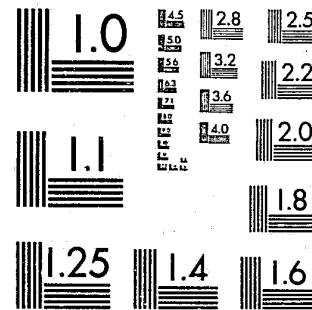


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THE PROBLEM-ORIENTED APPROACH TO IMPROVING POLICE SERVICE

A Description of the Project and an Elaboration of the Concept

Volume I

This project was designed to learn more about what is involved in promoting thoughtful consideration within a police agency of community problems by focusing on these problems and the police response to them.

This is the first in a series of four volumes emanating from the project. The first portion of this volume describes the background of the project and the plans for conducting two case studies. The balance of the volume is an elaboration on the overall concept of the problem-oriented approach, recorded prior to undertaking the two case studies.

Volume II in the series contains the results of the first case study—an experimental inquiry that focused on the problem of the drinking-driver. Volume III contains a memorandum summarizing the results of a similar inquiry into the problem of the repeat sexual offender.

The final volume in the series, volume IV, reports on the methods employed in conducting the two inquiries and contains reflections on what was learned in this effort to develop the problem-oriented approach.

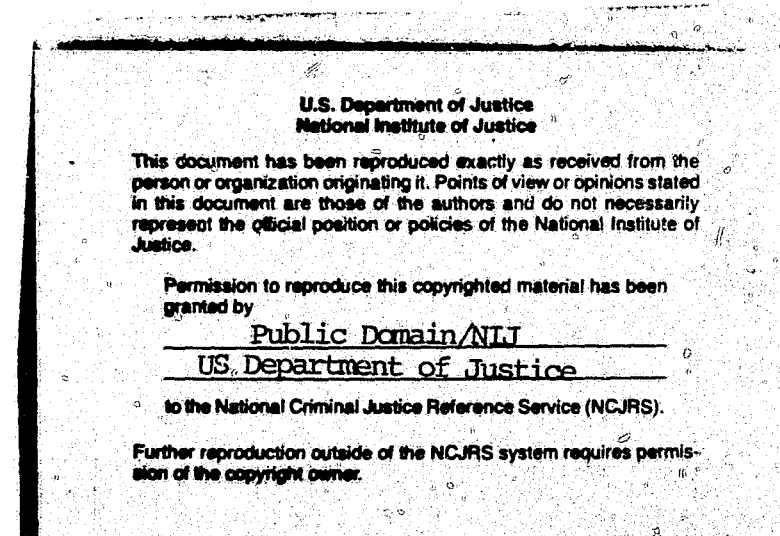
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PROJECT ON DEVELOPMENT OF A PROBLEM-ORIENTED  
APPROACH TO IMPROVING POLICE SERVICE  
at the  
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#### A. BACKGROUND OF THIS PROJECT.

This project grew out of an article published by Herman Goldstein, the project's principal investigator, in the April 1979 issue of Crime and Delinquency entitled "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach." The general thrust of the article, addressed to a lay audience, was summarized in this abstract:

*The police have been particularly susceptible to the "means over ends" syndrome, placing more emphasis in their improvement efforts on organization and operating methods than on the substantive outcome of their work. This condition has been fed by the professional movement within the police field, with its concentration on the staffing, management, and organization of police agencies. More and more persons are questioning the widely held assumption that improvements in the internal management of police departments will enable the police to deal more effectively with the problems they are called upon to handle. If the police are to realize a greater return on the investment made in improving their operations, and if they are to mature as a profession, they must concern themselves more directly with the end product of their efforts.*

*Meeting this need requires that the police develop a more systematic process for examining and addressing the problems that the public expects them to handle. It requires identifying these problems in more precise terms, researching each problem, documenting the nature of the current police response, assessing its adequacy and the adequacy of existing authority and resources, engaging in a broad exploration of alternatives to present responses, weighing the merits of these alternatives, and choosing from among them.*

*Improvements in staffing, organization, and management remain important, but they should be achieved—and may, in fact, be more achievable—within the context of a more direct concern with the outcome of policing.*

Encouragement to undertake further work on the problem-oriented concept came from a wide range of sources-- academics, practitioners, criminal justice planners, and others concerned with improving police services. Twelve police chiefs, invited to a three-day seminar in Madison in July 1979 convened for the specific purpose of exploring

the concept, urged further development. They acknowledged that their respective departments knew relatively little about the substantive problems they were expected to handle in the community and that focusing on these problems could produce a sounder basis upon which to work for improvement in the operation of their agencies. The National Institute of Justice subsequently included further development of the concept in their research program. It was in response to an invitation from the institute that the proposal for the project was prepared. Professor Goldstein, who is a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin Law School, was joined in the endeavor, at this stage, by Charles Susmilch, a sociologist trained in research methodology who had recently worked on the evaluation staff of the Police Foundation and who subsequently was associated as a researcher with the Department of Sociology at the university.

The interest in the concept was attributable, at least in part, to a feeling among those responsible for directing reform efforts and setting research agendas that a new overall framework in which to work for improvement in policing was acutely needed and that problem-oriented policing might provide that framework. The emphasis on the "end product" or "output" of the police

effort has a great deal of appeal as the core around which such a framework might be constructed. It is a way of underlining what many people feel should indeed be the most important concern in attempting to improve police functioning; i.e., the quality and effectiveness of the police response to the range of problems that together constitute the very reason for having a police agency.

Support for the concept was obviously welcome, but at the same time somewhat troubling, for we suspect some of it may have reflected the periodic expression of understandable frustration in dealing with the seemingly intractable problems confronted in policing and a readiness to turn to any newly articulated approach, however undeveloped it may be, in the hope of reducing the magnitude of such problems. The record of the past decade's efforts to deal with crime and to improve policing is marked by numerous programs, designed to emphasize specific approaches to change, that were launched before they were fully developed and that were, as a consequence, quickly abandoned.

The record of past programs cautioned against unrealistic expectations. The problem-oriented approach is not fully developed, and it would most likely suffer a fate similar to earlier efforts if agencies, through some nationally sponsored program, were encouraged to implement

it without benefit of further development. So far, the principal value of the approach has been in drawing attention to the need for redirecting improvement efforts from focusing primarily on the police as an institution to focusing on the specific problems that the police are expected to handle in the community. A tremendous amount of work remains to be done before stronger claims can be made for the concept and before police agencies can be urged, with a greater degree of specificity, to adopt it.

With this awareness, we reflected on how one might begin to develop the concept within the limits of a single, relatively modest research project. What could be done to work through some of the anticipated difficulties in adopting the approach; to explore, in more specific terms, its potential; and, at the same time, to learn from the experience in ways that could be shared with others who are in a position to contribute to developing the concept? These were the principal questions with which we struggled in responding to the National Institute's invitation to submit a proposal for funding.

We identified two quite different projects in our initial efforts to answer these questions. The first called for the development of the processes implied in the problem-oriented approach. It would draw on whatever

empirical research is currently available and would explore in greater depth some of the difficulties one can anticipate (e.g., availability of data, limitations on staff, availability of community resources, and resistance of rank and file). Such an effort would have helped meet some of the need for greater specificity in advancing the concept, but the end result would still necessarily have been quite general and somewhat abstract.

The second project called for working with a police department on several "live" problems. This would entail gathering as much knowledge as possible regarding each problem as it exists in the specific community, capturing an accurate description of the current police responses to the problems and their effectiveness, examining the use being made of existing authority, brainstorming about possible alternatives and their potential effectiveness, and pushing as far as possible to explore the potential value of these alternatives and what would be involved in their implementation. Further conceptual development of the problem-oriented approach would be inductive, flowing from the experience in addressing the specific problems.

The first project appealed to us because, as stated earlier, we were acutely aware of the need to develop the problem-oriented concept before putting it to a test.



The appeal of the second project was in the opportunity it would afford to "dig in"; to acquire more rapidly the specific knowledge we need to develop the concept in order to move beyond discussing it in abstract terms. We anticipated that our product would be greatly enriched by live examples. The second alternative had the added feature of enabling us to move immediately to contributing knowledge on substantive problems the police must confront. It would make it possible for us to begin to do what we are advocating that the police do--to blast through to a direct concern with the core of police business.

The project we decided to undertake combined elements of the two plans. The first stage, requiring approximately four months, called for conceptual development of the type that was contemplated in the first alternative described above. But because of the compressed nature of this conceptual effort, it obviously was planned to be less comprehensive than if this were the sole objective of the project. And it was anticipated that the results of the effort would be tentative and lacking in operational specifics.

The second and third stages, each lasting approximately four or five months, called for working on two live problems selected for analysis. The proposed research

would be facilitated because of the interest and collaboration of the Madison Police Department. The problems, although of special concern to the citizens of Madison, which is the community that would serve as our laboratory, would also be problems of common concern to police elsewhere.

Given what was said about the state of development of the problem-oriented approach, we realized it would be premature to place any police agency in the position of implementing the concept while the researchers limited themselves to observing on the sideline. To work through some live problems, in a depth not previously reached, it became clear to us that we, the researchers, would have to become directly involved in the project. We explored several levels of involvement. One called for total immersion--with us not only developing techniques for inquiry into the problems selected for examination, but actually making the inquiries. Another level called for the kind of involvement typically associated with consulting relationships, in which we would train police personnel to carry out the inquiries and we would provide technical help as they progressed.

In analyzing the tradeoffs in these different levels of involvement, we concluded that our direct involvement

in conducting the inquiries would increase substantially both the depth and breadth of the project over what could otherwise be achieved with available resources. We based this conclusion on several factors. First, since Goldstein was responsible for having articulated the problem-oriented concept, much of the work involved in communicating the perspective in the course of formulating the project and in keeping the project on track would be facilitated. Second, the skills and knowledge associated with social science research--especially those possessed by Susmilch--would otherwise have to be taught to police staff. Third, a research effort that has one foot in a university was likely to afford easier access to some sources of data (such as offenders and victims) that may, at least in initial explorations, be less accessible to the police. Finally, the bureaucratic arrangements necessary for the development of a more consultative-type relationship, despite the cooperation of the department, would be time consuming and difficult.

Unfortunately, it was recognized that, as researcher involvement increases, the extent to which one could generalize from the project in applying its findings to other jurisdictions would decrease. This was particularly so because of the unique experience and interest that the

researchers would bring to the project. Beyond this, there were the obvious difficulties involved in any effort to describe or evaluate one's own efforts.

Weighing these considerations, we elected to adopt a relationship with the department in which we would immerse ourselves totally in the project. To reduce limitations on the transferability of our experience, every effort would be made in our research to utilize techniques that are within the capacity of an average police agency. For example, in the analysis of data on one of the live problems, a "best possible" statistical analysis might call for a multiple discriminant analysis, but we planned to attempt to achieve similar results with tabular analysis. We committed ourselves to choosing methods that were both inexpensive and straightforward and that at the same time would yield useful, reliable, and valid data. We thus planned to role play the part of a police department researcher, working within an estimate of what we sense might reasonably be expected in resources within the average police agency. (In a slight departure from this role, we thought it important, at this stage in the development of the concept, to capitalize on our semi-independent status to explore ways in which the police may gain access to sources of information not now readily available to them.)



The fourth and final stage, taking two to four months, would be devoted to analyzing our experience and distilling those findings that will be helpful in further development of the concept. In anticipating the results of our efforts, we were constantly aware that the project was not a test of the problem-oriented concept and ought not to be evaluated on this basis. It was, rather, an effort to develop the concept through empirical example, and the measure of its success should, therefore, be the contribution it makes to this development. We anticipated, of course, that we would learn a great deal about the two problems we explored (and thereby aid the Madison Police Department in development of more effective responses). But our primary objectives were to learn about the process involved in making the inquiries; to reach some conclusions about the merits of different aspects of the process; and to assess its value in promoting a greater concern for substantive matters in police agencies.

In this, the first of four volumes reporting on the project, we summarize the results of the first stage of the project in which we endeavored to expand on the problem-oriented concept before undertaking the two case studies. The material incorporates the ideas previously set forth in the April 1979 article and builds on them.

