

As a blade of grass cuts through stone: Helping rebuild urban neighborhoods through unconventional police-community partnerships

Crime and Delinquency

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Abstract:

Geller discusses the idea of mixing community policing with community development with the objective of economic development and community safety mechanisms reinforcing one another to prevent the typical plight of urban neighborhoods. *Copyright Sage Publications, Inc. Jan 1998*

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BACKGROUND: A WARY TOE IN THE METAPHORICAL WATERS

While the federal government's "Weed and Seed" program has begun recently to enable or inspire some promising programmatic efforts (Institute for Social Analysis 1995; Conly and McGillis 1996; Webster and Connors 1992), for much of its life, Weed and Seed has been an intriguing metaphor waiting to happen more than halfway.' The program has, indeed, helped some communities thin their gardens of people (and conditions) contributing to crime, disorder, and fear. It is the seeding that has been dubious. What if communities, with a helping hand from the police, really could incubate what anthropologist Jane Goodall calls the "roots and shoots"-people and institutions that make for a vibrant, ecologically sound social garden? What if we could grow gardens with fewer weeds and more immunity to the weeds that do appear? What if we could convert most weeds into acceptable if not productive residents of the garden?

To be sure, metaphors and slogans such as "weed and seed" should be inhaled with care. Among others, George Kelling has written thoughtfully about the dangers of public safety metaphors such as declaring "war" on crime (Kelling and Coles 1996, pp. 88, 96; Geller and Swanger 1995, p. 130). The Geneva Convention is hardly a sufficient restraint on how domestic peacekeepers should treat Americans who produce or promote crime, incivility, and intimidation. And it grossly mischaracterizes the nature of police work and the skills required to perform it to imply that officers are typically sent in large groups with explicit orders to carry out precisely predetermined violent missions (Goldstein 1979, 1990). Even officers working such special assignments as SWAT teams, riot-control squads, and units conducting warranted raids rarely intend and hope to produce

casualties at the outset of the mission. As the U.S. drug czar—a former Army general—put it in explaining why police officers, not military forces, should be deployed to deal with complex domestic crime problems, "The purpose of the military is to train, to be ready and to fight" (McCaffrey 1997).

Sound-bite solutions may give little nourishment if transplanted unthinkingly from situations where they make sense to other settings. Thus, umpires have the formal and moral authority, as well as the enforcement apparatus, to impose the "three strikes and you're out" rule on baseball diamonds. Certainly, their calls are argued, but nobody questions the functionality of the rule to the game for which it was devised. If one were intent on thoughtfully applying the three-strikes metaphor in the criminal justice setting, perhaps it would be informative to consider some of the reasons why the rule gains player and spectator approval within the closed system of a baseball game—a game in which brawls do occasionally break out over other issues (cf. Tyler 1991). For one thing, the concept of foul balls mercifully differentiates between lack of success and outright failure. Moreover, even the batter who strikes out is afforded the opportunity to do better in later innings and subsequent games and to thereby redeem himself or herself in the eyes of the baseball community of interest.

Yes, criminal offending is normatively different conduct than frustrating fans and failing to fulfill the expectations of competency engendered by six-figure sports contracts. And few would want to induct in the Human Being Hall of Fame members of society who, over their lifetimes, average 4 lawful acts for every 10 opportunities they've had to break the law. If anything, the impulse is to indict, not induct. But if the social significance of striking out in baseball and in criminal law compliance is so obviously different, then could it be that the three strikes rule is better suited to one domain than the other?

A fondly recalled law professor at the University of Chicago, Soia Mentschikoff, frequently cautioned us that "slogans are dangerous because they tend to prevent thought." Phrase spinners sometimes sacrifice logic or decency at the altar of memorable rhythm and rhyme. For example, referring to human beings, even extremely antisocial ones, as weeds is dehumanizing in a way that Jesus, Jane Addams, and George Orwell likely would have found perilous. An Orwellian contempt for political euphemisms would counsel us that a society might do things to weeds that it would not do to homo sapiens. For instance, the experts recommend, "As far as possible weeds should not be permitted to mature seeds. Good cultivation should aim at getting all the seeds when they are small and while they are doing but minimum damage" (Jaques 1959, p. 7). What is the analog-involuntary sterilization? Killing crack babies?

The dilemma is compounded if the weeds are not indubitably dangerous. Writing his popular field manual, *How to Know the Weeds*, in Dubuque, Iowa, when the baby boomers were just saplings, Professor H. E. Jaques counseled,

"Weed" may have many definitions such as an unwanted plant; any plant growing in cultivated ground to the injury of the crop or desired vegetation; plant growth that gives an unfavorable appearance to an area, etc. Thus it will be seen that it is not the species

that brands a plant a weed, but its associates and how it lives. Many highly useful species may become objectionable weeds when in the wrong place. One frequently sees scattered stalks of corn growing in an otherwise beautiful field of soybeans. (Jaques 1959, p. iii)

The sharp botanist achieves some precision in labeling and an appreciation that often context is content: "A 'weed' may be a nuisance to some people but desirable to others" (Embertson 1979, p. 10), and in delineating unruly behavior, "what is not aggressive in one context may seem extremely aggressive in another" (Kelling and Coles 1996, pp. 177, 178, 185). All day long, every day, we judge things as welcome or unwelcome depending on the context in which we perceive them. For example, as media specialist Tony Schwartz observed decades ago, noise is simply unwanted sound. A fire engine's siren or a young child crying in the distance is annoying when you are trying to read. They are most welcome if your house is burning or you are part of a neighborhood search party looking for a lost child.

The good scientist not only keeps a keen eye on context but strives hard to properly differentiate friend from foe in the garden. Accurate classification of some offending plants can be extremely hard: "Some serious weed pests produce seeds so closely resembling in size and weight those of a cultivated crop that their separation from the crop seeds is very difficult" (Jaques 1959, p. 6; Blumstein 1997, pp. 21, 30).

