledging that it also embraces many “common sense” and “traditional” ingredients. While some would promote community policing as the virtual panacea for all social ills, Professor Oliver takes a more rational, balanced approach. He teaches, but does not preach, the message.

Moreover, he has done a masterful job of explaining community policing’s historical evolution, rationale, strategies, pilot programs, areas of responsibility, implementation techniques, ideals to be accomplished, and even how to evaluate these programs to determine when and if we are succeeding. Simply put, no other text on the topic is as comprehensive.

This book combines the best of all worlds—for those who require historical perspective, it is precise; . . . for those who want an update on progress, it is detailed and illustrative; . . . for those who ask “So what else is new?”, it firmly speaks to an inventive philosophy that is interwoven into the efficient but often unbending institution that we have all come to know as our modern police structure.

Police departments are to many of us the same as our young children were as they were maturing. We care deeply about them, we have learned to live with their shortcomings, and we have tried hard to grasp the adjustments they have had to make as society molded them. They, in turn, worked to adapt themselves to outside pressures, changing environments, and higher expectations. This textbook grasps how those changes occur, without ever losing sight of the many diverse roles of the police and how the community never quite agrees on how they should be accomplished.

In my manuscript reviews, I typically have commented that the material is fine for a practitioner, but lacks the academic rigor or the proper level of references to serve as a textbook. On the other hand, manuscripts often lack realism and relevance, even though they might be heavy with research citations. Or even more frequently, the narrative lacks the thoroughness and breadth of scope to truly address the subject completely. None of these drawbacks are found in this text. In Professor Oliver's *Community-Oriented Policing*, one finds all of the necessary ingredients to state without hesitation that this book combines knowledge, understanding, insights, and realism. It provides an encyclopedia of information about this most significant and widely heralded development in law enforcement.

If community-oriented policing accomplishes everything that its advocates anticipate, its current tidal wave of popularity may well stabilize to become a solid foundation underlying the transition of American policing into the twenty-first century. But perhaps most significant is the promise it holds for propelling the momentum to raise policing to the status of professionalism that has been so elusively sought during the last half of the twentieth century.

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PREFACE

Community-oriented policing is truly an idea whose time has come. Research and application over the past twenty years have moved the idea from explaining the past failures of team policing, to a method that could avoid these past pitfalls, to a viable, but crude method in the 1980s, to the successful and detailed practices of the 1990s that have caused many to deem this the community-oriented policing decade. There is little doubt that this paradigm in policing has captured the attention of both citizen and police, mayors and police chiefs, state government and national government officials, and has worked its way into becoming a household name. The dilemma of understanding arises in how community-oriented policing is defined and what the paradigm entails. It is to this end that we must now set our sights.

Perhaps one of the first debates over this approach lies in questioning if it is “old wine in a new bottle” Critics of this paradigm have thus argued it is early-twentieth century policing glorified and that turning back the policing clock would prove detrimental to both the profession and the citizens served. These critics seem to miss the fact that it is more than just making a new case for the methods, practices, and procedures utilized by the police today, but rather, it is argument for changing the way we think about policing, both from the perspectives of the police and the community. Abraham Lincoln perhaps said it best, “As our case is new, so we must think and act anew.” We recognize that the current case for promulgating community-oriented policing is new, what we on many occasions have failed to do, both from an academic and practical standpoint, is allow ourselves to think and act anew. Although the nostalgia, a consistent trend in all organizations, may exist in policing, community-oriented policing is not a push backward, but rather a rapid movement forward regarding the mission of the police and how they perform their duties. Yet, despite this realization, the questions continue to linger as to what specifically is community-oriented policing?

A key debate within the central understanding of the systemic approach to policing is whether community-oriented policing is a philosophy or a program. The argument on the side of a philosophy is rooted in the premise that in order for the systemic approach to be fully functional it must grow from a conceptual framework from which all the actors can adhere to mutual principles, but retain the freedom to ad-lib. The argument on the programmatic side is rooted in the understanding that methods employed by the actors must be more substantive and should therefore be put forth in a script with written parts for each actor. The argument can be further broken down into whether or not community-oriented policing is a concept for the way we think about the police or for actions garnering the policing. It is an argument between the theoretical and the practical.

In order to delineate between the importance of the two, it is important to reach an age-old method of issue resolution: compromise. Theory, often in its true form, ignores the practical application, thus negating the possible benefits derived from a theory. Practical application, in turn, often ignores theory, thus negating the benefits that can be derived from a guiding theoretical construct. The consensus lies in the commitment for both the theoretical and practical to coalesce into a synthesis that supersedes the ontological perspectives, thus creating a mutually beneficial relationship. The synthesis can then be utilized for the proposition of a conceptual framework, from which to guide the systemic application from the theoretical to the practical.

Community-oriented policing, as a systemic approach to policing, is in fact the realization of this synthesis. It incorporates both the theoretical and the practical into the overall framework, thus allowing for the maximization of benefits. It must start as a new philosophy, a new way of thinking about the role of the police in society, and it must be enacted through new and various programs that adhere to the philosophical premise. This, then, is the primary emphasis of this book. It is an attempt to weave both the theoretical and the practical, as well as combine the various interpretations of the systemic approach, into one concept under the banner of community-oriented policing.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK'S CONTENTS

The first chapter is a historical review of police and community relations since the formation of the United States. Although other authors have attempted to analyze the eras of policing from a strict police perspective, this chapter analyzes the relationship between the two parties and places them into eras indicative of the type of relationship occurring at the time. A review of history from this perspective, it is largely historical, and that is acceptable, for it allows the reader a better understanding of the different relationships we are now entering into under the auspices of community-oriented policing.