B. NEED FOR GREATER CONCERN WITH SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS.

Earlier we described substantive matters in policing as the specific behavioral problems that arise in the community and that the public expects the police to handle. Experience has taught us that this definition, although having the advantage of being brief, does not fully communicate the focus we are trying to convey. In other areas, concern about substantive matters would be equated to concern about the product, "service delivery," or the "output" of an organization or a manufacturing process. In medicine, for example, substantive concerns would relate to the diseases and injuries being treated compared to the procedural concerns involved in running hospitals, employing doctors and nurses, and financing hospital care--all of which we must do in order to impact on disease and to treat injuries. In automobile manufacturing, we see concern with the quality and performance of the car that comes off the assembly line as a substantive concern, while concerns about the operation of the assembly line itself are of a procedural nature.

In policing, a concern with substantive matters would concentrate the attention of police and citizens on the common problems police must handle (e.g., sexual assaults, shoplifting, burglaries, speeding, domestic disputes,

and complaints of noise) and would result in the more direct exploration of the effect that police operations have on these problems. What, for example, is the specific nature of the shoplifting problem? What are the police doing about it? How effective are their efforts?

1. Lack of Concern with Substantive Matters.

Relatively little in the current organization, training, staffing, and administration of police agencies reflects the regular, continuing, institutionalized concern for substantive matters contemplated in the problem-oriented concept. Some agencies come closer than others. Some chiefs engage with regard to substantive matters more than others. But the field as a whole has little tradition for taking a serious, inquiring, in-depth interest in the wide range of problems that constitute its business, nor does it have a tradition for attempting to proceed logically from the knowledge that might be gained from such a process toward fashioning a response.

The efficient running of a hospital, as cited in the earlier examples, is of crucial importance in determining the effectiveness of the medical field in treating illnesses. And the efficient operation of an

assembly line is essential to automotive manufacturers in producing a quality vehicle at minimum cost. Similarly, all of the considerations that go into the running of a police agency are of the utmost importance in determining the quality of the end product or the service delivered to the community. One should not, therefore, disparage the tremendous effort that has gone into creating and maintaining a well-organized, adequately staffed, efficient police agency.

What is troubling in policing, when compared to these other fields, is the imbalance that exists between concern for the organization and concern for substantive matters. Not only have the latter been neglected, with the result that community problems have not received the kind of careful attention they require, but the skewed, almost perverse obsession with the running of the organization has resulted in a structuring of the organization and its procedures that has often gone forward without consideration of the problems on which the whole enterprise is intended to impact.

This situation is not unique to police agencies. It is a common phenomenon in our society, evidenced, for example, in the operations of school systems, colleges, and social agencies. We undertook the project, therefore,

with full awareness of the prevalence of the "means over ends" syndrome in bureaucratic organizations, but with the conviction that the imbalance is especially acute in policing; that the absence of adequate concern with substantive problems has become a major impediment not only in dealing more effectively with these problems, but also in the continuing efforts to improve the police institution as well.

The imbalance is evidenced most clearly in what has gone into efforts to improve police functioning. Until the late 1960s, the so-called reform of policing in this country concentrated almost exclusively on internal management: streamlining the organization, upgrading personnel, modernizing equipment, and establishing more businesslike operating procedures. All of the major commentators on the police since the beginning of the century--Leonhard F. Fuld (1909), Raymond B. Fosdick (1915), August Vollmer (1936), Bruce Smith (1940), and O. W. Wilson (1950)--stressed the need to improve the organization and management of police agencies. Indeed, the emphasis on internal management was so strong that professional policing was defined primarily as the application of modern management concepts to the running of a police department.

The sharp increase in the demands made on the police in the late 1960s (increased crime, civil right demonstrations, and political protest) led to several national assessments of the state of policing. The published findings contained some criticism of the professional model of police organization, primarily because of its impersonal character and failure to respond to legitimate pressures from within the community. Many recommendations were made for introducing a greater concern for the human factors in policing, but the vast majority of the recommendations that emerged from the reassessments demonstrated a continuing belief that the way to improve the police was to improve the organization. Higher recruitment standards, college education for police personnel, reassignment and reallocation of personnel, additional training, and greater mobility were proposed. Thus the management-dominated concept of police reform spread and gained greater stature.

Evidence of the imbalance between procedural and substantive concerns is also reflected in, for example,

- the content of texts on police administration,
- the subject matter of conferences conducted for police administrators and operating personnel,
- the curricula of university programs designed to prepare young people to enter the police field,

- the content of police training programs,
- the prevailing criteria for selecting a police administrator,
- the manner in which police administrators spend their time,
- the content of journals and other publications in the police field,
- the content of plans developed at the state level for improving the police response to crime,
- the frequent absence of participation by police administrators in the discussions and debates that produce public policy for dealing with substantive matters,
- the activities and interests of planning and research units in police agencies.

Occasionally the imbalance surfaces in a more dramatic and sometimes embarrassing fashion as, for example, when strict adherence of a police officer to a procedural requirement seems to get in the way of responding in a sensible manner to an incident that has high visibility in the community. Or when the effectiveness of an officer is overlooked as administrators dwell on a procedural irregularity brought to light in the officer's handling of a situation.

In a classic example, the Chicago Police Department was held up to ridicule in November 1980 when officers whose pictures had appeared in the newspaper because of their success in apprehending a child molester who had terrorized a neighborhood were the subject of an investigation because they appeared in the photographs without their hats.

## 2. What Accounts for the Imbalance?

On reflection, numerous factors, most of them inherent in the nature of police functioning, possibly explain the lack of adequate attention to substantive matters in policing. The factors are uneven in their significance, but are very much interrelated. We cite a number of them here to illustrate their variety and the way in which they relate to each other.

### a. Nature of the Police Function.

The diverse, poorly defined, and somewhat overwhelming character of the police job makes it difficult to establish what, precisely, is the end product of policing. The product is defined in different ways depending on one's interest in the police and what one expects of them.

### b. Focus on Immediate Needs; View of the Police as Palliators.

One of the most common views of the police characterizes them as primarily concerned with meeting immediate, emergency-like needs; as alleviating problems rather than solving or curing them. Greater rewards are attached to improving immediate responses--to increasing speed and efficiency, for example--than to seeking more permanent, longer lasting solutions to the problems that require such responses.

c. Concern with Incidents Rather than Problems.

The working environment of the police encourages thinking of police business as consisting of the handling of incidents that arise rather than as the handling of the problems that collections of similar, oft-recurring incidents constitute. An officer may see only a few incidents of a particular type in a normal work week. The demands of these incidents (different citizens with different personalities in different locations caught up in different combinations of unusual circumstances) understandably lead individual officers to stress uniqueness as opposed to similarities.

d. Confusion as to Who Is Their Client and What Interests Are to Be Served.

A great deal of conflict exists in policing between pleasing the person who calls for help and satisfying broader interests, including those of the total community. An abused spouse may want no more than to have her spouse ordered out of the house. Community interests may want the abusive spouse prosecuted. Fearful citizens may want strangers in their neighborhood checked and persuaded to leave. The strangers and the larger community may place a higher value on freedom of movement. Moving beyond immediate needs would force the police to confront such

conflicts; given their complexity, police understandably tend to shy away from doing so.

e. Intractable Nature of the Substantive Problems Police Confront.

Many of the problems the police must handle are, by their very nature, insolvable. The potential for doing anything about some of them is, at best, very limited. Improving a communications system or establishing a new operating procedure is much more satisfying than trying to devise a new response to shoplifting or prostitution. Nonsubstantive matters are more self-contained within the agency, and the police are, therefore, less dependent on outside forces for their success in dealing with them.

f. Perception that Better Responses, Even If Known, Are Beyond the Capacity of the Community to Place in Effect.

The police may be convinced that a change in public policy or services would greatly relieve a problem with which they must deal, but that the absence of resources or a community consensus leaves them with no alternative but to go on handling it as they have in the past. Who are we, the police ask, to question existing policies or to push for changes? Instead, they tend to "swallow hard"

and concentrate their efforts on handling such incidents in the best manner possible--which naturally focuses on efficiency.

g. Expectation that Police Administrators Should Not Serve as Outspoken Leaders in Shaping Policies on Political or Social Issues.

The police function is defined, in the minds of many, as simply doing, in a dutiful fashion, what is formally required of them. And this is true even if it is widely recognized that what is expected of the police is not feasible or effective. It has been persuasively argued that the police are the "dirty workers" in our society, forced into using sometimes questionable methods to suppress social problems (e.g., to remove disreputable individuals from the streets). The police administrator who surfaces social problems and presses for solutions from the broader community is often thought to be acting outside his bailiwick; he is more often rewarded for sparing both his boss and the community the need to face such problems. This produces a cyclical effect. Because police administrators are not expected to speak out on substantive matters, we tend to select as administrators those who lack the ability to do so.

h. Fear of Police as a Proactive Agency.

Underlying the last point is the realization that we have an understandable, innate fear in this country of a too powerful police force. There is a feeling that, so long as the police are kept in a narrow, reactive role, they are more subject to effective control. When police become proactive--initiating actions on their own (e.g., in the recent Abscam investigations)--substantial segments of the public become anxious about the police and about their own ability as citizens to control the exercise of police authority. This basic attitude--"if we want you, we'll call you"--not only dissuades the police from initiating programs and activities; it conditions many police administrators into believing that they are not expected to initiate discussions on what some see as political and social issues.

i. Absence of Time and Energy.

The job of running a police agency has always been demanding. In recent years, the demands, both on the top administrators and on all others in the agency, have greatly multiplied. Police administrators, especially in large urban areas, struggle to keep up with the most immediate pressures of the day--demands from their



personnel, unions, other regulatory agencies, and special interests in the community. Police are operating in a "survival atmosphere," so it is understandable if administrators and operating officers limit themselves in what they undertake.

j. Narrow Manner in Which Accountability Is Defined.

A police administrator worries about matters such as his employees' speed in responding to calls; their use of deadly force; their courtesy in relating to the public; their integrity; and the manner in which they use their time. These are the matters about which complaints are likely to be filed and for which the administrator is likely to be held accountable. It should not be surprising, therefore, that one of the highest priorities of a police administrator is to get his "house" in order. This is no small undertaking in agencies in which the basics of good administration have not been implemented. Cleaning up a poorly operated police agency, to ensure that employees do what they are supposed to do, can be a totally consuming job.

k. Promotion System.

Committed as we are to selecting police leadership from within the ranks, where all of the rewards are for

very practical performance, police leadership is not motivated to be substantively oriented. Little in the experience of police officers, as they rise through the ranks, equips them to come to grips with substantive concerns. Rarely can a chief stand back far enough to examine critically the impact of his agency's operations on a given problem, nor does he possess the knowledge or skills (e.g., minimal familiarity with research methods) required to engage in such an examination.

3. What Compels or Supports Change? Why Not Leave Things Alone?

Given the rather awesome, complex factors that seem to account for the current imbalance in the concerns of the police, why press for a greater concern with substantive matters? And even if desirable, why press at this particular time?

a. Current Lack of Direction in Working for the Improvement of Police Operations.

Police reform, viewed as a movement that has extended over many years, is now in what can best be described as a "holding pattern." The lack of resources, the absence of any strong pressure for change, and the resistance of police unions to reorganization and new

programs have greatly reduced the momentum that built up during the past two decades. Police administrators in the largest cities are in a period of retrenchment--cutting back on programs, services, staffing, and the purchase of equipment. So long as present conditions continue, no pressure exists to develop new agendas to guide police improvement. If and when such pressure develops (and it could come suddenly as a result of a new wave of concern regarding crime, racial problems, or urban conditions generally), a search will once again be made for the most effective way to upgrade the quality of policing in this country. Having invested with mixed results in the past in models built on improving efficiency, technology, training, and education, the time is ripe to push beyond simply improving the police organization and, by way of reaching to a new plateau, press for greater concern with substantive matters as the vehicle by which improved policing can be achieved.

b. Financial Crisis in Municipal Governments.

The financial plight of most city governments is forcing cutbacks--many quite substantial--in police budgets or is limiting increases to those meeting the costs of inflation. Faced with increasing work loads,

police administrators are required to cut back services and to make more effective use of their personnel. Up to a point, such cutbacks can be made across the board. But there comes a time when municipal officials and police administrators must weigh the impact that police operations have on their capacity to deal with a specific problem; or, vice versa, when community awareness of inattention to a specific problem presses for identifying those aspects of police operations that impact on it, with the hope of restoring or strengthening them. In those communities where the possibility of an increase in personnel and budget does exist, municipal officials are increasingly reluctant to appropriate still more funds without greater assurance than they have received in the past that their investment will have an impact on the problems about which they are concerned. Thus, with a dramatic decrease in resources, it is inevitable that pressure will be greater to identify more clearly the relationship between police use of their resources and the specific behavioral problems of concern to the community.

c. Growth of a Consumer Orientation.