Beyond the potential for innocently confounding desired and undesired members of the garden club, there is the risk of purposeful misrepresentation. In the name of order maintenance, racism and classism may masquerade as maintaining domestic tranquility; intolerance of legitimate dissent may be dressed up as the necessity to prevent people from shouting "fire" in a crowded country. Kelling and Coles (1996, pp. 7, 163, 179), among others, acknowledge that too many "police and criminal justice agencies have a sorry record when it comes to respecting, let alone protecting, the rights of minorities and the poor" (see also Williams and Murphy 1990; Johnston 1996). In unscrupulous hands, even seemingly uncontroversial assertions of fact can be exaggerated or emphasized in a misleading fashion for divisive, scapegoating purposes. At a time rife with immigrant bashing, the botanical bigot may not be able to contain his or her enthusiasm over the discovery that "a large percentage of our weeds are not native plants. They have come to us from other countries" (Jaques 1959, p. 7).

The consequences of thinking a weed is a socially useful plant can, of course, be calamitous:

Weeds have many ingenious ways of widening their occupied areas.... Many weeds in growing require more water and plant minerals than the cultivated plants with which they are associated. They may also compete for light. Insect pests and plant diseases may start on weeds and later transfer to the crop plant. Weeds are costly; it does not pay to tolerate them. (Jaques 1959, pp. 6-8)

To be sure, many weeds pose extreme hazards to a healthy garden.³ Yet, fear of weeds can produce a panicky rush to metaphorical transplanting. Among the risks this creates is

forgetting about the different "life cycles" involved in the different domains. For many plants and weeds, anything that matters must happen within a year. For most people and neighborhoods, significant maturation and modification may take years to accomplish, and whether such changes will prove enduring is a separate question. It is true that many communities can establish some modicum of peace on the streets relatively rapidly if they intensively and persistently thwart the unpeaceable. The question is how long it will take to send the tap root of peace down so deep in the community's fertile core (assuming there is such a core) that desirable, perennial growth becomes highly resistant to a host of surface threats. Restorative justice practitioners might ask further what it would take for the healthy! roots and shoots to diffuse their benefits to, and transform, "threats" into organisms that add value to the garden. And they would try to do so in a way that protected the crops from lapsing into hypocrisy and becoming more weedlike (see Zehr 1990; Umbreit 1985, 1995; Pranis 1997).

Perhaps the most fundamental flaw with equating troublesome people and weeds is that many people, well cultivated and controlled, can alter their behavior, sometimes radically. A weed will always "behave" according to its genetic predestination, although people could change their minds about whether that behavior is desirable in a particular context and could stop calling the plant a weed.

Another risk of casually applying metaphors is forgetting that weeds vary in type-and heartiness within type-and that different weeds may be susceptible to different countermeasures in different doses and under different climate and soil conditions. Even wind speed and direction can be crucial factors, neglect of which could result in having the herbicide miss its intended target and strike a vulnerable innocent crop or gardener. There could be other unintended consequences. For instance, we might save the tomatoes but pollute the groundwater or poke holes in the ozone layer, or our toxins might also destroy the garden's natural defenses against a more virulent strain of botanical badass.

Everyday examples abound of the variety of weeds and the need for tailored controls. For instance, some weeds have shallow roots and vulnerable shoots while others, such as the common North American perennial "bindweed," grow "persistent rootstocks" 10 or more feet long and earn such nicknames as "Devil's Vine" (Jaques 1959, p. 131). Plucking off the top few inches of bindweed might give one the satisfaction of gardening and the illusion of progress, but in time the hearty plant will almost surely recidivate. And erring in the direction of excessive intervention-using a bulldozer to weed the garden when more discrete and simpler measures might avail-is both fiscally irresponsible and risks decimating the entire garden in the name of saving it.⁴ Such "police actions" as that in Vietnam of course come to mind. So do some police problem-solving efforts that try to stop crime in troublesome places by eliminating the places; a recurring example is the "hot spot" apartment building that is demolished. As criminologist Jack Greene has observed, such efforts often solve the problem for the police, at least those assigned to that particular area, but may not be as helpful to the law-abiding people evicted so the building can be torn down (Greene 1997b). Most criminologists have also been pleading in vain for a national crime control strategy that deploys resources in ways that other fields seem to find potent. For instance, biology has long understood that "prevention

makes the best start in weed control" (Jaques 1959, p. 7). And for almost two decades, restorative justice proponents have been calling for a paradigm shift away from deficit models (focusing on stemming individual and community weaknesses such as criminal offending and vulnerable locations) and toward capacity-building approaches (Nicholl 1996). Thus, a core question becomes, "How can the [criminal justice] system support communities in achieving justice when dealing with conflict or harm?!" (Pranis 1997, p. 1).

One could surely enumerate other problems-and other potentially valuable insights-presented by metaphors such as weed and seed. Yet, for many of us, such slogans are powerfully alluring. And, like it or not, this metaphor has spawned a bureaucracy,⁵ a budget, and recurring congressional application of fertilizer. These in turn have stimulated a set of neighborhood activities that command attention. This allure and these community activities helped spark a conversation several years ago among a number of colleagues in several organizations that had, to varying degrees, adopted the view that community safety and community development could prove symbiotic. We wondered together: Suppose we were really serious about linking the weeding to significant seeding? The image of police and other community institutions and groups coming together in novel ways to really help seed a community whose undesired wildflowers they had labored to thin was a provocative and attractive one. These! ideas animated a trilateral partnership that its conveners called the Community Security Initiative (CSI).

THE COMMUNITY SECURITY INITIATIVE: THE TEAM AND THEIR IDEA

Building on long involvement with community development conducted in isolation from policing and on a few earlier efforts by others to meld community policing with community development, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) of New York City launched the CSI in 1994. The CSI, with underwriting from several private foundations, entails collaboration among LISC, policing experts and police, and community development corporation practitioners. In-field explorations are being conducted that examine how police and community development corporations (CDCs) might join forces to help make communities safe enough for successful, reasonably sustainable economic development. The long-term goal is for economic development and community safety mechanisms to reinforce each other in ways that reverse the downward spiral of urban decay, a blight whose poster children are broken windows, scary streets, and fractured families (Wilson and Kelling 1982; Skogan 1990; National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives [NOBLE] 1997).

