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TEAM POLICING AND POLICE SERVICES: AN EXPERIMENT THAT WORKS

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Since the turn of the century, when reformers first began to critically examine police departments, which were relatively new municipal agencies, reform agendas have revolved around the organizational structure of departments and the recruitment of personnel. In recent years this narrow focus has shifted to a concern with how available police resources are used. There has also been increasing interest in empirically examining the effects of different deployment strategies. Earlier reformers were much more concerned with implementing their ideas than with evaluating the impact of those ideas. The reasons for this shift are undoubtedly many and complex.

One important reason, however, seems to be the realization that earlier reform programs simply did not have the intended impact. Since the 1950s, especially in urban areas, there have been marked changes in police departments throughout the United States. Many long-standing reforms have been implemented, at least to a degree. Yet, during this same period, when the costs of policing have increased dramatically, crime has sky-rocketed, police-community relations have reached crisis proportions in many ghetto communities, and police graft still persists in many cities.

A second, more general reason lies in the current drift of American politics. Gone is the sixties' mentality that more is better. It has been replaced with a skepticism about the ability of government to do much about many social problems. Political leaders in the 1970s have been slow to initiate any new far-ranging social programs or dramatically increase existing ones. While this has led some bureaucrats to simply retrench, others have responded by rethinking traditional practices, trying out new and innovative approaches, and attempting to determine "what works."

Buoyed by this movement, and supported by funds from the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, police departments throughout the country have examined and experimented with various deployment strategies. One of the most innovative and potentially useful strategies has been labeled *team policing*. According to a recent Urban Institute report, over sixty cities have experimented with different versions of this program. Champaign, Illinois, is one such city. Since May of 1977 it has

unit was supported by the city of Champaign and the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission. This report is an analysis of the effect of this program upon a number of different indicators of police performance: citizen evaluations of police services, attitudes toward the police, fear of crime, clearance rates, and crime rates.

Before turning to the design, results, and meaning of this study, however, a few pords need to be said about team policing as a deployment stategy.

utilized a team unit in what is termed the Northend, a

racially mixed, largely working class community. The

TEAM POLICING DEFINED

The notion of team policing, in its most elementary form, is not new. Fundamentall it is reversion to the way police have been deployed in England and small American towns and cities for deades. The models of team policing currently being suggested are somewhat different, however, from these earlier forms. Moreover, there are many operational variants of this strategy. Nonetheless, it is possible to outline some of the basic attributes of team policing, as well as the expected benefits of such programs.

Basic Attributes

There are at least two ways in which team units differ from traditional patrol units. One includes organizational characteristics, the other concerns their approach to crime deterrence.

Among unique organizational characteristics of team policing one could include such things as geographic exclusivity, a community-service orientation, decentralization of authority and functions, and enhanced roles for patrolmen. Thus, team units — composed of stable groups of officers — are expected to be fully responsible for providing all police services, usually on a twenty-four-hour basis, to a given geographic area. This includes the performance of most routine investigative tasks, traditionally performed by a centralized detective division. The only exceptions are emergencies and instances for which highly skilled expertise is required.

Through the community-service orientation, team units attempt to reduce police isolation in urban neighborhoods; it is an extension of the old "cop on the beat" concept. Team members are normally equipped with mobile radios and are expected to do a certain amount of foot patrolling. The idea behind this focus is to initiate positive contacts with citizens, to enable officers to become familiar with their beat and its residents, and to permit community members to know and relate to their police officers. It

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is hoped that such an orientation will reduce citizen hostility, engender positive cooperation, and facilitate the work of the police.

Along with the added responsibilities given team units, the individuals comprising each unit are generally given greater authority than in normal patrol units. Such decentralization of authority is thought to be a crucial tool in making the police more sensitive and responsive to local community needs. It is also expected to result in better utilization of individual officers, since the team supervisor is expected to become more familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of each officer in the course of identifying problems and developing programs to solve them.