Chapter 2 is then the guiding chapter for the rest of the book in that it attempts to provide a clear understanding of what community-oriented policing is and how it is defined, in both theoretical and practical terms. The construct

of the chapter shares a three-pronged process that was assembled to reach a definition of community-oriented policing. It reflects the multitude of definitions and explanations that have surfaced in the academic literature for the past fifteen years, which covers both theoretical constructs and research methodologies. It reflects the practical applications covered in various journals and magazines, and synthesizes the definitions and actions implemented by police departments across the United States under the auspices of community-oriented policing. And finally, it would not be a factual representation if I were not to state that the third prong is the inclusion of this author's understanding and definition of the systemic approach based upon my experiences as a police officer and the community-oriented policing programs I have had the fortune to witness. The culmination of this three-pronged approach has revealed many consistent themes throughout the academic literature, the practical literature, and my own experiences. Community-oriented policing can then be defined as:

... a systemic approach to policing with the paradigm of instilling and fostering a sense of community, within a geographical neighborhood, to improve the quality of life. It achieves this through the decentralization of the police and the implementation of a synthesis of three key components: 1) strategic-oriented policing—the redistribution of traditional police resources; 2) neighborhood-oriented policing—the interaction of police and all community members to reduce crime and the fear of crime through indigenous proactive programs; and 3) problem-oriented policing—a concerted effort to resolve the causes of crime, rather than the symptoms.

The next four chapters then concentrate on expanding the definition, by breaking down each component into its own chapter, along with one additional chapter that explains how the three become synthesized into one framework: community-oriented policing. Chapter 3 is a more detailed explanation of strategic-oriented policing and all of the potential methods the police can employ to achieve this component. Chapter 4 is an overview of the many types of police and community programs that can promote interaction and communication between the two actors to understand the quality-of-life benefits that can be derived from this cooperation. Chapter 5 defines the component of problem-oriented policing and draws heavily from the works of Herman Goldstein (academic) and John E. Eck and William Spelman (practical). Chapter 6 is then an overview of how the three components are integrated into the systemic approach of community-oriented policing. Chapter 6 also includes three case studies of a large-, medium-, and small-sized police department and demonstrates how they have implemented the three components as they relate to the systemic approach.

Chapter 7 then provides an understanding of how the systemic approach to policing will mandate systemic changes to both the organization of the police department and the management methods employed. It specifically details how the police department must decentralize by geography, personnel,

and by its structure to achieve the true benefits of community-oriented policing, and it reviews the varying types of management practices that complement the systemic approach, specifically Total Quality Management (TQM).

The next three chapters detail the role of the three key actors involved in ensuring the success of community-oriented policing: the police, the community, and the police chief. Chapter 8, on the role of the police, gives wide coverage to the changes that must be made to move traditional police officers to community-oriented police officers. As the police are the street level implementors of the philosophy and programs under the systemic approach, they are a key link to the overall success of community-oriented policing. However, because the systemic approach is geared toward the community, it is readily apparent that the community's role in community-oriented policing is equally important. Their role is detailed in Chapter 9 and provides an understanding of what is meant by "community" and how past attitudes of not getting involved in police matters can be overcome. Chapter 10 then provides the key link to the relationship between the police and the community and that is the role of the police chief in community-oriented policing. This role, as a result of changes in the police, community, and organizational and management structures, must also change to accommodate the synthesis of philosophy and practical applications. It is important that the chief become a dynamic member of the community and that the chief's office provide the impetus for the systemic approach.

Chapter 11 then sketches a rough outline for implementing the systemic approach to policing. Community-oriented policing is a profound change to police practices of the past, therefore it is not a "program" that can be implemented overnight, but rather one that must see a gradual and incremental form of implementation to ensure its success. Each department will see variations on their community-oriented policing methods as a result of endogenous variables, exogenous variables, and the differences that account for both space (location of the police department) and time (the current development of the police department); each department will then see a different time line for their implementation of the systemic approach.

Chapter 12 proves to be the most daunting of the chapters, but it highlights the fact that evaluations under community-oriented policing are crucial to the success of this paradigm. The evaluation process must not be limited to one actor, but made a part of the everyday duties of the police and can include surveys of local citizens, police officers, and local government employees. As the systemic approach is implemented in an incremental fashion, these surveys become part of the evaluation process and provide the necessary information for the police, citizens, and police chief to make the determination as to whether a particular program or policing method should be continued, deleted, or altered in some way.

Chapter 13 covers many of the "caveats" that go with implementing community-oriented policing. These caveats are based upon the various failures of past policing experiments and recent failures with community-oriented policing. In reviewing this information, it provides an insight into why certain programs have failed in the hopes that these methods will not be repeated in future

implementations of the systemic approach. Hence, these are not in actuality problems for the implementation process, but rather caveats, making the police department that decides to shift to this new paradigm aware of the many possibilities for failure.

In turn, Chapter 14 speaks of the future benefits that police departments may receive when implementing community-oriented policing, as well as the overall benefits that have already been achieved. It also delves further into the future to discuss many of the potential benefits and provides some discussion for how police departments can plan for the future, today.

Chapter 15 is then a summary conclusion that discusses further why community-oriented policing should be implemented and why it is considered a systemic approach to policing. It is at the same time a review and a preview of what lies in the future for policing regarding both the philosophy and practical application of community-oriented policing.

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I must say I was stunned to discover how long the process of writing and producing a textbook takes. By the time you are able to read these words, it will have taken almost three years of my life. What is perhaps even more stunning is the number of people who have allowed me to get where I am. In thinking about everyone who assisted me either overtly or covertly, I am overwhelmed by their generosity and hope that I can satisfactorily name them all, and I must immediately apologize to those I fail to mention . . . you are not forgotten.

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Willard M. Oliver
Glenville, West Virginia

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