These explorations are proceeding simultaneously in three places: Seattle's Chinatown-International District-a compact neighborhood, the majority of whose 2,000 Asian and Pacific Island residents are either elderly or recent immigrants and who speak more than 20 languages as their mother tongue; two predominantly African American low-income communities in Kansas City, Missouri-the Swope Parkway/Elmwood and Town Fork Creek neighborhoods; and the much feared and maligned, low-income, predominantly Latino and African American Brooklyn neighborhood of East New York. (A former police chief of East Palo Alto, California, once opined, "In the United States, you don't

want to be from East anywhere!") Because my firsthand knowledge comes from providing technical assistance to the Seattle and Kansas City sites (in close collaboration with Lisa Belsky of National LISC), I will draw examples from those locales. My own collaboration with LISC began while I served as Associate Director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a national police chief membership organization and research institute,⁶ and has continued as part of my ongoing efforts to facilitate effective, efficient, and legitimate partnerships for public safety.

Partnering with LISC and PERF on the Community Security Initiative is the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Staff and faculty from that program, including Frank Hartmann, Susan Michaelson, and David Kennedy, were instrumental in the design and site assessment stages of the CSI and will oversee the writing of case studies about some of the CSI sites. David Kennedy's contributions drew on his examination of some earlier efforts to harness the joint power of community policing and community development in Savannah and in Baltimore's Sandtown neighborhood (Kennedy 1996; see also Kelling and Coles 1996, pp.195-198).

LISC is one of several national umbrella organizations founded in the past two decades to encourage and incubate community development in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods of American cities. Another such organization, the Enterprise Foundation, worked with Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke on the Sandtown project in the early 1990s. LISC, Enterprise, and similar organizations were inspired by the work years earlier of several African American CDCs that pioneered the community development movement by focusing on economic development issues. The staff of such CDCs and the best of their modern counterparts typically have brought to their challenging work an enticing combination of business heads and community empowerment hearts. Although much of the early emphasis of LISC was on "bricks and mortar" efforts (residential and commercial construction), in recent years LISC has begun to diversify its strategy by adding the kind of economic and social development programs that the original CDCs had long believed were essential for improving inner cities.⁷ LISC today provides funding and technical assistance to hundreds of CDCs. In the past year alone, LISC provided nearly half a billion dollars in the form of grants, equity investments, and low-interest loans to groups operating in 37 cities and in rural communities around the country.

The project demonstration sites each have a community development corporation that is affiliated with and served by the national LISC office in New York and by regional LISC offices. The question posed in these sites is whether unconventional allies-police and community entrepreneurs-can achieve their respective missions better and without more unintended consequences by working together than they could without collaborating. Until experience or research persuades us otherwise (formal evaluations of CSI-type endeavors have not yet been conducted; Kennedy 1996, p. 13), the technical assistance team and our practitioner clients/partners are willing to act on the belief that there can be a reciprocal reinforcing relationship between crime control and neighborhood revitalization (see Weisel and Harrell 1996, p. 18).⁸ As Kennedy (1996, p. 13) put the

notion, "In at least some troubled neighborhoods, crime both fosters and is fostered by a variety of adverse conditions and systems." As former NIJ Director Chips Stewart observed, "Poverty causes crime and crime causes poverty." What acting on our collective belief means in the context of CSI work in Seattle and Kansas City is devising and trying various collaborative roles and procedures to see how well they align with the emerging mutual strategic goals of the practitioners.⁹

At this juncture in the national evolution of community involvement in fostering public safety, it is sometimes clear and sometimes still less obvious what that involvement should be. But the feasible roles of police and other traditional peacekeepers in stimulating and incubating real estate projects and other economic enterprises generally are as clear as Logan Airport on a foggy day.

In some organizational development experiences, the challenge is to adjust (sometimes substantially) roles and procedures so they align better with long-standing and accepted strategies and goals. But the CSI implementation challenge in Seattle and Kansas City is somewhat different-easier in some ways and harder in others-because the police and CDC strategies and goals are themselves moving targets. The police are evolving toward a community problem-solving strategy and a fortified crime prevention mission. The CDCs are evolving toward an integration of investments in developing not only bricks and mortar but also social (interpersonal) and human (individual) capital.

IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCES

Space does not permit detailing the full variety of lessons we are learning as participant/observers. Many of the lessons pertain to four themes: (1) the fascinating and occasionally frustrating process of courtship and budding collaboration among police officers and CDC staff and associates; (2) the struggles of these maverick practitioners to also address pressing intramural questions and challenges within their own organizations-challenges best captured in the ancient Asian curse, "May you live in times of transition" (see Geller and Swanger 1995); (3) the value of fidelity to process, such as following mutually agreed-on problem-solving protocols, when trying to solidify a work team that is diverse occupationally, experientially, culturally, racially, ethnically, politically, socioeconomically, and in other potentially meaningful ways; and (4) the willingness of police to, as the saying goes, think outside their own box. (Major Francy Chapman of Kansas City, a central player in CSI progress, bemoans that she has been having trouble recently with one of her cats, who has taken to thinking outside the box.)

Francy's skillful use of humor in leading her officers and many of the rest of us is part of a growing opus of quips about the odds of successfully constructing diverse teams of unaccustomed partners to address daunting problems. One sage characterized "collaboration" as an unnatural act between nonconsenting adults. Some may recall when Yippie Abbie Hoffman, during his and codefendants' arraignment in the Chicago Conspiracy Trial before the Reasonably Honorable Judge Julius Hoffman, looked at his fellow accused and then at the judge and exclaimed incredulously, "Conspiracy?! We couldn't agree on lunch!" And then there is Woody Allen's observation about the perils of

partnership among people with unequal power. "The lion and the lamb shall lie down together," he noted, "but the lamb won't get much sleep."

