

## **A Proposal for an Enlarged Range of Policing: Neighborhood-Driven Policing (NDP)<sup>1</sup>**

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The purpose of this article is to stimulate dialogue about potential evolutions of the current models of policing. Before we proceed to lay out the model, two caveats are in order. First, the discussion of NDP is intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. It is our goal only to expand the existing range of choices rather than to recommend any particular choice. Such decisions, in our view, belong properly to the affected neighborhood. Each neighborhood gets, or should get, the opportunity to make its own choices and to live with the consequences of those choices. Second, these models are points on a continuum. We do not see, nor do we foresee, any pure cases in what passes for real life. As with most models, reality will dictate when theory yields to practice.

Robert Peel's oft-repeated maxim, "that the police are the public and that the public are the police" (Peel, 1822) has yet to be fully embraced by mainstream policing. Most policing activity, in the U.S. and elsewhere, remains centered on official discretion, official action, and official assessment/evaluation. The neighborhood is the primary locus of action and sometimes a source of information. In spite of the most recent philosophies espoused by police leaders, the neighborhood drives policing activity only rarely, and then not systematically.

At present there are two primary competing models of policing. One, variously entitled "combat policing" (Levin, Myers, and Broadfoot, 1996) or "traditional law enforcement," focuses on suppression of crime. Its primary virtues are apparent clarity and simplicity of mission and

susceptibility to mensuration. In combat policing there is no formal provision for input from the neighborhood, although it is clearly recognized that some input, often indirect, does occur. The other current genre, variously entitled "community policing" or "community-oriented policing" (often combined with a problem-solving or problem-oriented component) allows for a modicum of neighborhood input (e.g., Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990; Sparrow, Moore, and Kennedy, 1990; Alpert and Piquero, 2000; Goldstein, 1990; Police Foundation, 2003 and, to a lesser extent, Hartmann, Brown, and Stephens, 1989; but see Zhao, He, and Lovrich, 2003; and Schafer, Huebner, and Bynum, 2003), but it is still the police who are the decision-makers and the actors. It is the purpose of this paper to propose a third model, one in which the neighborhood is both the primary decision-maker and often a major player in enacting decisions. In effect, we propose extending the currently truncated continuum.

Law enforcement has a well-earned reputation for resisting change, especially when change threatens to control law enforcement behavior. Even corrections has long had neighborhood-driven models, variously known as restorative justice and reintegrative shaming. Those neighborhood-driven models are notable for their effectiveness in a field that has enjoyed few successes. In contrast, law enforcement traditionally has resisted rather than welcomed even community-level control (e.g., its response to proposals ranging from community review boards to involving citizens in the process of selecting police officers to widely deploying citizen volunteers in all aspects of policing). Neighborhood control is rarely considered, except in the very weak sense of neighborhood watch and its clones.

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## **A Brief Description**

For purposes of this discussion, "neighborhood" is defined as an interactive group. While most will, for the foreseen future, be physical and geostatic, virtual neighborhoods of various sorts do exist and will become far more frequent in the future. For geostatic groups, the scope will range from city blocks through neighborhoods and unincorporated rural areas to local political subdivisions.

The neighborhood-driven model assumes the local election/selection of a board. Ideally, members of the board would be representative opinion leaders. The board's role would include oversight over the tasking of officers, including outcomes assessment and resource allocation. The characteristics of the board, as well as the other aspects of this model, will depend on neighborhood-level decisions. There would be no two alike.

At first blush, the differences between COP and NDP may seem trivial; they are not. COP is a top-down construct or at most a "middle down" construct; if officers are truly empowered, they are making a lot of decisions, but the point is, it's still not the neighborhood driving the bus. Members of the community may be partners in COP, but they are junior partners at best. They supply information to the police, who serve as the primary decision-makers and who wield the bulk of the power. NDP presumes precisely the opposite: neighborhood members are the senior partners; they make many of the decisions that historically have been made by the police.

As in restorative justice, NDP presumes that the neighborhood will also serve as a resource. While some in policing may be reluctant to admit it, some of the best solutions for crime and disorder have nothing to do with the police (see Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter, and

Bushway, 1998). Neighborhood boards would be expected to develop novel solutions to some policing problems by taking advantage of extra-legal neighborhood resources.

In the NDP model, the police function as servants of the people. They serve as consultants, supplying information about "what works" in the prevention and solution of crime. They may also be tasked to solve particular problems. And as necessary, they carry out traditional duties of patrol, investigation and arrest. Table 1 provides a brief overview of some relationships between neighborhood-driven policing and the present models.

## **Why NDP Now**

Current models of policing are artifacts of the industrial age. With their large hierarchical structures and emphasis on linearity and upon strength in numbers, they were designed to emulate a military model that no longer exists (see Krulak, 1999).

NDP is an attempt to develop the first policing model for the information age; it was formulated with an appreciation for and an emphasis on the world as it currently exists. It also recognizes the reality that if policing is unable to adjust to this rapidly changing world of ours, it risks obsolescence.

## **The 21st Century and NDP**

Garreau (1999) notes that one of the most profound realities of the information age is the manner in which information technology has shifted the power from hierarchies to social networks. People routinely communicate and access information at near instantaneous speed. Institutions that once enjoyed insularity are finding their worlds increasingly transparent.