Policing has not yet felt the full impact of consumer advocacy. As citizens press for improvement in police

service, improvement will increasingly be measured in terms of results. Those concerned about battered wives, for example, are not concerned about whether the police who respond to such calls operate with one or two officers in a car, whether the officers are short or tall, or whether they have a college education. Their attention is on what the police do for the battered wife.

d. Increased Internal Resistance to Change that Is Primarily Organizational.

Intended improvements that are primarily in the form of organizational change, almost invariably run into resistance from rank-and-file personnel. The stronger and more militant unions have engaged some police administrators in bitter, prolonged fights over such changes. (Such was recently the case, for example, in Boston where the union brought suit to prevent the commissioner from implementing his reorganization plan.) Because the costs in terms of disruption and discontent are so great, police administrators initiating change will be under increasing pressure from their mayors and the community to demonstrate in advance that the results of their efforts are likely to impact sufficiently on the quality of police service to make the struggle worthwhile. (As a corollary to this observation, there is some indication that rank-

and-file officers would be less resistant to change if it were designed primarily to impact directly on their capacity to deal with substantive problems in ways that make their job easier and more satisfying.)

e. Value of Police Knowledge in Searching for Better Responses to a Community's Problems.

It is ironic that the people who have unusual insight into such a wide range of problems that affect the quality of life in a community, gained from daily exposure to these problems, are least likely to be consulted as a community tries to improve its response to them. Sensitive police officers were fully aware of the pain suffered by women battered by their husbands, the trauma experienced by rape victims, and the horrors of child abuse long before these problems came to be matters of widespread concern. And the police still have more knowledge about some of these problems than those who have mobilized to deal with them. Similarly, the police have long been aware of other major problems that are only now getting appropriate attention: e.g., the increase in arson for profit, the increase in crimes against the elderly, and the plight of the deinstitutionalized chronically mentally ill as they have attempted to adjust to living in the

community. Candid discussion with police officers will bring to light similar problems that cry out for attention because of the pernicious effects they have on individuals and the community, but that have not yet been recognized by others. But somehow, police knowledge of such problems does not, by itself, bring the problems to public light. The police seem almost to be paid to sit on and keep quiet about such problems--with all of the injustices and social costs they entail--until some other force in the community takes an interest in them. As the populations of urban areas struggle with the wide range of problems that currently trouble such areas, the knowledge that the police have regarding these problems should be tapped--earlier and more systematically.

f. Need to Create a Healthier Atmosphere in which Police Can Function.

Numerous studies in recent years have drawn attention to the stress that police officers experience in their jobs and to what some have characterized as the impossible nature of the police function. A major factor contributing to these conditions is the responsibility that police officers have for responding to an endless array of complex social problems without the personal skill, time, and resources that are required to deal with them effectively.

Police administrators are often troubled by the bad light in which they and their agencies are placed through no fault of their own. And thoughtful police officers are often pained by the inadequacy of their response to calls for assistance, aware of what is needed to work out the multiple problems often evidenced in a single incident relating to housing, employment, education, finances, or family relationships. People want police officers who are sensitive to human, democratic values. But the working environment of the police officer encourages callousness--the very characteristic that is so harmful to the quality of police services. The sensitive police officer cannot easily maintain his sensitivities and survive on the job. Although the police are always likely to be confronted with unmet community needs (that is why the police are called), it is unfair to burden them with the responsibility for handling long-standing problems without giving them adequate resources that are helpful in alleviating these problems. Improvement in policing--in all aspects of their operations--requires lifting the yoke that has been placed on them. One way to do this is to enable the police to do something about the problems they are required to handle, even if only to encourage them to speak out about the suffering, abuse, corruption, and injustice they witness.

g. Need to Expand and Refine Police Authority.

Whether the police can or cannot do something about a given problem is often dependent upon the authority they have been granted. The community often assumes that the police have more authority than they do. Fashioning any form of authority, by the legislature and through subsequent interpretation by the courts, is an incredibly difficult chore, balancing--as we must--the need to deal with a given problem with the need to preserve individual rights and to protect against the misuse of police powers. As our society grows increasingly complex, this task is complicated because we do not have reliable data readily available on the effect that the use of specific forms of police authority actually has on the capacity of the police to deal with specific problems. Although strong arguments have been made to authorize the police to engage in wiretapping, eavesdropping, stopping and questioning, and frisking, it is hard to demonstrate that the use of such authority will have a direct impact on specific problems.

What, for example, can be said in specific terms about the impact that wiretapping has on commercial (as distinct from social) gambling? To what extent does authority to stop and question impact on police

effectiveness in dealing with street robbery? In a case [Delaware v. Prouse, 440 U.S. 648 (1979)] involving a challenge to the police practice of stopping drivers for registration and license checks, the United States Supreme Court, in deciding to limit police authority, decried the absence of empirical evidence to support the claim made that such stops both supported the registration and licensing system and contributed to traffic safety.

Whether new forms of authority will be approved by legislatures, or old forms will be sustained or modified by the courts, in the future will depend to a great extent on our capacity to demonstrate more precisely through empirical evidence the relationship between the problem and the authority being advocated. Available data are not now adequate to meet this need for informing both legislatures and courts. Greater awareness by the police of the substantive aspects of their operations, plus the development of skills to collect and use relevant data, would go a long way toward meeting this need.

4. Relationship Between the Need for Greater Concern About Substantive Matters and the Need for Research.

The needs that we have described for greater concern on the part of the police for the more substantive aspects of their operations reach in many directions. Ideally,

we would like to see all aspects of police functioning more heavily influenced by such a concern; e.g., the training of new recruits, the criteria by which police officers are rewarded, the system by which available resources are allocated, and the design of records and communications systems. Ideally, police officers in their contacts with supervisors, citizens in their contacts with police administrators, and local legislators in their contacts with mayors and city managers regarding police matters would all engage more in exploring the impact of police operations on specific community problems.

Movement in these directions, however, requires--almost as a prerequisite--a commitment to more systematic inquiry into the nature of the problems police are expected to handle and into the nature of the current police and community responses. All efforts to push for a greater substantive concern depend heavily on learning more about specific problems and what is currently being done about them. To do a good job of training police officers to deal more effectively with sexual assault, for example, we must know more about the nature of sexual assault; we must have critiqued past responses; and, out of this analysis, we must fashion the most effective response, which should then be taught to

police officers in training. To be able to reward police officers for the quality of their response to a complaint about noise, we must first establish what constitutes a quality response. Before doing that, we must examine the nature of complaints made about noise, explore the alternatives for dealing with such complaints, and choose from among them. That is why the need for systematic inquiry or research emerges as so crucial.

Although, as was previously noted, police have a great deal of knowledge about many of the problems they must handle, this knowledge, absent a commitment to systematic inquiry, has not been refined. Hard facts are often mixed with myths that have been passed down through the years. Assertions based solely on experience have not been tested. Officers with different kinds of experiences tend to see the same problems in different ways. Knowledge gathered by others has not been related to their own knowledge. And since personnel tend to respond to incidents as isolated incidents (in a very individualized manner) rather than to incidents as part of a larger problem, for which a uniform response has been developed, relatively little is known about the nature of these responses. Most important, the absence of any public expectation that the police can be a source



of hard facts regarding the problems they confront has stifled the development of those kinds of pressures and tests that would otherwise have served to refine the knowledge in their possession.

It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that police administrators are often unable to respond to the most basic questions about problems for which the community holds them responsible. The twelve chiefs that the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) invited to the seminar convened in July 1979 to explore application of the problem-oriented concept to policing, were among the most enlightened chiefs in the nation. In preparation for this seminar, lists of questions were compiled illustrating the approach and asking for basic information about three problems that urban police agencies now commonly confront: Street prostitution, the chronically mentally ill, and the robbery of all-night retail establishments. It was thought--both by those who prepared the questions and by the chiefs--that local answers to the questions were essential if one was to design an adequate response to each of the three problems. But the chiefs acknowledged that they were able to answer few of the questions with any degree of confidence. They

said that doing so would require a substantial effort by themselves and their staffs. (Copies of the three sets of questions are included in the appendix.)

5. To What Extent Does the Recent Increase in Research in the Police Field Meet the Need for Inquiry Regarding Substantive Problems?

The amount of research conducted in the police field has increased tremendously in recent years, but most of it is not responsive to the needs identified here. The volume is much too great to subject to detailed review here. At the risk of oversimplification, we note several major categories of research that might appear to some as relevant, if not directly responsive, to the needs we have identified.

Research, as viewed by many police administrators, is associated with the work of planning and research units within police agencies. These units originated out of an effort to provide staff support to operational personnel for improving the management of the agency. They focused, initially, on developing plans for police coverage of special events, on streamlining internal procedures, and on allocating police personnel. They subsequently became involved in forms management, in the design of records and communications systems, and

in the application of computers to police operations. Their focus today is uneven. In some agencies, the planning and research unit has deteriorated into a clerical arm of the chief administrator's office, answering letters and questionnaires. In the vast majority of departments, they remain concerned with improving the management of the agency--developing specifications for new equipment, plans for reorganization, and new procedures. Occasionally, a planning and research unit has examined a substantive aspect of police business on their own initiative with varying degrees of intensity, but such studies appear to be very much the exception. The dominant focus on management is reflected in the characterization of such units in texts on police administration and in the subject matter of college courses devoted to police planning. The choice of topics slated for discussion at the first national meeting of the National Association of Police Planners, scheduled for June 1981, freshly confirms this emphasis.

From among the various research efforts conducted outside police agencies, the most ambitious and highly publicized projects, undertaken with the hope that they would have national significance, have explored major segments of police operations. Studies such as the

Kansas City preventive patrol project (1974); the Rand study of detectives (1976); the Kansas City response time study (1977); the Newark study of foot patrol (1981); and the PERF studies replicating the response time analysis (1981) and examining detective operations (1981) are all very important for the questions they have raised about the value of forms of police activity in which tremendous resources have been invested. But these studies did not tell us much about the police response to specific pieces of police business. And what they did tell us was limited to assessing the effect of the method of operation that was under study. The studies, moreover, were conducted with a national audience in mind; they required resources and methodological skills far beyond the capacity of the agencies in which the studies were conducted; and, with the exception of the Kansas City response time study, they were conducted by outside research organizations, but with the full cooperation of the agencies involved.

A second group of research efforts conducted from outside a police agency are more relevant in that they zero in on substantive problems and examine in some detail the nature of the police response. We have reference, for example, to the studies of robbery by

Conklin (1972), of burglary by Scarr (1973), of robbery by Feeney and Weir (1974), of residential crime by Reppetto (1974), and the studies of police narcotics control by Williams, Redlinger, and Manning (1979). All of these efforts, however, were undertaken with a broad objective in mind; they were not intended to assist the agencies in which the studies were conducted in evaluating the quality of their response to the given problem. It is significant that such efforts tend to be viewed by police practitioners as academic exercises and are rarely utilized in reviewing their own handling of the problem that was studied.

An example of a more recent work at the national level centered on a substantive problem in which a special effort was made to produce a product of more direct value to practitioners is PERF's study of spouse abuse, by Loving (1980). Another is Battelle's study of arson for profit by Karchmer (1980).

Those research efforts that have been most responsive to the needs identified earlier, although limited in various ways, have two primary characteristics in common. They focus on specific substantive problems that the public expects the police to handle, and they do so in a particular community. Some police agencies, for example,

have undertaken, in cooperation with a state planning agency, a university, or a consulting firm, to study in a comprehensive way a specific crime such as residential burglary. Many agencies have zeroed in on the problem of domestic disturbances. And in recent years, some police agencies have examined, in greatly varying depth, their response to sexual assault, crimes against the elderly, and spousal abuse.

Many of these projects resulted from initiatives at the federal level and were carried out with LEAA funding. The earliest efforts were part of the crime-specific program--a concept initiated in California and subsequently adopted by LEAA that encouraged police agencies and total communities to direct their energies to a specific type of crime and to make those changes in existing operations that were deemed necessary to reduce its incidence. Subsequently, LEAA, responding to waves of public interest, made funds available for programs responsive to problems such as domestic violence, sexual assault, crimes against the elderly, and arson. In some communities, these funds were used in part to analyze the nature of the problem as it existed in the community, to evaluate current responses, and to make proposals for improvement.

The Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program (ICAP), in which LEAA invested heavily in its final years, comes close, in some of its multifaceted operations, to analyzing substantive problems in the manner in which we have advocated. As the architects of the very elaborate program that has emerged have stated, ICAP is many things to many people. With emphasis on the use of computerized information, it includes a commitment to related matters such as planning, crime analysis, and directing patrol operations more effectively. Varying in form in the fifty-two cities in which it has been implemented, it may be that, in some of these cities, ICAP is enabling the police agency to examine and critique all aspects of an agency's response to a specifically defined problem. It is not easy to make this judgment based on the descriptive material that is available. Our general impression, however, is that ICAP, as a broad, computer-based management system, lends new emphasis to the "scientific management" of police agencies; that it does not, as one of its central components, direct the attention of police managers to substantive problems in the manner contemplated in the problem-oriented approach.

C. GENERAL OUTLINE OF A PROCESS OF INQUIRY.

Because there is so little tradition for systematic inquiry into substantive problems by police agencies, thinking through the form that such inquiry might take requires covering the most elementary steps as well as the more complex. The original article on the problem-oriented approach described a relatively simple process of inquiry in which police agencies would define more precisely the problems the public expects them to handle, research each problem, undertake a broad exploration of alternatives to their present response, and choose methodically from among these alternatives.

We use these same steps in amplifying our consideration of the process in this section, but wish to emphasize, in doing so, that we use them primarily as a way to conveniently organize our thoughts. In setting up a plan for substantive research in a police agency, the challenge is not in settling upon a lockstep, mechanical process, but rather in working through the details involved in making in-depth inquiries in an agency with no tradition for making such inquiries. We stress this point because the identification of steps in the process will connote to some that one must follow the sequence of steps outlined; that each step leads naturally to the

next; and that one risks error or, at a minimum, wasted effort by moving to a later stage in the process before completing the first. It certainly would be a mistake, for example, to attempt to assess, in any detail, the police response to a given problem before being clear as to the problem on which one is focusing. But exploration of a problem (such as shoplifting) in a local police department in which it has not previously been examined in any depth is not a neat process. A single inquiry--in the form of an interview, an observation, or an examination of records--may provide information that bears on each step in one's plan for inquiry. Observation of the processing of shoplifting cases through the courts, a form of inquiry not likely to be undertaken until after the problem has been defined, may lead to the conclusion that greater precision or more categories are needed in defining the problem. Thus, we view this overall framework for inquiry as a general guide--as much an indication of what we eventually hope to get out of the inquiry as a firm prescription of the order in which the inquiry should be undertaken.

# 1. Defining the Problem.

## a. Local Character of the Inquiry.

By the very nature of what we are proposing, the problem must be defined in the local context. This recognizes that a problem such as commercial robberies or landlord-tenant conflict or bicycle theft may take a radically different form in one community than in another, due in part to the location of the community and its demographic characteristics. This does not mean that the experience of one community in dealing with a specific problem is irrelevant to that of another. But it does mean that each community must make inquiry for itself and that caution must be exercised in comparing problems and in weighing the appropriateness of responses developed elsewhere. This is one of the factors that places a higher value on an inquiry initiated from within a police agency than on a more broadly based academic study of a substantive problem.

## b. Selection of a Substantive Problem.

Police agencies are so beset by problems of all kinds and so limited in their capacity to deal with them that organizational problems will often be redefined as substantive problems in order to qualify them for the

attention advocated here. Moreover, absent familiarity with the overall framework that has led to this concern with substantive problems, it is understandable why a police administrator will nominate a problem for attention that is not in fact substantive. Getting police administrators and those who work with police agencies to distinguish substantive problems from the wide range of other problems with which they must deal is an initial hurdle in development of this process.

c. Need for Specificity.

The police field has a long-standing practice of using overly broad categories to describe police business. Citizens, as well as the police and others working in the criminal justice system, overuse such miscellaneous categories as "crime," "street crime," "disorder," "delinquency," and "violence." Obviously, substantive problems must be defined in much more precise terms before one can begin to examine them.

d. Limitations on the Value of Using Legal Labels.

Initial efforts to define specific elements of police business often lead to the use of labels tied to the criminal code, such as robbery, burglary, and theft.

In some situations, the term used to define the crime has become a convenient and fairly accurate way in which to define the problem as well. We have no difficulty under such circumstances in using the criminal term. But use of the statutory label more often creates complications to which we should be alert.

First, such terms frequently mask diverse forms of behavior. Thus, for example, incidents classified under "arson" might include fires set by teenagers as a form of vandalism, fires set by persons suffering severe psychological problems, fires set for the purpose of destroying evidence of a crime, fires set by persons (or their hired agents) to collect insurance, and fires set by organized criminal interests to intimidate. Each type of incident poses a radically different problem for the police.

Second, if police depend heavily on categories of criminal offenses to define problems of concern to them, others may be misled to believe that, if a given form of behavior is not criminal, it is of no concern to the police. This is perhaps best reflected in the proposals for decriminalizing prostitution, gambling, narcotic use, vagrancy, and public intoxication. The argument, made over and over again, is that removing the criminal label



will reduce the magnitude and complexity of the police function, freeing personnel to work on more serious matters and ridding the police of some of the negative side effects, such as corruption, that these problems produce. But decriminalization does not relieve the police of responsibility. The public expects drunks to be picked up if only because they find their presence on the street annoying or because they feel that the government has an obligation to care for persons who cannot care for themselves. The public expects prostitutes who solicit openly on the streets to be stopped, because such conduct is offensive to innocent passersby, blocks pedestrian or motor traffic, and contributes to the deterioration of a neighborhood. The problem is a problem for the police whether or not it is defined as a criminal offense.

Finally, use of offense categories as descriptive of police problems implies that the police role is restricted to arresting and prosecuting offenders. In fact, the police job is much broader, extending, in the case of burglary, to encouraging citizens to lock their premises more securely, to eliminating some of the conditions that might attract potential burglars, to counseling burglary victims on ways they can avoid similar

attacks in the future, and to recovering and returning burglarized property.

e. Need to Subdivide Problems.

However initially labeled, the problems police are expected to handle are complex and multifaceted. Broad problems need to be broken down into smaller, operationally relevant subproblems. Using a medical analogy, just as different forms of cancer call for different therapies, so different subproblems in policing call for different responses. Car thefts committed by juveniles are amenable to different preventive tactics than are car thefts by professional car thieves. Intrafamily sexual assault requires a different response than sexual assaults by strangers. Ideally, subcategories should be mutually exclusive and should be selected with a view to correlating them with the analysis of the different interests in the subcategory that are discussed in section 2 below.

f. Shifting from a Focus on Incidents to a Focus on Problems.

For many police administrators, a discussion of problems as we have been using that term is itself quite foreign. To the extent that police executives currently focus on the product of their efforts, the predominant

perspective views a call for service or a reported incident as the basic unit of police work. The business of the police is seen as the accumulation of such calls, and efficiency or effectiveness is defined in terms of the speed and finality with which they are handled. Decisions on the deployment of resources and manpower are based, in large measure, on the distribution of incidents and calls. The problem-oriented approach calls for changing the perspective of the police executive to one in which like incidents are grouped as problems-- and the problem becomes the subject of attention for police executives.

g. Varied Ways in Which to Group Incidents as Problems.

Problems are more difficult to identify than incidents, because doing so requires abstracting common themes from essentially disparate events. The natural inclination of the police executive is to define problems in terms of offenses; e.g., a burglary problem or a sexual assault problem. But problems may be identified in a variety of quite different ways:

- by the characteristics of the victim (e.g., crimes against the elderly),
- by locality (e.g., a park in which vandalism, teenage drinking, sale of narcotics, fencing of

stolen property, and noise have been of concern; or a city block with a concentration of establishments that serve liquor and offer adult entertainment),

- by the behavior (e.g., driving while drinking, the robbery of attendants in twenty-four hour convenience stores),
- by the condition of individuals with special needs (e.g., the chronically mentally ill, alcoholics, and the developmentally disabled),
- by the time of day, week, month, or year or in connection with a special event (e.g., a rash of burglaries in a college student housing area during vacation or the rowdiness at a rock concert).

If one were to choose, for example, to focus on the problem in a city block with a concentration of liquor-serving establishments and adult entertainment, one might bring together, for consideration under one umbrella, the clusters of incidents that might otherwise be classified as liquor license violations, disorderly conduct, assaults, prostitution, drunkenness, runaways, and parking violations.

h. Viewing Police Problems in the Context of Community Problems.

Most police problems for which we seek a more effective police response are in fact community problems that more properly call for a community response. Because the police--as the "hired hands"--are available to deal

with the unsavory aspects of life in the larger community, the citizenry tends to define such problems as police problems. Unfortunately, the police have accommodated this tendency to abdicate to the police, with the result that the police are often charged with the responsibility for handling problems for which they lack resources, authority, and expertise. In attempting to define the full magnitude and dimensions of a given problem, we must reach out to others in the community to whom the problem may be of concern. Is what the police are seeing but a part of the total problem, as, for example, is most assuredly the case in looking at child abuse? In what way does the police perception of the problem relate to the perceptions of others who see the same problem from a different perspective? What determines whether a given incident becomes a matter of concern for the police?

On occasion, police have been known to write off a problem because they find no evidence to confirm that it exists (e.g., complaints of vandalism). But if the community still contends that they have a problem, the problem becomes the community's concern, and the police must find ways to deal with it.

i. Attempting to Gain the Best Possible Assessment of the Full Magnitude of the Problem.

Problems confronted by the police tend to be defined by factors that may produce a distorted picture of them. A study of domestic violence based on calls made to the police is likely to indicate that domestic violence is a problem of the economically deprived, ignoring the fact that most such calls come from neighbors who, because they live in close quarters, are disturbed. Battling couples residing in individual residences are not as likely to be called to police attention. An analysis of the victims of sexual assault is likely to show a high incidence of young victims, because younger women are under greater pressure from parents and other guardians to report such offenses. An analysis of persons arrested for drunk driving, given the relatively small percentage of all drunk drivers who are arrested, does not describe the drunk driver in a community. It may say more about the criteria employed by the police in deciding who should be arrested.

An awareness of these difficulties in the use of police data cautions against using police statistics to characterize the problem with which police must deal. It raises questions whether there are more satisfactory ways to establish a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the problem.

j. Dealing with the Infinite Number of Variables in the Incidents Police Handle.

In an effort to gain insight into the problems police handle, it is necessary to look at written reports of the incidents that contribute to the problem, observe such incidents if possible, and talk to police officers who have handled large numbers of them. Such explorations will quickly make it clear that no two incidents are alike; that a seemingly endless number of variables are present that distinguish one incident from another. This effort requires grouping similar incidents. Difficult as this may be because of the number of variables, having direct access to original police reports and contact with police officers will greatly facilitate the task. Many of the analyses of substantive problems, conducted from outside a police agency, are based on compilations of data furnished to some central repository. Awareness of the numerous variables that distinguish one incident from another that comes from a reading of source documents and from observing the handling of incidents makes one realize how inaccurate and misleading some of these compilations may be and how questionable research is that is based on them.

2. Identifying the Social Interests and Costs.

a. Viewing the Community as the Client.

An unfortunate side effect of the recent concern over victim rights and needs is that victims have come to be narrowly defined in terms of a specific incident. In many ways, the total community is often the victim as well. The problem perspective, while incorporating concern for the victims of specific incidents, recognizes the need to look out for the larger community. Thus the police clearly have a responsibility to help the individual victim recover from his burglary, but they also have a responsibility to help the community cope with some of the less direct consequences when burglaries occur.

This focus has implications for the use to be made of police data. Although data collected in a specific case, in the form of a report taken from the victim, may be relatively useless for solving that case, it may be extremely valuable in helping to define the larger problem and in developing strategies for dealing with the problem. Information collected in disparate cases may identify geographic, structural (e.g., certain types of construction), or personal (e.g., types of individuals) vulnerabilities of which the community should be aware. What is contemplated here goes well beyond the use now

commonly made of officer reports to recognize patterns of crime as a basis for identifying and apprehending an offender.

b. Multiple Interests in a Problem.

In the past, we have tended to oversimplify analysis of police handling of incidents or a problem by ascribing police actions to but one goal--enforcing the law according to legislative mandate. Police effectiveness was usually measured by the number of individuals arrested and prosecuted. More penetrating analysis requires examination of some of the interests served in making the conduct illegal. Even if the conduct is not legislatively proscribed, the same need exists to identify the various interests in controlling a problem.