As it has turned out, when Lisa Belsky and I gaze around the conference table at energetic CDC/police brainstorming sessions in Seattle and Kansas City, it is not only the community organizers (in some ways, the less powerful partners) who occasionally look like they have had a few restless nights over the role and protocol confusion engendered by this project. In exposure to both the angst and the opportunities provided by the CSI, it is often true in our sites, as it was in earlier projects, that "the police play more an `equal among equals' role than the `first among equals' position more typically seen" (Kennedy 1996, pp. 15-16). This does not mean, as former pioneering Police Chief Ray Davis of Santa Ana noted, that community policing entails "a blind pilgrimage to the temples of community control." Even in a restorative justice model, "expert systems" such as police departments have significant responsibilities to prevent the trampling of individual liberties by the community (Parnis 1997; cf. Delattre and Behan's [1991] description of the police role as "enforcing freedom"). Notwithstanding the penchant of so many of our nation's so-called leaders to slavishly follow public opinion polls to divine the least objectionable-not the most propitious-course of action, happily there remain public officials, including a number of cops in the CSI project, who are different. These officers are willing to try to shift roles as the community/police mission requires among following, pulling in harness with their collaborators, and boldly leading where others wish to go but are afraid to tread. Lisa and I have been struck with some regularity by the openmindedness, good cheer, and courage displayed by both the officers and the community organizers as they attempt to navigate the shoal waters of the CSI. I will illustrate the police open-mindedness after some further comments on the problem-solving protocols that we are finding to be a useful component ! of team building in Seattle and Kansas City.

The Art of Problem Solving as Science

Reasonably faithful adherence to the classic scientific method (increasingly referred to in police strategic innovation circles as problem-solving techniques) seems at this juncture (about a year into the effort in Kansas City and nearly 2 years in Seattle) to have value in team building for the police/ CDC partners. This process for organizing needed creative and noncreative work and allocating responsibilities generally requires four basic elements: (1) a convergence of stakeholder interest in carefully selected tractable problems; (2) a feasibility study of how the problem(s) might be addressed, given available resources of people, power, and purse; (3) a set of activities implementing the selected remedial measures; and (4) periodic monitoring to learn-and, one hopes, incorporate into an accessible compendium of professional knowledge-(a) whether any short-term or enduring progress has been achieved, (b) what interventions seem to work and not to work under specified conditions, and (c) what the costs and benefits of any progress and setbacks" seem to have been in terms of tangible resources, reputational issues, organizational development, organizational learning (Geller 1997), community development capacity, and other factors. The most determined innovative organizations strive to find ways to continually enhance institutional problem-solving prowess by

adapting their goals, roles, and procedures as needed to capitalize on this new learning (cf. Reiss 1991).

The types of crime and disorder problems initially selected for weeding in Seattle and Kansas City are garden variety, commerce-inhibiting challenges that afflict American inner cities—public intoxication, aggressive panhandling, open drug dealing and abuse, gunfire, thefts from vehicles, and so on—and the fear attending these behaviors. As the problem-solving process has been applied to these problems, the officers and community developers have begun to study and address an array of questions, most of which pertain to the first two problem-solving steps of "scanning" and "analysis."² While a variety of techniques seems useful in building winning teams, the one emphasized here is the identification, clarification, application, and modification of a set of guiding light questions that help structure an orderly problem-solving process. The operative team-building theory is that individual and collective competence, coupled with procedural guidelines, elevates the group's confidence to take strategically valuable risks. Lisa and I are discovering how salient such process questions as the following can be in giving strangers and the estranged some of the trust and desire they need to be willing to pull in the harness against mutually targeted challenges.

THE THRESHOLD IDENTIFICATION OF TRACTABLE PROBLEMS OF INTEREST

Is there a problem (i.e., a group of related incidents that concern the community at large and the core collaborators) that is unlikely to be resolved without some new initiative and seems vulnerable to the kind of countermeasures the core group and other potential confederates could deploy?

Which discrete problem is small enough to fix but big enough to matter to the community and the police?

Who is directly affected by the problem (or by our potential solutions), and who can be mobilized to help even though they are only indirectly affected?

How long might it take to constructively address the discrete problem we have identified, and what opportunities and obstacles could arise in the interim in the community, the CDC, the investment community, the police department, local government, and other key domains?

INFORMATION ABOUT VICTIMS

Who are the direct and indirect victims? For every immediate victim, there may be a number of other victims affected at least emotionally and perhaps financially.

What, if anything, do the victims have in common?

Who are the likely future victims of this particular problem? If the problem stays where it

is? If it is displaced? If it spreads like a weed?

What are the immediate and near-term physical and psychological injuries and damages, and what fear and quality-of-life problems are being created?

Do different kinds of victims experience different types or amounts of harm?

Why are the victims vulnerable at this particular time?

Why are the victims vulnerable at this particular location?

What resources do the victims have to protect themselves against the problem?

Are the identifiable victims willing to prosecute and testify or speak out in a forum other than a courtroom or a dispute resolution conference?

Are the victims also to some degree contributors to the problem at hand?

INFORMATION ABOUT OFFENDERS AND SUSPECTS

How many are there?

Who are they?

How could we recognize them (age, gender, race/ethnicity, physical appearance clothes, vehicles, compatriots, etc.)?

Are they local?

Are they mobile? On foot? Vehicle (type and license number)?

Do they have criminal records? For what?

Do they generally display or use any weapons? What kinds? Where do they get these weapons? Kennedy (1997) reports on an evolving, powerful approach to disrupting gun markets, especially for youngsters.

What are the suspects' and adjudicated offenders' motivations, gains, and losses from their involvement with this problem?

Are there accomplices in another location (e.g., lookouts; criminal employers or supervisors; fences; family, gang members, friends, or other beneficiaries)?

Are the suspects or offenders also to some degree victims of the problem at hand?

INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Are there innocent people who are usually present at the problematic place(s) and who are affected in some direct way short of traditional measures of victimization (e.g., inconvenienced, decline in the value of their property, attrition of neighborhood businesses, services, and amenities)?