A final organizational characteristic of team policing is the enhanced role of individual officers. Besides normal patrol functions, team officers are expected to take on some investigative tasks and participate in team planning and decision making. In addition, they are often trained in crisis intervention and are expected to take part in various phases of an overall community relations program. Such responsibilities are in stark contrast to the narrower functions traditionally vested in patrol officers. They are expected to result in more well-rounded and professionally fulfilled officers who are able to respond more effectively in a wide variety of situations.

Traditional police thinking about crime deterrence can be traced back at least to noted police authorities such as William Parker and O. W. Wilson who contended that the police should focus on reducing the opportunities for crime rather than on the motives for crime. This required a two-tailed strategy: educate the public in the fundamentals of crime prevention ("harden" the targets of crime) and enhance police presence. Of these two strategies, the latter received, by far, the most emphasis. The pat police response to increases in crime was always a cry for an increased number of police and added latitude to take a more aggressive, proactive orientation. It was an article of faith that such enhanced police presence would increase the probabilities of a criminal being apprehended, thus increasing the costs of criminal activity. This, in turn, would lead to reductions in crime.

The crime deterrence philosophy inherent in team policing is also based upon the notion of increasing the costs of committing crimes and hardening the objects

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of crime through education in crime prevention. The real theoretical difference between the traditional and the team approach lies in how team units attempt to increase apprehension probabilities in order to increase the costs of crime. Instead of an increased police presence, the team strategy relies upon increased availability and utilization of information, a tactic strongly recommended by a recent Rand Corporation study of the criminal investigation process.

Increased information is expected to come from two sources. First, long-term assignments to designated geographic areas should lead to greater territorial familiarization by officers. They should be more familiar with trouble spots as well as troublemakers. They should also be in a better position to know what is normal and what is not in different settings. This will allow them to make more efficient use of their time and other resources. Secondly, the team strategy's emphasis upon knowing, relating to, and maintaining positive contacts with community members is expected to increase the flow of information from the community. This is considered invaluable because community members have access to much information not accessible to police officers and not forthcoming where hostile relations exist.

More effective use of available information is expected in a team program for a number of reasons. First, the linkage of the investigative and patrol function in the team unit is expected to mitigate interunit competition and jealousies, resulting in a freer exchange of information and insights among individual officers. Secondly, the decentralization of authority in the team is expected to permit greater flexibility in responding to informational insights, gained from whatever source. Finally, unlike the situation in traditional settings, where assignments are in planned flux and responsibility can be shifted across departmental units, the team is accountable for its own beat and is more likely, therefore, to make full use of all information that comes its way.

Expected Benefits

Because of its potential advantages over more traditional forms of police deployment, team policing has been warmly endorsed by such groups as the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice and the National Advisory Commission. Benefits are expected to accrue to the community served, to members of the team, and to the sponsoring department.

From the community perspective, the service orientation of team policing, its emphasis upon positive and continued interactions with citizens, its ability to respond to local needs, and its focus upon officer fulfillment are all expected to improve the quality of services and make citizens feel more secure in their person and home. This in turn is expected to create a more positive image of the police and increase the flow of crime-related information to the police. The more positive image and increased information, in conjunction with the increased capacity of the police to deal with crime-related information, are expected to result in greater arrest probabilities and, ultimately, reduced crime rates.

The primary potential benefit of team policing for team members is increased job satisfaction. Wider discretion, increased responsibility, and more positive contacts with citizens are expected to result in more well-rounded officers who are more satisfied with their jobs. This is

Fear and Perceptions of Crime

While actual crime rates are important indicators of a police program's impact upon the crime problem, people's perceptions may be just as important. If, for example, crime is stable or decreasing but people perceive it to be increasing, it may well have many of the same adverse effects upon their lives as if crime were, in fact, increasing. They will curtail their social life, relate to strangers more cautiously, and invest in various, perhaps unnecessary, home or car modifications.