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NDP recognizes this reality and attempts to capitalize on it. Rather than viewing the neighborhood as either the target (combat policing) or a source of information and problem identification (COP), NDP places the emphasis where it always should have been, with the neighborhood leading itself and deciding its own fate. NDP integrates the principles of the new style of electronic communications and the virtual neighborhood to expedite vital information sharing between and among the public and the police.

In the NDP model, police officers will be closely linked to their respective neighborhoods through the use of modern communication networks including wireless email, voice over IP, and integrated communicators, inter alia. Web-based, interactive information sharing within and between neighborhoods will create enhancements to existing neighborhood watch networks. Neighborhood residents, feeling more "in the know" real-time, will in turn increase real-time delivery of information and intelligence to the police. The stronger communication links may increase the sense of ownership, thus enhancing participation by volunteers.

### **Benefits for the Police**

NDP has potential for increasing rather than decreasing the role and power of the police.

Rather than functioning purely as a combat leader, the police chief becomes a true coalition builder and professional developer. In essence, NDP offers the promise of shared governance.

The NDP front-line officer also assumes many roles: counselor, leader, consultant, facilitator, and problem-solver. When necessary, the officer carries out the traditional duties of investigation and arrest. Some current COP/POP officers perform these roles. However, in other ways the NDP officer is quite different.

Under the NDP model, hiring and training practices will have to undergo a radical

transformation. Officers will be selected for their intelligence and leadership potential rather than their brawn and ability to unhesitatingly follow orders. While COP/POP officers may be selected for these cerebral traits, in NDP there is even greater emphasis on them. In addition, the public will be much more involved in selecting NDP officers. The NDP role will require enhanced levels of entry-level education (at the bachelor's and master's levels as a minimum) and will entail training far beyond what is currently offered. In order to attract the caliber of personnel required to carry out NDP, entry-level salaries may need to increase commensurately.

In spite of these enhanced requirements, NDP actually offers potential cost savings. Because the neighborhood will be a resource rather than merely a customer, fewer officers may be needed. Will some officers with traditional skills be needed? Surely. The need to make physical arrests will not disappear. However, power in the information age will reside primarily in intelligence, speed, and flexibility, not in mass and authority. Enhanced educational requirements, better training, and increased salaries also offer the potential for something policing has aspired to but never attained: the status of a profession.

Homeland security is a buzz-phrase that implies a wide range of fears, needs, and shortfalls in our current social superstructure. NDP opens opportunities to manage homeland security, not only at the lowest effective level, but at the only effective level. It allows the neighborhood to determine its own level of risk, remediation, and security, thereby allowing for enhanced control and empowerment. Despite the best intentions of federal and state governments, homeland security is primarily a neighborhood issue. This is true whether we are talking about information collection or whether we are talking about taking action.

## Implications and Path Forward

NDP is most likely to be tried in neighborhoods that have adopted the COP/POP philosophy. These local neighborhoods will find it easier to make the transition to NDP because they already will be accustomed to increased interaction with their police and, similarly, the police officers already will be accustomed to more proactive and positive contacts with the public. The public will benefit from more awareness of current police procedures and gain greater insight into the "police culture" before applying greater control over the police.

Training and education targeted at the job should begin early in the college careers of potential police candidates. Additionally, candidates from non-traditional sources should be heavily recruited. Such sources should include public school faculties and social services department staff.

Selection of the controlling board may pose challenges. Some mechanism may be needed to screen out of the controlling board those who would join for the same ill-advised reasons that we now use to screen out poor candidates for police positions (power/authority seeking, poor skills, narrow or limited political agenda, etc.). It is crucial that partisanship be eschewed in favor of a broad sense of neighborhood ownership: board members must be able to leave their hats at the door.

Even in the current COP/POP model, police officers have a bias toward the routine, resisting change whenever possible and unless the change meets a "what's in it for me" standard, such as enhancing their job tasks. The path toward NDP will require officers who are much more flexible than many now employed.

## Summary and Conclusion

Neighborhood-Driven Policing extends the traditional continuum. It proposes a difference in degree rather than in kind. It reflects an opportunity to move emphasis from an early industrial age model to a model more compatible with the information age. Each neighborhood, however, must make its own choices and live with them.

## Endnotes

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## Appendix

**Table 1. Comparisons of Combat, COP/POP, and Neighborhood-Driven Policing models**

Dimension	Combat	COP/POP	Neighborhood-driven	Notes
Future-orientation	Reactive	Mostly reactive; some proactive	Mix of reactive and proactive	
Nomenclature	Law enforcement officers	Police officers	Peace officers or social services officers	
Source of information- derived power	Officers	Mostly officers; some community	Mostly neighborhood; some officers	
Who processes data that are input to decisions?	Mix of officers and agency administration	Mostly officers; some administration	Mostly neighborhood; officers under neighborhood direction	Evidence-based policing, intelligence- driven policing, problem-solving orientation
Who sets the agenda	Administration and officers	Officers, some administration, some community	Mostly neighborhood	Neighborhood delegates what it considers routine activities/decisions.
Who owns the values and goals?	Jurisdictional authorities and administration with little community input	Some community input	Mostly neighborhood except for routine/default/extreme events	Implies respect for diversity
Who are the primary actors, once decisions are made?	Officers	Officers	Neighborhood	
Assumptions (among many)	Officers have power and expertise	Officers have power and expertise	Neighborhood members have power and expertise, with officers as supplemental	
Key areas of expertise	Mechanics of arrest, knowledge of law, investigative skills	Problem solving tactics and social skills	Social skills and insider knowledge	