Who cares about the problem and has some power to influence it, even if they are not directly affected and not usually present when the problem occurs (e.g., particular news reporters)?

Are there people with influence over the suspects, victims, or problematic places who might provide particular help with reducing the motivation of the suspects or the vulnerabilities of the potential victims or places?

Are there public agencies or private entities (including the investment community and the news media) that care-or should care-and could do something to alleviate the problem?

Who, although unlikely to take on problem-solving responsibility, could nonetheless be a valuable source of information because they come to the troublesome location regularly? Possibilities include postal carriers,³ trash collectors, utility company meter readers, debt collection agencies, public welfare system field staff, food delivery services, firefighters, and paramedics.

Are there interest groups (e.g., homeless advocates, civil rights groups, abortion protestors) who might actively oppose interventions to alleviate what many consider disorderly or even violent behavior problems (see Kelling and Coles 1996), and what is the potential for finding common ground among the adversaries and negotiating a win-win code of conduct?

TEMPORAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE OFFENSES, VICTIMIZATIONS, AND CONDITIONS

For how long has this been a problem?

What time of day, day of week, month, and season do the offending behaviors occur? Is there a recurring temporal pattern?

How often do the incidents that make up this problem occur?

Do the offenses occur during an identifiable time period before or after other specifiable events or conditions? Does there seem to be a cause-effect relationship? Could some identifiable person or persons exercise any meaningful control over these related events or conditions?

INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOCATION(S)

What are the pertinent characteristics of the places where the offenses or unwanted conditions occur?

Do the problems travel? In apparent response to what?

Why do the problems occur at this location or at these locations?

Why would offenders and people vulnerable to victimization be there? Where are they coming from and where are they going?

Where do the suspects go after the crimes? Is the place or are the places nearby?

What are the land uses in this area (schools, bars, theaters, convenience stores, shopping malls or stand-alone retail stores, banks, currency exchanges, recreation facilities, industry, residential buildings, correctional or mental health or social service facilities, etc.), and what, if any, criminogenic qualities do they have as currently managed?

What are the proposed or likely future land uses in the area (development plans by local and outside interests)?

Are there other features of this location that may be contributing to crime and disorder problems here?

Are there any helpful locations nearby (churches; schools, especially ones available after hours as community centers; businesses; residences of desirably nosy neighbors; safe havens for children; neighborhood homes with exemplary, functional families; battered women's shelters; police stations; firehouses; hospitals; community mental health clinics; child guidance centers; post offices; etc.)?

Are there any places that can be used as safe surveillance points?

SUSCEPTIBILITIES OF THE PROBLEM, THE PROBLEM SOLVERS, AND STRATEGIC GOALS TO OPTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

What previous efforts have been made to address this problem, and what seemed to work and not to work? Under what conditions?

Can the problem be eliminated or reduced? How much reduction is enough for the key stakeholders to care about the response?

Can the harm be reduced even if the frequency of the offense cannot be, and will that matter sufficiently to key stakeholders?

What is the potential for addressing the conflict and harm at issue in a way that tests community and other stakeholder receptivity to a "restorative justice" or "community justice" approach (see Pranis 1997; Van Ness and Strong 1997; Nicholl 1997)?

If the harm cannot be sufficiently reduced, can the team ethically capitalize on the problem to help advance other legitimate strategic objectives (e.g., fostering police-community trust, community organizing, coalition building, securing grants for staffing a community group, for community development, or for other purposes)?

What can the community, the police, and other government agencies do with resources they have or can get to affect the victims, offenders, locations, and other stakeholders?

In particular, are there Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) options that could reduce the vulnerability of the location to the problem?

What development plans and which developers interested in this area should be considered in picking optimal target problems and optimal responses?

What are the risks of unintended consequences from the possible solutions?¹⁴ How do we avoid what in the medical arena would be described as negative interaction effects of multiple treatments?

Are there interventions that might be equally useful against the problem but that present different opportunities to build organizational problem-solving capacity, police-community understanding and trust, community and family competence, and resistance to problems? Would different response options have different effects on desirable community development? How would different options influence community capacity and inclination to "deal with conflict and harm" as humane beings should (Pranis 1997, p. 7)?

Given an array of possible responses, in -what order and with what "dosage" should they be attempted?

Which of the collaborators' larger strategic goals might be affected positively or negatively by the type, intensity, and sequence of interventions?

Are the proposed responses aimed at symptoms (for strategic reasons, such as emboldening potential problem-solving allies), at proximate causes, or at the deep roots of the problem? What are the strategic costs and benefits of trying to deal with such symptoms and suspected causes?

Who will do what and when? How will the collaborators keep sufficient track of what has been done and what still needs to be done? Who will do the needed nudging? For what important purposes, other than managing implementation, will records be necessary?

INFORMATION ABOUT ANALYTIC METHODS

What techniques, sources, and data were or will be used to get the information above?

Was critical information confirmed-or will it be-with more than one credible source?

Do enough of the key stakeholders find the key information credible? Without misrepresentations, are there different types of information that could be emphasized for different stakeholders to maximize the effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy of problem-solving efforts?¹⁵

Have all the directly affected units of the police department and segments of the community been consulted and involved to the extent possible-or will they be-in analyzing the problem and devising, fielding, and assessing the possible solutions?

Have preparations been made to collect the kind of conventional and creative before/after information-and, if feasible, data about comparison groups or locations-that could help reveal whether the desired changes in the problem have occurred and whether there have been unintended, adverse consequences or unanticipated accomplishments? There might be, for instance, a "diffusion of benefit" beyond the offenders, victims, and places directly addressed (Skogan 1997, p. 9).