For this reason, two questions were asked to gauge the impact of the team unit on residents' perceptions of crime. The first dealt with whether the respondent felt crime had increased, decreased, or remained the same over the past twelve months. The second concerned how safe the respondent felt walking alone at night. Tables 3 and 4 report the breakdowns for these questions. Table 3 reveals the most distinct change. While the feelings of respondents in the control group are guite stable, a substantial proportion of those in the target area feel that crime has decreased since the introduction of the team program. Moreover, the change in the proportion who felt crime has decreased in the target area is significant beyond the .001 level. The changes are not as marked in Table 4, but further examination reveals that the proportion of people feeling unsafe (not safe at all or somewhat unsafe) increased in the control group, from .59 to .65. This change was statistically significant beyond the .05 level, but it was not registered among target-area residents. Thus it appears that the team unit has had a stabilizing effect in this area.

These two questions were broken down by the same four population subgroupings used earlier, but no consistent patterns emerged. Thus the observed changes were fairly widespread.

Clearance Rates

In many regards the impact of the team program upon clearance rates (the proportion of cases "solved" by police) is one of the most, if not the single most, crucial aspect of this analysis. It is generally accepted today that, given limited resources, the most effective way the police can directly impact upon crime is by increasing the costs of committing crime (i.e., increasing the apprehension rate). Thus the impact of any deployment strategy upon clearance rates should be carefully assessed.

Table 5 shows that with regard to four of the five crimes, clearance rates in the experimental area went up while those in the control group went down (tests of statistical

Table 3
TREND OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME IN PAST YEAR

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Before	After	Before	After
Increased	21 2%	19.3%	19.7%	22.2%
Decreased	13.2	21.7	5.5	7.9
Remained the same	65.6	59.0	74 7	69.8
	100%	100%	99%	99%
	(378)	(487)	(487)	(378)

Table 4
HOW SAFE WALKING ALONE AT NIGHT

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Before	After	Before	After
Not safe at all	42.9%	44.6%	19.8%	22.9%
Somewhat unsafe	13.5	13.8	15.0	17 9
Reasonably safe	31.9	32.2	38.3	39.7
Very safe	11.7	9.4	26.8	19.0
	100% (392)	100% (487)	99% (514)	100% (459)

significance are not reported because they are not wholly relevant for the data collected from police records). Thus, it seems safe to conclude that the program has had a positive impact upon clearance rates, especially with regard to vandalism and assault. This latter observation is important because, of the five crimes examined, victims or residents are most apt to have some firsthand knowledge of what occurred in a vandalism or an assault. The increase in the clearance rates suggests that some of this information may be more apt to be conveyed to the police as a result of the team program.

Table 5
CLEARANCE RATES FOR SELECTED CRIMES

	Experime	ntal Group	Control Group		
	Before	After	Before	After	
Burglary — building	.09 (n = 53)	.16 (n = 101)	.13 (n = 385)	07 (n = 542)	
Burglary — motor vehicle	06 (n = 48)	.05 (n = 61)	05 (n = 384)	(n = 324)	
Assault	.74 (n = 154)	.92 (n = 99)	.71 (n = 471)	(n = 291)	
Vandalism	.05 (n = 38)	.45 (n = 66)	.14 (n = 473)	.13 (n = 587)	
Theft	.38 (n = 105)	(n = 81)	.32 (n = 780)	(n = 1311)	

Crime Rates

To gauge the impact of the team program upon crime rates, both survey data on victimization and Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) were analyzed. The former included questions pertaining to the incidence of household burglary, vandalism, robbery, and assault in the six-month period before the survey. UCR data on several property crimes are collected by the police department and analyzed, geographically, by the state department of law enforcement. This provided comparable records data before and after the experiment began, inside and outside the experimental area, for five crimes: building burglary, vandalism, robbery, theft, and motor vehicle burglary

These two sets of data have numerous shortcomings. They are not comparable across types, for example, different time periods. Also, the records data include commercial burglaries while the survey data come only from a sample of households. Nonetheless the various data can be compared with one another: data on one crime from one source can be compared with the same data at a different point in time, from the same source. Moreover, since the two types of data have different

These positive findings raised a further point of inquiry An analysis of the data collected in the preexperimental surveys revealed that mean scores on the service evaluation questions (SE 1 to SE 4) were significantly lower (beyond the .001 level) in the target area than in the control group. The postexperimental surveys; however, reveal that for SE 3 and SE 4 (the more general evaluative questions) there were no significant differences between the target group and the control group. Thus it is clear that one effect of the program has been to lead people who have traditionally felt discriminated against to begin to feel that they are getting equitable treatment.