Thus, for example, because street prostitution will probably be a problem for the community whether or not the conduct is legislatively defined as criminal, one must more precisely inquire: Why is the community concerned? What are the social costs? Who is being harmed and to what degree? If one pursues these questions, using the street prostitution problem as an example, it is possible to identify as many as thirteen different and often competing interests:

- the nuisance created to passersby and to adjacent residences and business establishments,
- the offense to uninvolved women who must frequent the area and who are solicited,
- the likelihood that juveniles will become prostitutes,
- the harm that may befall a prostitute from her customers or pimp,
- the assaults, robberies, and defrauding of those who patronize a prostitute,
- the financial and physical exploitation of the prostitutes by their pimps,
- the possibility that street prostitution will provide the seedbed for organized criminal interests in the community,
- the link between prostitution and drugs, with the possibility that street prostitutes make extensive use of drugs,
- the need to protect the rights of the prostitutes as citizens,
- the interests and desire for privacy of those who feel the need to seek out prostitutes for their sexual outlet,
- the problems of parking and traffic congestion in areas in which street prostitutes congregate,
- the deleterious effect on the economy of the area, including the value and use of buildings, and
- the likelihood that prostitutes are among the most common conveyors of venereal disease.

Following up further on this example, careful analysis requires, first, that an effort be made to gather whatever facts may be available to quantify the concern so that it might be better assessed. How often are

juveniles involved? What evidence is there of organized criminal interests? How often is a prostitute injured? Are the values of property in the area changing? Do street prostitutes convey venereal disease? Those answers that can be obtained would aid a great deal in clearing away some brush and in sharpening our understanding of the competing interests in the problem.

A second stage of analysis requires making some value judgments. How concerned should the community be about providing a form of "consumer protection" to those who patronize prostitutes? What priority do we want to attach to protecting those who choose to be prostitutes?

It is only after one goes through this process that one can arrive at a clear set of objectives in dealing with street prostitution and that, of course, is essential as a prerequisite to fashioning a sensible strategy for dealing with the street prostitution problem.

c. Financial Costs of Current Operations.

Cost/benefit analysis, as applied to policing, is in an embryonic stage. Given the nature of police operations, arriving at even a rough estimate of the costs of policing attributable to a specific problem the police must handle seems extraordinarily difficult. And yet

the possibility of doing so ought not to be dismissed. The importance of trying is underlined by the likelihood that an approximation of dollar costs for responding as we currently do to some types of incidents may be the most persuasive way in which to convince the community of the futility of some current practices and of the need to explore alternative responses more vigorously.

d. Social and Financial Costs Incurred by Victims and by the Community.

How much do we actually know about the total financial and social costs of a given problem incurred directly by victims and indirectly by the community? And to what extent does this knowledge influence our priorities in dealing with it? Citizens tend, for example, to view a residential burglary as a serious offense. The invasion of one's home, the loss of valuable property, and the fear of reoccurrence take a heavy toll. But how do these consequences compare with those that result, for example, from the drinking-driver--the loss of life, the injuries, the lifetime burden carried by victims and the families of victims, the costs of settlements by insurance companies that are passed on to motorists, and the fear that motorists have in using the streets? This is not to suggest that an assessment of costs alone should



establish priorities. Many other subtle factors are involved, not the least of which, in the example comparison, is the identification many alcohol-using citizens have with the drinking-driver and the alienation they feel from one who burgles. But over a period of time, these attitudes might be altered if the agency primarily responsible for dealing with the two problems did a more effective job in documenting the costs of the two problems.

### 3. Documenting the Current Response.

Once a specific behavioral problem has been clearly defined and dissected and the various interests in the problem identified, the next most logical step in any form of systematic inquiry is to determine what is currently being done about it.

#### a. Why Invest Heavily in Determining the Current Response?

In taking a fresh look at a problem, a natural inclination is to move directly to new strategies for dealing with it, uninhibited by what has been done in dealing with the problem in the past. That may be feasible with regard to a limited number of problems in which the community and the police have not invested much effort in the past. But as to the vast majority

of problems for which the police have some responsibility, much has in fact been done, and a great deal can be learned from those efforts. Informal responses that have evolved over the years may be among the most effective responses and therefore warrant more official endorsement. Moreover, even if one concludes, on examination, that past efforts have been futile, documenting this is often necessary to persuade those who have invested their energy in them that an alternative strategy is likely to be more effective. Thus we are interested in looking at current responses--on the part of both the police and the community--in order to:

- establish more precisely the relationship between what the police are doing and the substantive problem that triggers police action,
- identify factors that limit the effectiveness of the current response,
- detect any negative, unanticipated consequences of the current response,
- discover individual responses that, because of their apparent effectiveness, ought to be used more widely,
- avoid useless activity, especially given the competition for police time, and
- provide a basis for evaluating police and community policies relating to the problem and for weighing the feasibility of developing new resources and alternatives.

b. Importance of Looking at the Total Community Response; Viewing the Police Response in Context.

In an earlier section, we argued in some detail for the need to view as community problems the substantive problems that the police handle; to recognize that the police generally do not have sole responsibility for dealing with the many problems they encounter daily. Because this is not commonly recognized, the tendency--in the limited efforts that have been made to examine substantive problems handled by the police--is to focus too narrowly on examining just the police response. This may be misleading in several ways. Ignoring what others are doing regarding the problem may lead to error in assessing the adequacy and importance of the police response. The responses of other agencies in a metropolitan area may explain why the police are doing what they are doing. Establishing the nature of these responses may draw attention to overlaps and conflicts that result in the police and other institutions working at cross purposes.

The importance of viewing the total community response is illustrated in the experience of those who have been concerned about the police role in responding to the chronically mentally ill. Exploration has required acquiring knowledge about statewide policies regarding

the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, about the agencies available in the community to assist such individuals, about the operating policies of these agencies, and about the nature of their contact with the individuals who become the subject of police attention. On the infrequent occasions when representatives of the various agencies that deal with the chronically mentally ill are brought together, they often discover that they, along with the police, are dealing with the same individuals, but in an inconsistent, uncoordinated, and usually ineffective fashion.

But where does one draw the line in an inquiry that grows out of a desire to improve the effectiveness of the police? Encouraging any form of inquiry into the police response is difficult enough; making the breadth of the inquiry so important an element would most likely be a disincentive to doing anything. Police agencies cannot take on the responsibility for conducting large-scale studies of major social problems that other agencies--with more resources and a more direct responsibility--have not conducted for themselves. In reviewing the police response to the public inebriate, for example, it would be absurd to expect the police to make a judgment about the effectiveness of treatment programs to which

referrals are made--a judgment that even professionals in the alcohol treatment area find difficult to make. The decision where the line should be drawn must be made with reference to the specific problem under examination. As a minimum, we would recommend that the police determine what others are doing--enough to enable them to better characterize and assess their own operations.

c. Distinguishing Between Responses at the Problem Level and at the Incident Level.

Responses, whether by the police or by the larger community, occur at two quite different levels. We find it useful to think of these as being roughly parallel to the incident/problem distinction drawn earlier. Responses to problems usually take the form of broad programs. A local counseling service dealing with sexual assault, for example, conducts community education programs, sponsors a transit service for women during the hours of darkness, and may testify on pending legislation relating to sexual assault. Likewise, a police agency may promote an advertising program against shoplifting, work with merchants to install antishoplifting devices in their stores, and support legislation to facilitate the prosecution of shoplifters. All of these activities--the first as part of the broader community response and

the second as part of the police response--would be considered in our vocabulary to be responses at the problem level. By contrast, much of the work of both the community and the police takes the form of contact with individual citizens with regard to specific incidents that together constitute the larger problem. Thus, for example, the sexual assault counseling service contacts the individual victims of sexual assault shortly after they have been attacked, counsels victims and their families, and lends support to victims throughout the criminal process. The police investigate complaints of shoplifting, arrest shoplifters, and process them through the criminal justice system. We consider these types of responses to be at the individual incident level.

At the risk of overgeneralizing, we believe that much of the ethnographic work done with respect to the police response has focused on capturing the police response to incidents of a miscellaneous nature primarily to gain general insights into the nature of police operations--i.e., the discretion exercised by the police, the influence of the police subculture, and the effect of police training. Few have combined this effort with an effort to learn how the police were responding to a specific substantive problem.

d. Lack of Readily Available Information on the Nature of the Current Response.

When inquiry is first made about the nature of the current response to a substantive problem, those having some responsibility for the problem tend to describe the response in fairly specific terms. One would think it should be possible to do so. But for the person committed to a systematic inquiry, in which comprehensiveness and certainty are important factors, it soon becomes apparent that very few of the individuals dealing with the problem have a total picture of what is happening in the community; that knowledge and perspectives vary depending upon the individual's role; that perceptions often differ substantially from realities; and that hard facts are often extremely difficult to obtain.

At the most general level, police tend to respond to queries about what they are doing in broad, generic, operational terms. Thus, initially, police are likely to report that they attempt to deal with a given problem through preventive patrol, by investigating complaints that are brought to their attention, and by arresting and prosecuting those who violate the law. Investigation, patrol, and prosecution are descriptive of large blocks of their operations used to deal in a common fashion with a wide range of quite different problems.

When pressed beyond this superficial level, administrators are likely to describe the police response to a given problem in terms that meet public expectations, legal standards, and formal guidelines. But administrators, especially in large police agencies, are far removed from the street and the handling of individual incidents and are, therefore, often ill equipped to describe the current field response accurately. One may obtain several quite different pictures of what is happening on the street based on talking with different administrators within the same agency.

Individual police officers, who are probably in the best position to describe accurately the present response at the incident level, are least inclined to do so. This is due, in part, to their fear of being reprimanded for acknowledging practices that may be in conflict with formal guidance. But even if this barrier is removed, individual officers, as the lowest level employees in what remains a semimilitary organization, are conditioned to believe that their observations and their insights are not particularly relevant.

e. Importance of Using Inquiries of Sufficient Depth to Establish Actual Practice.

It comes as no surprise to anyone familiar with bureaucratic organizations that formal descriptions of police responses to specific problems often differ from the actual responses that are implemented. A wide array of factors, some of which will be explored below, account for the difference. The observation hardly bears repeating, were it not for the frequency with which publications in the police field contain reports on studies that were based on unverified descriptions of what the police do. Written policy statements and training bulletins can be used as general indicators of what administrators want to achieve, but not as descriptive of police practice. Narrative reports prepared by police officers in individual cases provide a great deal of information on how police handle incidents, but one must be careful in the use of such information because the reports are prepared to serve a number of quite different functions (e.g., providing a basis for prosecution and accounting administratively to officers' superiors for how they handled a case). Similarly, a researcher will err in assuming that the processing of an individual follows the various steps set forth by law, given the accommodations that typically develop in the application of the law.

f. The Variety of Responses at the Incident Level.

We know, from the numerous efforts to document police activity in the field, that the way in which different officers respond to the same type of incident varies tremendously. As for some problems, there may be as many ways to handle an incident as there are officers, and some methods may be very imaginative. On the other hand, many responses are highly routinized, reflecting a rather uniform pattern that has emerged on a shift, in a unit (like a precinct), or in an entire agency. When questions are asked, a practice may be attributed to the orders of a supervisor, the highly publicized comments of a judge, or the informal word passed on by an assistant prosecutor.

The differences in the way police respond, even in dealing with relatively simple matters, may be significant. When a runaway child is reported, some officers may limit themselves to obtaining the basic facts. Others, sensing as much responsibility for dealing with the parents' fears as for finding the child and looking out for the child's interests, may seek to relieve the parents' anxiety by providing information about the runaway problem and about what the parents might expect. From the standpoint of the consumers--in this case, the parents--the

response of the second type of officer is vastly superior to that of the first.

In handling more complicated matters, the need to improvise has prompted some officers to develop unusually effective ways to deal with specific problems. Many officers acquire a unique understanding of problems that frequently come to their attention; learn to make important distinctions among different forms of the same problem; and become familiar with the many complicating factors that are often present. And they develop a feel for what, under the circumstances, constitute the most effective responses. After careful evaluation, these types of responses might profitably be adopted as standard for an entire police agency.

But finding out about the varied responses at the incident level is quite difficult. The high value placed on uniformity and on adhering to formal requirements and the pressures from peers inhibits officers from candidly discussing the manner in which they respond to the multitude of problems they handle--especially if the inquiry comes from outside the agency.

g. Establishing the Factors that Account for Current Responses.