A number of these questions take time, persistence, ingenuity, and, not infrequently, courage to answer accurately. Predictably, in light of more than a decade of experience with police-community problem solving around the nation, some of the officers and CDC practitioners in both sites have at various junctures felt impatient with wading through the analysis before jumping into solutions. Perhaps the varying tolerance of participants for analysis is partially explainable by personality differences, by a melange of life and organizational pressures, and by different levels of indoctrination and experience concerning the hazards of a "ready, fire, aim" approach to successful problem solving. As noted earlier, we also suspect there is a powerful relationship between one's patience with a task and one's capacity to do it well, which in turn may depend on basic skills, education, available support systems, and competing demands. Add to this intolerance stew our society's general longing for instant breakfast and microwave dinners, Polaroid pictures, EZ On/EZ Off highway rest stops, mega megahertz computer speed, and a host of quick fixes. A Martian might be forgiven for concluding that the whole nation is afflicted with @ !*#@#* (a rough translation would be Attention Deficit Disorder). The news, therefore, is not that some CSI practitioners some of the time have disdained analysis as a prelude to response; it is that many (particularly the police) have not.

Police Thinking Outside the Box

We have been struck by the willingness of police officers at various ranks to spend considerable energy (even on their own time) imagining and testing the idea that helping business incubation and other forms of community development might be worthwhile arrows in their crime control quiver. ¹⁶ This is remarkable given both traditional concerns about integrity risks when police "cozy up" to individual business proprietors and given the larger patience-testing questions of the CSI strategy. One of those larger questions is how the practitioners will handle the challenge of seeding for long-term community development, development that may not fully blossom in their lifetimes. Yet,

as we reflect on hours spent with, among others, such Seattle personnel as Officers Tom Doran and Dave Sylvester, Sergeant Mike Meehan, Lieutenants Harry Bailey and Dick Schweitzer, Captains Tag Gleason and Wanda Barkley, Community Policing Bureau Director Nancy McPherson, and Chief Norm Stamper, and! such Kansas City police as Officers Tim Bedard, Marilyn Bell, and Jonathan Patton, Sergeants Phil Smith and Kent Moore, Captains Paul Weatherford, John Hamilton, and Mike Sola, and Major Francy Chapman, it seems remarkable in our generation that they have mustered and maintained such unusual levels of determination to help the CSI plant sequoias. Additional personnel in both agencies are getting more involved with each passing month. My apologies for any oversights in crediting those police who have thus far done the "heavy lifting" of this project.

Beyond-the-box thinking in Seattle was evident at one of the early meetings of what the participating local police and CDC staff have dubbed their Community Action Partnership. There, a free-ranging discussion ensued about the kinds of commerce that attract people who live elsewhere in the Seattle area to visit the Chinatown-International District. All concurred that many people come for cultural and culinary purposes. This prompted the question whether various things could be done-if an infusion of more nonresidents would be welcomed by the community-to promote additional tourism and shopping.

This line of inquiry turned up a range of ideas that might cause anyone familiar with the traditional police roles of the past several decades to conclude that we were not only outside the box but perhaps not even in Kansas any longer. For instance, Jan Johnson, the brave, artistic, and iconoclastic live-in owner of the low-rent Panama Hotel in the neighborhood, reported that she had been amazed to discover in the basement of her old building a number of large steamer trunks. These, scholars confirmed for her, held historically significant memorabilia of the shameful World War II Japanese internment experience. During the 1940s, the building occupied a place of significance in the bustling Japanese section of the International District.

"What if [that great question of Hewlett-Packard's] . . . we worked together to convert the Panama into the nation's principal museum on the Japanese Internment?" asked a first-line police officer. Some months later, the possibility would be preempted by the ribbon-cutting ceremony for such a museum in California. Nevertheless, it was the spirit of the inquiry rather than its realization that was important at this juncture of the budding CSI. Similarly, when CDC manager Michael Yee revealed during a brainstorming meeting that, when he craves really good Chinese food, he gets in the car and drives 2 hours north to Vancouver rather than eating at one of the many restaurants in the International District, one could almost see the lightbulbs illuminating over the officers' heads.

"What if . . . we opened the best Chinese restaurant on the West Coast?" It's the kind of bold query that gives an economic development consultant goosebumps.

One approach that has already begun to reduce a targeted disorder problem in Seattle's International District is securing voluntary agreements by convenience store operators to

stop selling fortified (high-alcohol content) wine. The first minimarket operator who cooperated was applauded in a CSIfunded "thank you" ad in the community newspaper.

In Kansas City, working in an emerging partnership with several community groups-including one with whom the police previously communicated mostly by rumor"-a team of officers is also engaging a fascinating array of entrenched problems. These include notorious hot spots of crime such as convenience stores; "redlining" of neighborhoods by food delivery services, locksmiths, and other businesses; and a decades-long practice of illegal trash dumping on the neighborhood's vacant lots by private waste haulers.

"What if. . .?"

The possibilities that the Kansas City police have been willing to entertain, despite their realization that implementation might entangle them in the underbrush of economic, political, organizational, and other impediments, include the following:

Supporting, in some as yet unspecified ways, a community resident who looked the manager of the parasitic convenience store in the eye at a community meeting and vowed to open a competing store across the street if the minimarket didn't clean up its act. While this retired gentleman probably was bluffing, there may be a quiet cadre of cautious onlookers who could pick up his idea and start a new neighborhood business.

Launching a food delivery service to bring pizzas, Chinese, or other food to neighborhood residents, to compensate for the refusal of well-known national franchises to do so.

Founding a waste-hauling company that would provide reliable, affordable service in picking up and properly disposing of such large items as furniture and kitchen and laundry appliances.

The food delivery and waste-hauling enterprises could offer the additional benefits of employing currently unemployed or underemployed neighborhood residents, some of whom might otherwise make more problems than they solved. In Savannah, as in other cities, a related approach focused on diverting idle youngsters from mischief by involving them in neighborhood beautification and morale building: Local youth were paid to "cut grass and collect trash in the area's numerous vacant lots" (Kennedy 1996, p. 17).