There is also evidence to suggest that this impact is more than just perceptual. It has often been noted by students of urban police that, due to racial tensions and mistrust, members of minority groups are less apt to call the police for assistance than are whites. The presurveys showed this to be true for Champaign's Northend as well. The postsurveys show that this previous, statistically significant difference has disappeared as calls per household rose from .175 to .243. The latter figure of .243 is not significantly different from the .22 figure recorded in the control group. Moreover, further analyses showed that this increased tendency to call the police in the target area is wholly due to increased requests from black households.

In an effort to determine where the evaluative changes had taken place, the two target samples (pre and post) were broken down by different population subgroups: race, annual household income (below and above \$5,000), age (below and above forty-five), and whether or not the respondent had occasion to call the police during the six months prior to the survey. This analysis showed that changes have occurred largely (SE 4 being the lone exception) among whites, those above the poverty line, those forty-five or older, and those who had not had contact with the police. With only two exceptions, these results were not paralleled in the control group, where the few changes that did occur were sporadic.

Attitudes toward the Police

Nine different questions (A1 to A9) were asked to gauge respondents' attitudes toward the police:

- A1 Champaign policemen have a tendency to accuse people of things they didn't do.
- A2 In general, Champaign policemen are of below average intelligence.
- A3 Generally, the Champaign police really try to help people who are in trouble.
- A4 In general, Champaign policemen have a tendency to use force on people for no reason at all.
- A5 Champaign policemen are brave.
- A6 Champaign policemen generally don't give a person a chance to explain.
- A7 In general, Champaign policemen are dedicated to their job.
- A8 In general, Champaign policemen try to act like big shots.
- A9 Generally, the Champaign police are trouble instead of help.

Again each was scored so that the most positive score was 5.

Table 2 shows the findings from this analysis; the pattern is quite similar to that reported in Table 1. In the Northend positive changes were reported for seven of

Table 2
MEAN ATTITUDINAL SCORES

	Northeast Champaign (experimental group)	Champaign in General (control group)
Accuse — A1 Before After	3.3 (265) 3.5 (348)	3.8 (435) 3.8 (332)
Intelligent — A2 Before After	3.6 (282) 3.8*** (406)	4.0 (440) 3.9* (364)
Try to help — A3 Before After	3 8 (334) 3 9** (461)	4.0 (486) 4.1* (424)
Use force — A4 Before After	3.4 (268) 3.5 (382)	3 8 (427) 3.9 (327)
Are brave — A5 Before After	3.5 (285) 3.8*** (414)	3.8 (416) 3.7 (359)
No chance to explain — A6 Before After	3 2 (260) 3.5*** (353)	3.7 (415) 3.8* (334)
Dedicated — A7 Before After	3.7 (292) 3.9*** (426)	3.9 (465) 3.8* (370)
"Big Shots" — A8 Before After	3.4 (282) 3.7*** (390)	3.7 (463) 3.7 (393)
Are trouble — A9 Before After	3.7 (301) 3.9*** (446)	4.1 (482) 4.1 (438)

- * Significant at or beyond the :05 level.
- ** Significant at or beyond the 01 level
- *** Significant at or beyond the 001 level.

the nine variables. Moreover, all but one of these changes were at or beyond the .001 level. Changes in the control group were null or weak and sporadic: two changes were positive, two were negative, and all were only at the .05 level.