In addition to attempting to establish what the police currently do at the incident level, it is important, as well, to attempt to learn why they respond as they do. Contrary to the stereotypical view of the police as being of "one mind," officers have a wide range of different attitudes toward their jobs, the community, and the problems they are called on to handle. They are greatly influenced in their actions by these attitudes and by other considerations such as their relationship with their peers, with their superiors, and with the citizens with whom they are in contact. Thus their handling of an incident may be affected by an endless variety of factors:

- the pressures of time;
- the realization that there are simply too many violators (one cannot arrest and prosecute all of them);
- the manner in which their peers view various responses;
- the arrangements for compensating an officer for any overtime that might be required;
- impressions as to what happens to individuals processed through one system or another;
- the agency's reward system;
- the ease with which an incident can be handled in one way, as compared to another; or
- the closeness to the end of their shift.



As for many of these factors, little can be done, in the context of addressing a specific substantive problem, that will affect them. But others, having been identified, may be easily addressed and thereby affect officers' decisions. Thus, for example, expediting the procedures by which a police officer can admit an individual to a shelter for abused women, or to a home for runaways, or to a detox center can greatly increase the use of a response recognized as superior to more frequently used alternatives.

h. Guarding Against Becoming Overly Concerned with the Use of the Criminal Justice System.

Because so much dependence has been placed on criminal prosecution as a way to deal with the problems the police handle, the natural tendency, in a study of current responses, is to become preoccupied with the use made of the criminal justice system. Why are more arrests not being made? What are the problems in processing arrests? What is the experience in prosecution? How can the quality of cases presented before the court be improved? All of these questions tend to assume that more prosecutions will lead to a more effective handling of the problem. This may, in fact, be true for some problems. But as for others, evidence that a greater

number of prosecutions, by itself, will impact on the incidence of the problem is lacking. Because many questions exist about the value of criminal prosecutions as a response to some problems, it is important to identify alternatives that police officers are using to deal with a problem and to attempt to establish what is known about the effectiveness of the alternatives. This is an especially difficult chore because the use of alternatives is not usually recorded. For obvious reasons, officers do not record, for example, that they took a drinking-driver home rather than make an arrest.

i. Methods for Acquiring Information from Police Officers About Their Responses to Individual Incidents.

From the preceding paragraphs, the importance of trying to determine, with some preciseness, how the police respond to individual incidents is apparent. How to do so is problematic. Goldstein's experience in the American Bar Foundation study of the 1960s [which involved two years of field observations on which were based the subsequent influential writings of Joseph Goldstein (1960), Remington and Rosenblum (1960), and LaFave (1965)] and our familiarity with the ethnographic studies of Skolnick (1966), Westley (1970),

Bittner (1970), Livermore (1971), Van Maanen (1974), Ianni (1978), and Punch (1979) convince us that the most effective way to get a handle on the police response at the individual incident level is through field observation. We say "get a handle" because it is very unlikely one can get a comprehensive picture or in any way quantify the data acquired. But observing what the police do opens up an otherwise locked box. At a minimum, it provides some indication of the range of responses and of the extent to which field practices differ from policies and administrative perceptions. Field observation also affords an opportunity to learn more about the form in which a problem is presented to the police, with an indication of variable factors that are not recorded in written reports.

When studying proactive responses, one can efficiently schedule observations to coincide with the self-initiated operations of the police (e.g., enforcement of speeding through the use of radar). But the study of most problems will require the investment of a great deal of time, since incidents are not concentrated in either time or location. Because one could spend many hours on patrol without ever observing a response to the type of incident of interest, the cost may be prohibitive. It is possible

to deal with some of the problems cited by more carefully targeting field observations, based on some preliminary analysis of both the time and the locale of incidents; by accompanying police officers identified by department records as handling many of the particular type of incidents; or by making productive use of time between incidents by interviewing officers.

Because we have hypothesized that there will be much of value in the untapped expertise and experience of operating personnel, we attach a great deal of importance to interviewing officers who have dealt with the problem under examination. But the value of interviews will vary in direct relationship to the rapport established. For the reasons cited earlier, it is our impression that officers quite naturally feel inhibited about describing their responses and about citing in detail their experiences. It comes as somewhat of a shock to be asked to be reflective about something one has been doing routinely, but which one has never been asked to describe or analyze. Some officers, given the opportunity, will respond quickly, pouring out a vast accumulation of insights and opinions of tremendous value. Others will not do so until they receive certain assurances as to

the purposes of the inquiry and the effect that their candor might have on them.

It follows that, for interviews to yield desired information, considerable groundwork must be done beforehand. Officers must be fully informed on the nature of the research effort and the goals it is designed to achieve. If possible, the relationship should be drawn between the inquiry and the professional stake that each officer has in trying to deal with the problem; i.e., how the results of the study might subsequently affect the officer's ability to perform effectively. The interviewers themselves must be prepared to invest the time needed to build the rapport required if one is to get beyond superficial responses.

All of these observations argue in favor of a limited number of high quality contacts with operating personnel rather than attempting to be more comprehensive by interviewing large numbers of officers. But a commitment to in-depth inquiry with a smaller number of officers obviously requires care in selection of the sample in order to ensure it is representative of the department.

As for some problems, it may be feasible to gain needed knowledge about the nature of the police response by collecting officer responses to one or more scenarios

of incidents. The incident might be presented in narrative form or in a film or might be acted before a group. The attraction in using this technique is the potential it has for controlling some of the variables, thereby enabling the researcher to establish the range of police responses to a single common incident. The drawback, of course, is in trying to establish how the officer's response to a hypothetical situation in a laboratory-like setting might differ from the officer's actual response on the street.

At the earliest stages in trying to capture the police response, "hanging around" a police facility may be the best technique for identifying the dimensions of a problem and the potential lines for profitable inquiry. By "hanging around" we mean being present in the agency--talking to individuals in administrative positions and in specialized assignments, exploring the problem with operating police officers in an informal manner, and following various leads that develop from these contacts. The technique may also be useful at a later stage of inquiry as a way to validate the picture one acquires of the police response or as a way to elicit reactions to any new ideas that may have evolved for responding to the problem.

#### 4. Exploring Alternatives and Choosing from Among Them.

##### a. Need for a Broad, Uninhibited Search.

Exploration of alternatives requires throwing out the largest possible net. Past efforts to improve the police response have been seriously limited by several factors: the feeling of being locked into the use of the criminal justice system; an assumption that the response must be developed within the police agency; and a general lack of imagination. What is proposed here is a far-reaching uninhibited exploration that might include consideration of the following:

- physical and technical changes (which in the past has included, for example, better urban design, improved locks on homes and cars, exact fares on mass transit, and the direct deposit of social security checks);
- changes in government services that, if carried out, would reduce problems that are brought to the police;
- more systematic provision of reliable information to the public;
- new forms of authority (such as has been provided for taking public inebriates into protective custody);
- development of new community resources (such as shelters for abused women, houses for runaways, crisis intervention programs, and dispute settlement centers); and
- more imaginative use of zoning to reduce problems stemming from conflicting uses of land and buildings.

##### b. Identifying and Logging Alternatives in the Course of the Inquiry.

In an inquiry of this kind, one begins, at the earliest stages, to try to define the problem and to speculate on alternative ways to deal with it. It is important to remember these for examination at this later stage in the process. The study of current responses itself will usually identify a wide range of alternatives that are being used informally and that may be as effective as, if not more effective than, the more formally established response. Thus, in the typical inquiry, on arriving at this stage, one should already have a number of nascent ideas for exploration.

##### c. Scouting Alternatives in Use Elsewhere.

The search for alternatives obviously need not start from scratch. Much work has been done on which to build. Crime prevention efforts of some police agencies and experiments with developing alternatives to the criminal justice system and with diverting cases from the system should be reviewed with the objective of assessing their potential impact on the specific problem under examination.

Police in many jurisdictions, in a commendable effort to employ alternatives to the criminal justice system, have arranged to make referrals to various social, health, and legal agencies. By tying into the services provided by other helping organizations in the community, the police in these cities have taken a giant step toward improving the quality of their response. But the great danger is that referral will be seen as an end in itself; that the police and others advocating the use of referrals will not concern themselves adequately with the consequences of referral. If referral does not lead to reducing a citizen's problem, nothing will have been gained. The adoption of such a program may even cause harm. Expectations that are raised and not fulfilled may lead to further frustration; the original problem may, as a consequence, be compounded; and the resulting bitterness about government services may feed the tensions that develop in urban areas.

Despite a number of efforts in recent years to spread good ideas through the police field and share the results of experiments (e.g., LEAA's exemplary projects, regional seminars, and the technology transfer program), local police agencies still find it difficult to locate with dispatch the most novel programs for dealing with a

problem of immediate concern to them. Word-of-mouth contacts within the field still seem to be more productive than any of the retrieval systems that have been established. Descriptions of alternative programs are of little value if the programs themselves have not been independently evaluated. Local agencies, not subject to any checks or controls, will make claims for the effectiveness of a new response that may not be confirmed on careful examination. LEAA sought to deal with this problem by furnishing an evaluation of those programs it chose to publicize.

#### d. What Criteria Should Be Employed?

Having identified various alternatives, how does one assess their merit and relate these assessments to an evaluation of the current response? What makes one response of higher quality than another?

The criteria to be employed in choosing between different alternatives are highly subjective, differing among communities, departments, and those individuals who become involved in the examination of substantive problems. Some of them are identified here, by way of illustration, without indication of the value that we or anyone else might attach to them:

- the impact the response is likely to have on those aspects of the problem that cause loss of life or serious injury;
- the potential value the alternative has to reduce the total problem;
- the extent to which different interests identified in section 2 of this volume are met, including the reduction of fear in the community;
- the extent to which the alternative is preventive in nature, minimizing the need for the police use of legal sanctions and force;
- the effect that adoption of the alternative would have on individual freedom;
- the financial cost of the alternative;
- the extent to which the police can be provided with both the authority and the resources necessary for full implementation;
- the potential the alternative presents for enabling the police to act in a legal and civil manner (recognizing the importance of legality and civility in building the relationship between the police and the community); and
- the ease with which the alternative can be implemented.

Agreement on the criteria to be employed is far less important than that they be clearly articulated. If a police agency becomes the advocate of a specific way to deal with a problem, open discussion of the proposal would be greatly facilitated if the reasoning behind it were spelled out.

The complex nature of the question [What constitutes a high quality response?] is illustrated by the police role

in the handling of public inebriates. With legislation decriminalizing public intoxication and the establishment of adequate detoxification facilities, both the police and the community may feel justified in claiming that they have vastly improved the quality of the police response to this problem: chronic alcoholics are treated more humanely and, most would argue, more appropriately than if they were jailed; those who are seriously ill receive medical care; police authority is spelled out clearly and is adequate for the task; and implementation can be easy and time saving for the police. But when such programs are adopted, the police tire of transporting the same alcoholics to the detox facility with even greater frequency than to the jail. Those with a commitment to preventing alcoholism begin to question the value of the program in dealing with the most chronic, arguing that it may be dysfunctional by enabling such individuals to sustain their drinking habits. Those concerned with the appearance of neighborhoods and the deleterious effect of having large numbers of intoxicated persons on the streets may question the ability of the police, under the new program, to "keep the streets clean." And those concerned with government expenditures may question the ever-increasing costs of such programs.



Is the new response a high quality response? The answer probably depends on the person to whom one addresses the question. Despite the criticisms, a police chief may characterize the program as a superior response to the problem of the public inebriate--perhaps acknowledging the need for further refinement. Officers might strongly disagree. Some alcohol treatment people and local merchants, for different reasons, might characterize the response as a good-idea-gone-awry. And budget officials, faced with the difficult task of judging whether the dollars are well spent, may be highly critical.

e. Ease with Which Alternatives Can Be Adopted.

Ease of adoption emerges as a crucial factor in determining the likelihood that proposals will be implemented. The proposed changes that evolve from substantive inquiries are likely to be of varying magnitude and complexity. Some studies might recommend complete replacement of a current response; others might recommend that a current response be supplemented or that minor adjustments be made in it. Some recommendations are likely to be viewed as radical or visionary; others, more practical. Some will be broad in scope, and others narrow. And

some will take years to implement; others could be implemented immediately.

Because a specific change may seem overly ambitious and require years for implementation, this should not, by itself, result in its being dropped. Its acceptance, at least in principle, may serve the agency well in providing a goal to work for, to which less ambitious changes can be tied. This suggests that it may be desirable to categorize proposals according to the type of action needed for implementation. For example:

Level one might include those alternatives and changes that can be implemented at the option of the police agency.

Level two might include those changes that require the approval of the mayor and city council.

Level three might include those changes that require the cooperation and approval of other agencies in the community with which the police work.