About a year ago, several of the first-line Kansas City officers involved in this project displayed the kind of dare-to-be-different entrepreneurial spirit the CSI is all about. Presenting their willingness to try the unconventional as a model for her other officers to consider, Major Chapman summarized,

Following a child-pedestrian accident in August [1996], Metro patrol officers in the Town Fork Creek neighborhood [the one that previously communicated with the police mostly by rumor] learned that three deaf children were living within a two block area [of the accident]. In an attempt to make the area safer for these children to play, officers

requested that the City post traffic warning signs to alert motorists. They learned that such signs would have to be privately purchased and erected. The officers surveyed the residents and obtained their support for signs to be posted. The officers then pooled their own money to purchase two signs to warn motorists about deaf children at play. They erected the signs on their own time. (Chapman 1996, p. 12)

More recently, the CSI officers in Kansas City, actively consulting with community residents and the owner and manager of the offending convenience store, have "weeded" the store and its small parking lot. How long the drug dealers and ruff ans will stay "weeded" remains to be seen-as does the future profitability of the convenience store and nearby businesses. But there are already encouraging signs of neighborhood seeding. Along-time resident, who lived close to the convenience store, moved his family away 4 years ago. For him the last straw in the pile of crime, drugs, disorder, and neighborhood deterioration was when gunshots blasted through a window of his house. But in the spring 1997, citing the police-community accomplishments in restoring order, this resident moved his family back to the neighborhood. For the first time in years, he told the police, his daughter and her friends can play in the front yard and sleep through the night without being startled by gunplay!

The kind of entrepreneurial responses that are beginning to dance in the heads of the police and their CDC partners in Kansas City and Seattle lie at the core of the CSI strategy: Look for structural solutions that reduce the frequency with which residents have to summon the police to stem disorder or keep the peace. And look for solutions that foster social-cultural-economic development of the sort that "competent communities" depend on to inhibit criminality and to raise and support good citizens. The quest is to sow the seeds of perennials so that, as the advertising sign at a suburban Chicago garden shop proclaims, "Our stock yields impressive perennial dividends."

CONCLUSION

In a brief review of literature on crime control in public housing, Jack Greene (1997a) concluded, "Cumulatively, these studies suggest that `community building' as a strategy for addressing crime and disorder problems has promise" (pp. 11-12). The CSI is an encouraging work-in-progress that is trying to add evidence that Greene is right. In tending the ghetto gardens of this project, the police and community developers are striving to clear many of the rocks and old roots that can confound collaboration and cultivation, have begun to weed, and are starting to shop for suitable seed.

This cadre of police and entrepreneurs is inspiringly imaginative and intellectually, physically, and organizationally courageous. With the persistence and lifeforce of the unexpected blade of grass that punctures the urban sidewalk in search of sunshine, they labor in Kansas City, Seattle, and New York to find and try approaches that will help make the neighborhoods in which they work and live safer and more economically and socially functional. Perhaps in time their efforts will, in David Kennedy's phrase, produce "visible sparks of new spirit" (Kennedy 1996, p. 14). Maybe they will even teach other communities some valuable lessons about the symbiosis of building neighborhood safety

and safely building neighborhoods.

NOTES

1. Weed and Seed is one of several Department of Justice grant and coordinating programs aimed at encouraging comprehensive community-based initiatives (Robinson 1996, p. 5; Conly and McGillis 1996). Several of these programs have been modified or initiated under teams led by Attorney General Janet Reno and Assistant Attorney General (AAG) for the Office of Justice Programs Laurie Robinson. AAG Robinson pulled no punches when she declared that all such programs have to go beyond "lip service" and decried "repackaging old ideas with new labels and calling it progress" (Robinson 1996, p. 7).

2. For a consideration of the cost-effectiveness of the three strikes law in controlling California crime, see Greenwood, Rydell, Abrahamse, Cauklins, Chiesa, Model, and Klein (1994) and MacKenzie (1997).

3. But the process of weeding may actually improve the garden beyond its condition before the infestation: "Weeds are sometimes thought of as a punishment for man. They actually do many helpful things. Cultivating to uproot and destroy the weeds loosens the soil, thus making possible for air and water to more easily reach the roots of the crop plants... Weeds when plowed under enrich the soil by adding humus and minerals" (Jaques 1959, pp. 8-9). And history teaches that, as Mark Moore often observes, "most of today's problems were yesterday's solutions." For example, "Many of the plants that are now called 'weeds' were brought here from Europe by the early settlers for herbal uses.... But those that ... readily multiplied where not wanted became known as 'weeds' " (Embertson 1979, p. 10).

4. "Some weeds . . . multiply so rapidly by a spreading root system that they completely take over patches of ground to the exclusion or choking out of practically all other plants. Sodium chlorate or any of several other chemicals will permanently kill such patches but will leave the plot of ground sterile to the growth of any plants from one to several years" (Jaques 1959, p. 8). If one were to switch paradigms toward a community justice model, the question might become whether we can be "tough on crime" by being warm on communities, that is, by facilitating the "connectedness" of people around a shared commitment to core values and agreed-on codes of

maintenance, what sense would it make to constrain the police to achieve their mission solely through officer deployment and expenditures on police salaries, training, and equipment?

17. The police had no contact person at this long-established group. For its part, the group was openly distrustful of the police, including expressing reluctance, when invited to attend a CSI brainstorming session, to meet in a police facility, and even asking the police who came to a neighborhood site for the meeting to wear civilian

clothes. For a review of the literature on citizen confidence in the police, see Geller and Toch (1996, pp. 113-149) and sources cited therein.

conduct. Pranis (1997) adds, "In our anxiety and fear around crime we have been inadvertently waging war on our sense of community, our connectedness to one another, our humanity" (p. 7).

5. The well-motivated, hard-working staff of DOJ's Office of Weed and Seed should not be berated for trying to help communities through a program they did not name.