In the analyses of the four service evaluation questions (SE 1 to SE 4) it was noted that the significant differences between mean service evaluation scores in the target area and the control group, which had been observed in the presurveys, had been eliminated in the postsurveys in two instances. Despite the changes reported in Table 2, the reductions in the differences between the means (across the target and control groups) were not as marked in the attitudinal area as in the service evaluation. The differentials were eliminated in only two of the nine variables (A2, A8). Despite these findings, the subgroup analyses revealed several interesting patterns. Perhaps the most remarkable finding here concerns race. In the target area virtually all of the significant changes occurred among blacks; only two significant changes occurred among whites. When categorized by age it can be seen that almost all of the changes came among those over forty-five. Unfortunately the patterns involving the "income" and "contact with police" categories were not as clearcut. Little can be said about them. In addition, it should be stressed that here again the changes observed in the experimental group were not paralleled in the control group.

expected to lead to more positive attitudes among team members and better service delivery. As for the department, closer contact between supervisors and patrol officers should lead to greater mutual understanding, better cooperation, and more efficient uses of available manpower. Decentralized planning and deployment are also expected to enhance police responsiveness to community needs, enabling them to make more efficient use of their resources. In short, service delivery should improve.

TEAM POLICING IN CHAMPAIGN

The Champaign team-policing program, like the program of any operational unit, is a variant of the general model. While it is small (fourteen officers), it has all of the basic attributes of a team program. All team members are volunteers; they are equipped with mobile radios and special insignia, and they are encouraged to engage in foot patrolling. Before going into the field, they participated in an intensive training program focusing upon participative management, planning, goal setting and evaluation, human relations, follow-up investigations, selective crime enforcement, use of crime analysis information, crime prevention education, and physical security applications. The team unit held several community meetings during its early existence and conducted an active crime prevention campaign.

Evaluating the Program

There is almost always a difference between the expected and actual impact of social programs. This impact should always be evaluated empirically. What follows is a somewhat limited evaluation of Champaign's teampolicing program. It is a condensed and modified version of a fuller evaluation performed for the Champaign Urban High Crime Program to comply with the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission's policy of examining the effectiveness of programs it supports. Because of limited resources the program's impact upon individual officers and internal departmental matters could not be gauged.

To examine the impact of the program upon the community, two types of police performance data were collected. One category included general measures of citizen satisfaction with the police — citizen evaluations of police services and attitudes toward the police. The

second category included crime-relevant measures of police performance, such as fear and perception of crime, clearance rates, and crime rates.

To collect the data two sets of surveys were conducted, and a significant amount of police records data was collected, employing a quasi-experimental design. The records data were crime-related information collected for selected periods before and after the team program's implementation. The surveys included both crime- and noncrime-relevant measures of police performance. The first set of two surveys was conducted in February 1976. four months before the program became operational. One survey was administered to a sample of approximately 500 people living in the "target area" (i.e., the Northend of Champaign); a second was administered to a sample of approximately 500 people living in Champaign outside the target area (the control group). Twenty months later a second set of surveys was conducted using the same instrument and the same sampling design.

Evaluation of Police Services

Four main questions (SE 1 to SE 4) were asked to gauge respondents' evaluations of police services:

- SE 1 How would you rate the speed in responding to calls for assistance of the Champaign Police Department (excellent, good, fair, not very good, poor)?
- SE 2 How would you rate their courtesy (excellent, good, fair, not very good, poor)?
- SE 3 On the whole, would you say the service provided to you and your household by Champaign police is excellent, good, fair, not very good, poor?
- SE 4 Compared to Champaign as a whole, do you think police protection in your neighborhood is much better, about the same, worse, or much worse?

Each of these four questions was scored from 1 to 5, with 5 being a positive score.

Table 1 displays the mean service evaluation score for each of the four evaluative questions. The meaning of the data in this table is unequivocal. While citizen evaluations in the control group were relatively stable (one went marginally up, one went marginally down), those in the target area went up on each measure. Moreover, the positive changes were not just marginal, two were above the .001 level of probability and one was above the .01 level.