Level four might include those alternatives requiring a change in state legislation.

Level five might include those alternatives that require a gradual change, over a long period of time, in public attitudes.

f. Who Makes the Choice?

Ideally, as work on a specific problem proceeds, various interested parties will be engaged in the inquiry: the police chief, his top staff, line supervisors, and

officers at the operating level; others in the criminal justice system and in agencies to which the police relate regarding the problem; those in the community with a special interest in the problem; and members of the community generally. Given the conflicting interests involved with most problems that the police must handle, a consensus would rarely emerge from this process regarding the major decisions that must be made. But the assemblage of hard facts and the sharing of this information may produce more agreement regarding some choices than might be anticipated.

In the end, however, given the original objectives of the study and its locus in the police agency, police management must decide on the program they wish to advocate. There is a unique perspective from which the community should benefit. For those changes that are within their authority to adopt, public announcement and the setting forth of written policy, where appropriate, afford ample opportunity for citizen reaction to be registered and weighed. The adoption of more far-reaching alternatives will require the approval of the mayor, city council, or legislature; and community interests, using established methods, can make their opinions known and bring their influence to bear at these decision-making

points. But in this larger forum, a police agency that has done its homework--by conducting an in-depth study of the substantive problem--will have a far more effective voice than it has had in the past.

g. The Proactive Role of the Police in Addressing Community Problems.

As was noted in earlier sections, given the constraints under which we have placed the police in this country, it seems somewhat anomalous--perhaps even threatening to some--that the police take a more active role in attempting to address substantive problems so that the problems are handled more effectively. Relating the police to a purely ministerial role, in which they are simply pressured to do what is expected of them, has been among the major factors that have isolated the police from the community and that have compounded immeasurably the difficulty of controlling police conduct.

Because the police occupy a frontline position in the community, they acquire a large amount of data and insights that can be used to define and clarify community problems. Rather than be forced to wait until problems have reached sufficient magnitude to generate community concern and only then react to them (and in an awkward fashion), we believe that the police should use the

data in their possession to identify problems at an earlier stage and alert the community to them. Although some police were oblivious to the gross inadequacies of past practices in dealing with, for example, chronic alcoholics, the victims of sexual assault, and the victims of spousal abuse (and may even have contributed, through their actions, to compounding these problems), others knew that the problems were serious long before they were widely recognized as such.

The approach calls for the police to take greater initiative in dealing with problems rather than resign themselves to living with them. It calls for the police to be more aggressive partners with other public agencies. These changes, which would place the police in a much more positive light in the community, would also contribute significantly to improving the working environment within a police agency--an environment that suffers from the tendency of the police to assume responsibility for problems that are insolvable or ignored by others. And an improved working environment increases, in turn, the potential for recruiting and keeping qualified personnel and for bringing about needed organizational change.

Identifying such problems and alerting the community to them is but the first step. The police must reach out into the community and prod it to live up to its responsibilities regarding the social control and welfare of its members. Thus, for example, if, as in many communities today, large numbers of individuals who are mentally ill are suffering for lack of adequate care due to a failure to develop the community resources that were to have been provided in lieu of institutionalization and if other segments of the community are being adversely affected by these individuals, it falls to the police--who are among the first to learn about the magnitude of the problem--to take a leadership role in drawing attention to it and in helping to formulate a more satisfactory community response.

D. THE INITIAL STEPS IN THE INQUIRY PROCESS.

An actual inquiry into a substantive problem, conducted under the auspices of a police agency, would not necessarily proceed along the lines outlined in the previous section. That section was devoted to identifying the major stages of inquiry and, more specifically, to identifying some of the matters one would want to consider at each stage. The inquiry process itself must, above all else, be flexible, with a readiness to shift gears or change directions as one begins to acquire data about the problem. Its sequence may be dictated more by the sources to which one turns than by a more precise effort, for example, to attempt first to define the problem and only secondly to capture the nature of the current response. A single source of data may fill both of these needs. With this need for flexibility in mind, how should one get under way?

1. Selection of the Problem.

Recognizing the tremendous array of substantive problems for which the police have some responsibility, the first task is to select a problem that warrants the careful inquiry advocated here. Several criteria could be employed:

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- the magnitude of the problem in the community and the degree of frustration being experienced by the police in dealing with it;
- the amount of interest in the problem and support for addressing it among rank-and-file personnel;
- the availability of data, based on some preliminary probes;
- the potential that exploration will lead to some progress in dealing with the problem; and
- community interests likely to support the inquiry and to assist in making use of whatever recommendations may evolve.

## 2. Initial Explorations.

To begin, a preliminary survey must be made in the agency to determine the dimensions of the problem and how it might best be explored. Questioning top administrators and a random sampling of officers at the supervisory and operating level will help to identify, in a somewhat crude fashion:

- major concerns in handling the problem, including specific points in the current police response that are troublesome;
- the various community interests that are involved;
- key people who might be helpful as sources of information, both within and outside the department;
- the types of data available in police files; and
- ideas that police have considered for improving their response.

## 3. A Literature Search.

High priority is attached to quickly assessing the accumulated literature on the problem under examination. Such an assessment could lead to a conclusion that hardly anything has been done with regard to the problem (as is true, for example, with regard to bicycle theft or noise) or, at the other end of the range, that a mass of accumulated research is available (as is true, for example, with regard to the drinking-driver). In the latter situation, syntheses of the literature might be helpful in judging its value for the local inquiry and in identifying relevant work. Although we consider an examination of available studies an essential step in the inquiry, we caution against investing large amounts of time in a search that may involve plowing through the results of inquiries based on data less valid and reliable than the data that can be acquired through a local inquiry.

## 4. Developing an Inventory of Queries About the Problem.

Using the results of the preliminary survey and the literature, one could compile a complete listing of information desired in addressing the problem, putting aside, for the moment, concern about whether the data



can be obtained. A special effort should be made to inquire about aspects of the problem--and responses to the problem--that go beyond the criminal justice system. Questions about the latter typically come easily; e.g., Who gets arrested? Who is prosecuted? What is the rate of convictions? The preliminary inquiries may provide enough insight regarding the problem to identify the major concerns that, in turn, can be used to organize what otherwise could be an unmanageable listing of unrelated questions. The exercise itself will usually produce some suggestions for categories under which questions can subsequently be grouped.

#### 5. Setting a Priority for Inquiry.

Because of the limited time and resources available, some early judgments must be made regarding the direction of the inquiry. What sources, fully explored, are likely to produce the data thought to be most crucial? Obviously, no one source may stand out that much over another, but it should be possible to make a good guess as to which inquiries are likely, at this stage, to be most productive of needed data and of insights that might help shape subsequent inquiry. Since field observation and the interviewing of officers at the operating level are likely

to require the most time and effort, one would probably want to defer this stage until the points to be pursued through observation and interview are sharpened.

#### 6. Matrixing Data Needs and Forms of Inquiry.

It may be feasible, at this stage, to develop a matrix across the top of which is listed the major forms of inquiry one intends to pursue if indeed one's thinking has progressed this far. The questions thought most crucial from among the list compiled can be placed along the other axis. Entries can then be made describing one's best guess of the extent to which the several forms of inquiry will produce data of help in answering the question. Aside from providing a rough picture of what one can anticipate accomplishing in the total inquiry, putting together the matrix is a convenient way to develop a checklist of items to be pursued under each form of inquiry.

## E. FORMS OF INQUIRY.

### 1. An Eclectic Form of Research.

The problem-oriented approach calls for developing, preferably within a police agency, the skills, procedures, and research techniques that will enable a police administrator to make problem analysis an integral continuing part of management. But given the kinds of inquiries that must be made, we know of no existing model--in terms of staffing or methodology--that is ideally suited to meet the need. Before working on a particular problem, one cannot know the exact kind of data and knowledge required to acquire an adequate basis for formulating effective strategies. Each problem may also require different expertise--the knowledge, for example, of a lawyer, psychiatrist, engineer, or chemist. No one person or even one agency can be expected to possess all of the specialized knowledge that may be required.

Thus a special breed of researchers must be developed--police researchers whose skills will enable them to collect and utilize data from diverse sources. Such a staff must work as generalists, willing to explore all paths of inquiry regardless of initial feelings regarding the potential payoff. Since the problem perspective assumes that methods for dealing with a problem go well beyond

use of just the criminal justice system, inquiries should be far-reaching, exploring all possible alternatives. The staff must push for the broadest possible exploration, reaching out into the community, establishing contacts with special interest groups, interviewing victims of crimes, and talking with offenders and others who have been the subject of police contact. In trying to acquire reliable information regarding some problems, they may have to develop unorthodox sources of information in the community, much as a detective develops informants.

Part of the job of the police researcher will be to describe accurately and completely some social phenomenon or behavior. This aspect of the police researcher's job is akin to that of the social science researcher. But in many ways, the job is quite different. The social scientist generally seeks to narrow the focus of his or her inquiries, whereas the police researcher must seek to provide breadth. The scientist often starts with a set of data and answers questions put to the data; the police researcher will have to start with questions and seek data that can be used to answer them. The police researcher will work under time and resource constraints that would cause many social scientists to maintain that doing the project was impossible.

The eclectic approach that we propose endeavors to provide police researchers with the means to describe complex social phenomena cheaply and quickly. Since the procedures and techniques are the same as those utilized in social science research, it will be necessary to make certain adjustments to achieve the desired ends. These adjustments will frequently require relaxing social science standards of proof. For example, if a rigorously derived social science answer to a question requires a sample of four hundred observations before most social scientists would be convinced that it was correct, we might be willing to utilize an answer based on a sample size of only twenty-five observations.

Relaxing such standards of proof is both complex and hazardous. There is a very thin line between the eclectic research we propose here and shabby or bad research. It is important, therefore, to make explicit whatever departures are made from normal, rigorous scientific research and to provide detailed justifications for these departures. The following are among the factors that we feel will allow relaxing the normal rigor associated with scientific inquiry.

Some policy judgments will not require a high level of precision. Prior to collecting data, a researcher

will often be able to specify the size of an answer that will make an operational difference. A researcher may, for example, establish that if he finds as many as ten percent of all auto thefts in the community involved cars with keys left in the ignition, a low-cost public information program should be initiated. If a sample of thirty cases drawn from police files indicates that fifty percent of those cases involved keys left in the ignition, that finding might be sufficient to implement the program.

Through research done in other localities, the accumulated experience of veteran officers, and information gained from other community experts, the researcher can often in advance of actually collecting any hard data specify some limits to the inquiry. If a researcher, for example, were examining the problem of noise, it could be estimated that the majority of such cases would occur on weekends and after ten o'clock at night. A small sample of cases drawn from police files that confirmed these expectations might be sufficient evidence to limit and thereby expedite the inquiry.

Finally, it may be possible to relax the rigor required of any single data collection effort if the answer obtained is consistent with the answers obtained from independent data collection efforts.

## 2. Full Use of Existing Police Data and Expertise.

A mass of data is systematically collected and stored in police files that has never been reviewed from the fresh perspective of one who is committed to mining it to develop as comprehensive and penetrating an understanding of a given problem as is possible. Likewise, much valuable information remains in the minds of officers who have handled hundreds of similar cases, but whose expertise has rarely been tapped. Traditionally, they have not been asked to summarize their knowledge and accumulated experience or to reflect on it. We intend to use the expertise we discover through systematic interview to lead us to further explorations of police records and, contrariwise, use our analysis of police data to sharpen our exploration of police expertise. If sexual assault were the subject of inquiry, for example, it might be desirable, based on the analysis of cases in the files, to present summaries of initial findings to a small sample of police officers. The officers could be asked to verify the findings, to explain how their view of the problem differs from that acquired in the analysis, to identify additional information that may be useful, and to offer their suggestions for how specific segments of the problem might be dealt with more effectively.

This maximum utilization of existing data and expertise will lead quite naturally to several additional forms of inquiry. It will help identify those in the community who should be consulted in order to acquire further information about victim needs. It will identify types of offenders who might have knowledge they may be willing to share. And it will identify specific locations, businesses, or residences that tend to be associated with a given problem. In the case of the drinking-driver, for example, it would be beneficial to observe activity in certain bars and to study the operation of late night restaurants to gain further insights into the problem.

### 3. Interviewing Victims and Offenders.

Discussions with victims can serve at least three purposes. Since an essential part of the police role is to minimize suffering related to a victimization, it is important that the police have an accurate understanding of victim needs. Such understanding is vital not only for formulating the police response to those victims who turn to the police, but also as a basis for trying to reach those victims who have chosen not to report their victimization.