6. PERF's technical assistance in East New York has been provided by Chuck Wexler and Mary Ann Wycoff.

7. Another promising recent undertaking is the "Emerging Neighborhood Markets Initiative," a project of The Social Compact, a Chevy Chase, Maryland-based national "coalition of private industry leaders who have joined forces to increase private investment in America's lower income neighborhoods." Its first in-field effort has been spearheaded in Chicago by Shorebank in collaboration with other major area companies. Together, they are challenging conventional thinking and traditional data that portray low- and moderate-income urban neighborhoods (e.g., those with median household incomes around \$20,000) as too weak in purchasing power to be valuable markets for retail and service businesses (Shorebank Corporation 1997). This is very much like LISC's Retail Initiative and, more generally, LISC's Jobs and Income Programs, which recognize the frequently overlooked market potential of inner-city neighborhoods. Acronym cop Tom Doran notes that the title "Emerging Neighborhood Markets Initiative" is unhappily close to spelling ENEMY. And I fear LISC may regret subliminally associating their Jobs and Income Program with the homonym gyp.

8. Crime is bad for most legitimate business except, of course, the crime control business. The private security industry continues to grow topsylike, engendering both feelings of public safety and lingering concerns about waste, fraud, and abuse of rights. Many communities mostly rural have enjoyed the employment boost afforded by the construction of a prison in their midst. Crime also makes criminology a growth industry. Biologist H. E. Jaques offered this career counseling to his mentees: "[A] careful study of weeds may become an interesting pastime. Weeds are never lacking in abundance and no one objects to their being collected. When working in the garden or cutting a patch of weeds we have found that naming the species of plants as they fall before the hoe or scythe makes an excellent dispeller of monotony. One may become so interested that he even regrets when the otherwise boring task is completed" (Jaques 1959, p. iii). It is enough to make one rethink the classic description by street cops of their job as entailing long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of terror. Our willingness to proceed in the absence of convincing research discrediting an intuitively sound approach made us resonate cautiously with a comment by Robbie Robinson, Syracuse University's new Director

of Public Safety. "Yes, community policing can make a difference," he asserted. "No bars, charts, or graphs-just one man's opinion!" (Robinson 1997, p. 25).

9. I thank management adviser Deborah Allen-Baber of Triangle Consulting in Chicago for helping me appreciate that a key to successful organizations is their alignment of "goals, roles and procedures."

10. Police in Surrey, England, have contributed an intriguing typology of public safety interventions: Peacemaking is an emergency intervention to end a particular crime or instance of disorder, peacekeeping is an ongoing order maintenance and crime control response, and peace building is the enhancement of institutional and community capacity to prevent crime, disorder, and fear and to foster healthy social interaction. NOBLE (1997, p. 33) has declared that what police departments need "is not public relations units but community intervention units" that collaborate to reduce youth violence and other social problems through "engineering, education and enforcement" (see also Kelling and Coles 1996).

11. Victories and setbacks are rarely unmitigated. Just as a football team can lose to its arch rival but gain tactical information useful for the next encounter or "luck out" when a star opposing player suffers a season-ending injury, so too can cooperative crime fighters make inroads or learn

important problem-solving lessons from even temporary defeats. Sensible, successful team leaders and their overseers usually have helped their colleagues and subordinates adopt a modus operandi that includes celebrating wins, figuring out what besides serendipity caused a success, and learning, whenever possible nonpunitively, from defeats-as they say, "failing forward" (see Geller and Swanger 1995).

12. My compilation-and the assembly of these questions by several of the sources on which I relied-are proof of the proposition that "originality is remembering what you heard but forgetting where you heard it" (unknown n.d.). In truth, my sources include Goldstein (1979, 1990), Eck and Spelman (1987), Weisel (1990), the Chicago Police Department (1996), Toch and Grant (1991), Spelman and Eck (1987), Moore (1992), PERF (1997), the San Diego Police Department (1994), Lungren (1992), Brann and Whalley (1992), and Cordner (1988). As John Eck and colleagues framed the popular four-phase, problem-solving process, immortalizing a former girlfriend named Sara, they delineated the steps of scanning, analysis, response, and assessment.

13. I have wondered whether fiction writer O'Henry might inspire another in Attorney General Janet Reno's deservedly celebrated series of federal government interagency coordination-and-cooperation efforts. The author wrote a famous mystery story in which all the credible witnesses insisted that nobody had come to a particular house during the time period in question. In fact, the one who came to the house every day but was overlooked precisely because his visits were so routine was

the postal carrier. What, if anything, could the U.S. Postal Service do to help identify community problems and solutions? Could it do anything to alleviate neighborhood crime and fear without jeopardizing employees or the efficient delivery of the mail? What about helping to sponsor a public service announcement disseminated through the media and neighborhood mailboxes? This might be consistent with the Postal Service spending money on advertisements seeking public respect and competing for market share in the overnight delivery business.

14. For instance, Skogan (1997, pp. 9-11) enumerates the risks that "crime can be . . . displaced in space or time, or by type of offense or type of victim"; that there will be the criminogenic effects of "making new criminals" or "making new crimes"; and that dogged determination to address particular problems will provoke corruption or demoralization among the problem-solving team.

15. Gene Rodenberry, creator of the TV series Star Trek, told the story of his original "pitch session" to CBS Network TV executives. He knew that the social criticism that would infuse many of the episodes, while of intense interest to him and some of the proposed writers, would fly like a lead balloon for most of the network bean counters. Accordingly, when he was given his audience with the CBS bigwigs and asked to describe in one sentence the gist of the show he was asking them to spend millions of dollars producing, Rodenberry replied, "It's kind of like Wagon Train in the sky."

16. For some good ideas about what government agencies can do to facilitate community building, see the Committee for Economic Development (1995, pp. 53-59). Among other recommendations is that "the public sector should invest in strengthening the organizational capacity of community-based institutions" (Committee for Economic Development 1995, p. 58). While needs for "staff development, more efficient management systems, and enhancement of organizational stability through multiyear funding and funding not tied to specific projects" (p. 58) could be addressed through a variety of federal, state, or local government programs, what about the police? Is it beyond imagination that a precinct or district commander should be given the discretion, within reason, to invest a portion of his or her annual budget or personnel resources in strengthening community organizations so they are more resilient strands in the net of informal social control? Even if the police goal was limited ! to crime control and order

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