Table 1
MEAN SERVICE EVALUATION SCORES IN BASIC SAMPLES

	Speed (SE 1)		Courtesy (SE 2)		Overall Evaluation (SE 3)		Comparative Evaluation (SE 4)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Northeast Champaign (experimental group)	3.5 (285)	3.7* (376)	3.6 (341)	3.9*** (419)	3.6 (343)	3.8*** (439)	3.0 (336)	3.1** (433)
Champaign Outside of experimental	4 0	3.9*	3.9	4.0*	4.0	3.9	3.2	3.2
area (control group)	(335)	(328)	(449)	(389)	(469)	(416)	(419)	(341)

^{*} Significant beyond the .05 level.

^{**} Significant beyond the 03 level.

^{***} Significant beyond the 001 level.

Table 6
SURVEY VICTIMIZATION RATES
FOR SELECTED CRIMES

-	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Before	After	Before	After
Household burglaries (per 1,000 house-				
holds)	77.8	87 6	93.5	92.8
Vandalisms (per 1,000 households)	143.5	189.2	244.3	198.7
Robberies (per 1,000 persons)	6.5	4 5	13 2	15.3
Batteries (per 1,000 persons)	$\frac{3.4}{n = 411}$	$\frac{7.7}{n = 502}$	$\frac{9.6}{n = 524}$	5.0 n = 46

methodological strengths and weaknesses, any conclusion supported by both sources is strengthened.

The data as presented in Tables 6 and 7 suggest that only the crime of theft (reported in Table 7) changed significantly. It increased dramatically in the team area while remaining constant outside of it. Because this finding was in such stark contrast to the others, additional inquiries were made. Data on theft were examined for the next six-month period (January through June of 1978) to determine if the figure in Table 7 was a statistical artifact of the result of some displacement effects (a shift from one crime type to another as a result of the change in police practices) or a deficiency in the team program. This analysis revealed a sharp decline in theft rates during the subsequent period, from 44.0 to 17.8 thefts per 1,000 residents. The 17.8 figure is lower than the prefigure of 23.2, and an averaging of the two figures (44.0, 17.8) yields a rate (25.9) that is much more consistent with the other data reported in Tables 6 and 7. Thus, this analysis suggests that the theft figure reported in Table 7 is probably due to some historical or statistical quirk rather than any displacement effects or programmatic shortcomings.

CONCLUSION

Although only a partial evaluation has been conducted, clearly the experimental team-policing program in Champaign has had significant and positive effects upon most of the evaluative criteria used. Residents in the area served by the team-police unit registered marked improvements in their evaluations of police services and in their attitudes toward the police. This is important because, historically, there has been a good deal of conflict

Table 7
UCR RATES FOR SELECTED CRIMES

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Before	After	Before	After
Building burglaries (per 1,000 house-				
holds)	40.2	52.3	24 7	34 86
Vandalisms (per 1,000 households)	39 1	38.5	31.2	36.3
Robberies (per 1,000 persons)	3.4	1.53	70	58
Thefts (per 1,000 persons)	23.2	44.0	25.2	25.5
Vehicle burglaries '(per 1,000 persons)	10.5	10.5	7.2	6.6

between the police and minorities, whether ethnic or racial. As implemented in Champaign, team policing seems to present a way to reduce such tensions. Many of the improvements, especially in the attitudinal variables, were registered among blacks. There is also abundant evidence to support the argument that the team unit is reducing the gap in service evaluations and attitudes between Northend residents and other Champaign residents.

One consequence of these improved relations seems to be that Northend residents, especially blacks, are calling the Champaign police for assistance more frequently. Improved relations seem also to have increased cooperation between the community and the police as exemplified by higher clearance rates, especially in the area of crimes such as vandalism and assaults. There is, however, no direct evidence on this point.

Perhaps the most disappointing finding in this analysis concerns the failure of the program to have an impact upon crime. It is all the more disconcerting in light of the changes in residents' perceptions of the crime problem and the higher clearance rates. It should be stressed, however, that these figures represent very early readings. Social scientists and criminologists know very little about the relationship between enhanced arrest probabilities and crime rates. It may be that there is a significant time lag between realities and perceptions. If so, higher clearance rates may well be reflected in future crime trends. If they are not — and this is reflective of more general phenomena — then criminal justice researchers and practitioners may well have to begin rethinking the role of police in the area of crime prevention.



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