Second, information obtained directly from victims would help to identify more precisely the range of individuals in the community (e.g., in the case of sexual assault: psychiatrists, physicians, clergymen, friends, employers) who become involved in dealing with a problem, the specific role that these individuals play, and the perspective they bring to bear regarding the problem. This information would be useful both for acquiring additional information about the problem and for developing a more coordinated community-wide response.

Finally, as noted in the discussion of methods for capturing the police response, it is important to obtain precise information about how victims view the police response: their expectations, their description of the contact, and their complaints. We feel confident that, as to some problems, this form of "consumer" research will alert police agencies to relatively simple ways in which they can adjust their operations and thereby substantially improve the quality of their service.

Convicted offenders may be a source of good information. Some imprisoned persons are anxious to talk about crimes in general and the type of offense for which they were convicted, and they often have unusual insights that have implications for police operations.

The local rape crisis program, with the primary purpose of aiding in the development of its own program, has interviewed persons now serving time for sexual assault-- with results that they report as being very useful for their purposes. Any ex-offenders who are interviewed, of course, would have to be told that the specific purpose of the interview is to develop information of potential value for planning police operations.

F. A SUMMARY OF THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND RECURRING THEMES IN THE PROBLEM-ORIENTED APPROACH.

Because the concept we have articulated is multifaceted, we thought it appropriate, at this point, to summarize its major features and recurring themes. Doing so affords an opportunity to clarify the interrelationship between the various components and to show how the concept differs from other efforts to address substantive problems.

- The concept seeks, in its broadest dimension, to introduce a new way of thinking about the police and policing by building into efforts to improve policing and, specifically, into the running of police agencies a greater, continuing concern for substantive problems. It seeks to have this concern reflected in all aspects of an agency's operations.
- The concept is concerned exclusively with substantive problems--with behavioral problems that arise in the community that the public expects the police to handle (not with the routine problems of management, staffing, and organization unless these bear directly on the capacity of the police to deal with substantive problems).



- The concept presses for moving from the common perception of police work as responding to an endless array of individual incidents to the grouping of incidents (because of their similarity, location, or the event to which they are tied) so that they can be addressed in a more generic way as problems.
- The concept calls for examining each substantive problem in all of its dimensions as experienced in the community--not simply those aspects of the problem that are reported to the police or against which the police take action.
- The concept is most directly concerned with the effectiveness of the police in dealing with substantive problems; with the quality of the police response to these problems.
- The concept recognizes the importance of systematic inquiry as one of the first steps that must be taken in developing a greater concern for substantive matters.

- The concept places high priority on the development of an in-house capacity to make penetrating inquiries into substantive problems--inquiries that produce easily communicated and operationally relevant end products; that are not costly to conduct; and that ideally can be staffed by present personnel with minimum training and support.
- The concept carries a commitment to develop a more rigorous form of inquiry that values preciseness and accuracy; that seeks to apply the standards of evidence and proof used in social science research.
- The concept recognizes the problems in applying such standards and, therefore, calls for developing an eclectic form of research that makes the most effective use of a variety of social science methods within existing time and cost restraints, with a commitment to acknowledging the limitations that the methodology used may place on the significance of the findings.
- The concept calls for seeking to verify findings by comparing results acquired from different sources.

- The concept calls for isolating, with a degree of specificity that is sufficient to separate it from the mass of police business, each problem selected for examination.
- The concept calls for deaggregating each problem; for taking it apart in order to understand its different forms, each of which may require a radically different response.
- The concept calls for identification and analysis of the multiple interests in a problem--the costs to individuals and the total community in loss of life, injuries, loss of property, freedom, fear, and the general effect on the quality of life in the community.
- The concept attaches a high value to mining and sifting both the data in police files and the experience of police personnel, recognizing that the rich insights that can be acquired from these sources are not often tapped; that much is lost in the technological processing of police data and in studies based on published statistical data.

- The concept calls for careful review of all relevant studies of the problem, whether conducted by academics, government agencies, community organizations, or other police agencies.
- The concept calls for investing substantial effort in acquiring an accurate picture of the current response of both the police and the community as a basis for assessing current effectiveness, identifying weaknesses, and identifying quality responses that might be more widely utilized.
- The concept recognizes the overdependence that has been placed on the use of the criminal justice system and the limited capacity of that system and, therefore, encourages explorations of alternatives where appropriate.
- The concept calls for conducting a broad, uninhibited search for alternative responses, reaching far beyond the police agency and the criminal justice system and concentrating on preventive rather than reactive strategies.

- The concept calls for examining, in context, the use of police authority as a response to substantive problems by using the knowledge acquired through this kind of systematic inquiry to establish more clearly the likely impact that a specific grant of authority will have on a specific substantive problem.
- The concept recognizes the unique characteristics of the police working environment and the nature of the police subculture, and it recognizes--in interpreting data, in assessing responses, and in weighing the merits of alternatives--the power and influence these phenomena may have on the operations of a police agency.
- The concept calls for the police to assume a more proactive role in sharing their knowledge about substantive problems and, based on much more careful and thoughtful inquiry than has ever been undertaken in the past, in offering proposals by which the community might more effectively deal with such problems in the future.

- The concept calls for developing a network through which police agencies engaged in substantive inquiry can exchange information on the results of their substantive inquiries; share their experiences in developing the inquiry process; and, in general, more efficiently learn from each other.

## Appendix

QUESTIONS ON THREE SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS

USED FOR DISCUSSION AT THE LEAA-PERF-  
SPONSORED SEMINAR ON PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

Madison, Wisconsin

July 30 - August 1, 1979

Problem 1	Street Prostitution.....	109
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Problem #1  
STREET PROSTITUTION

Madison Seminar on  
Problem-Oriented Policing  
July 30 - August 1, 1979

A. Defining the Problem

1. Does street prostitution take only one form, or are there several different forms of street prostitution?
2. Who are the street prostitutes? (age? race? male v. female? resident v. nonresident? prior criminal record?)
3. What are their specific methods of operating?
4. Do they engage in other forms of prostitution?
5. Are they organized? If so, in what specific manner?
6. Are others profiting from their income?
7. To what extent do they engage in other criminal conduct affecting the individuals they solicit? How much of this can be documented?
8. To what extent are street prostitutes engaged in the sale or use of drugs?
9. What is the incidence of venereal disease among them?
10. What types of individuals seek out street prostitutes? (age? occupation? resident v. nonresident?)
11. What, if anything, do we know about the factors that influence these individuals to turn to street prostitutes?
12. What specific effect does the presence of street prostitutes have on the area in which they operate--on residents, on those passing through the area, and on business establishments?
13. How do the facts that can be established, descriptive of the local problem of street prostitution, compare with knowledge acquired about the problem as it exists elsewhere?

14. What are the reasons for community/police department concern for the problem:
  - protecting the morals of the community?
  - protecting minors who become involved in prostitution?
  - preventing the criminal conduct associated with street prostitution?
  - dealing with the drug problem associated with street prostitution?
  - controlling venereal disease?
  - protecting prostitutes who might be forced into prostitution?
  - preventing others from profiting from the income of prostitutes?
  - dealing with organized crime?
  - eliminating conduct that is offensive to individuals residing in, passing through, or doing business in an area frequented by prostitutes?
  - eliminating the corruptive influence on police officers who might accept payment for ignoring the activities of prostitutes?
15. To what extent are these concerns warranted, given the specific facts acquired about the problem of street prostitution as it exists in this community?
16. How do these concerns differ from the concerns posed by other forms of prostitution? Do they warrant a different kind of response?
17. Of those concerns that are warranted, how do they relate to each other in their importance?
18. How do the concerns of the police department and the concerns of the community line up?

### B. Established Authority

1. What, specifically, is the authority of the police for dealing with street prostitution?
2. What is required as a basis for a criminal charge?
3. What are the restrictions on the police in acquiring evidence (i.e., concern about entrapment)? Are these statutory? case law? or applied as standards by trial judges?
4. What authority do the police have for dealing with loitering? for ordering people to "move on"?
5. Is the authority of the police relating to the "abatement of nuisances" relevant in any way?
6. What use, if any, is made of city ordinances as distinct from state statutes?
7. Are the police, by statute, compelled to arrest if they have evidence of prostitution? What discretion, if any, do they have?

### C. Present Police Practices and Their Effectiveness

1. What is the current policy of the police department in dealing with street prostitution? Is it spelled out anywhere? What specific directions are given to police officers?
2. How does the action of individual officers conform with department policy, if such policy exists?
3. Does the department aggressively undertake on its own to identify and prosecute street prostitutes, or does it wait for complaints from citizens before it takes any action?
4. What use is made of arrest and criminal prosecution? Who, from among all street prostitutes, gets arrested? Why?
5. What techniques are used in making arrests? To what extent do the police pose as prospective customers? Are there any limits on their behavior?
6. What problems are encountered in acquiring the evidence upon which an arrest can be made?

7. What happens to those who are arrested? Are they convicted? For those convicted, what sentences are imposed? What effect, if any, does conviction and the imposition of a sentence have on subsequent involvement in prostitution?
8. What practices are used by police officers, other than arrest and prosecution, in responding to the problem of prostitution? (e.g., chasing, harassment, etc.) Are there practices developed by individual officers that appear especially effective?
9. Are the customers of prostitutes arrested? Under what circumstances? What has been the experience in processing them through the criminal justice system?
10. What resources are devoted to street prostitution? What is their cost? How does the department decide how much of their resources should be devoted to street prostitution?
11. What is the effectiveness of current practices--both of the department and of individual officers? What do they achieve? How effective are they as they relate to each of the concerns identified earlier?
12. What is known about the effectiveness of the police response elsewhere
  - in prosecuting street prostitutes?
  - in the sporadic efforts that are made to prosecute those who solicit?
13. What are the costs of street prostitution in those jurisdictions in which no significant effort is made to arrest and prosecute?
14. Where street prostitution is tolerated by the police, what appear to be the conditions that contribute to the willingness of both the community and the police to tolerate the activity?
15. Some communities have a low level of street prostitution or none at all. What factors appear to account for this?

D. Analysis

1. What concerns should the police department try to meet in dealing with street prostitution? What should be its realistic goals?
2. How can police obtain the endorsement of the community for these goals?
3. Given the goals that the police and the community settle on for dealing with street prostitution, what appears to be the most effective method available to the community for achieving them? (Such analysis should reach out beyond a review of the most commonly utilized methods.)
4. Are there people who can help in devising new and more effective responses who are not now being tapped?
5. What is required to implement such a response in the form of community resources, additional legal authority, or police department resources?
6. How can these best be obtained?
7. What use should be made of the criminal justice system in dealing with street prostitution? What should be the criteria for making arrests?
8. How can the results of any newly adopted policy best be evaluated?

Problem #2  
THE MENTALLY ILL

Madison Seminar on <sup>114</sup>  
 Problem-Oriented Policing  
 July 30 - August 1, 1979

A. Defining the Problem

1. How much of police business involves dealing with the mentally ill? Are the number of cases in which mental illness is the central problem readily identifiable as such?
2. Of the total number of such cases, what percentage are cases in which a complaint is filed about the conduct of the mentally ill person, and what percentage are cases in which the mentally ill person summons the police?
3. What is the nature of the incidents requiring police attention in which mentally ill persons are involved? (e.g., trespass, assault, domestic disturbance, annoying or bizarre conduct, requests by the mentally ill for assistance)
4. Is it possible to subdivide the problems police confront in dealing with the mentally ill by categorizing individuals on the basis of the behavior they display to the police? Would this be desirable?
5. How often do the mentally ill with whom the police have contact engage in conduct that is dangerous to themselves (the mentally ill) or others? What do we know about these incidents? Were the individuals involved previously in contact with the police? What was the nature of these contacts?
6. Are problems relating to the mentally ill concentrated in specific areas of the city? If so, why?
7. Of those mentally ill individuals who themselves summon the police, how many call repeatedly? What is the nature of their problems?



8. Most states, in their treatment of the mentally ill, have recently adopted a policy of deinstitutionalization--attempting to keep mentally ill persons in the community and helping them to live as close to a normal life as their condition makes possible. This includes the expectation that they will learn to live within the boundaries of acceptable conduct commonly enforced by the police.
- What implications has this recent change in policy had for this community?
  - What is an approximate estimate of the number of individuals now in treatment in the community who, several years ago, would have been institutionalized?
  - What services are available to these individuals?
  - What kinds of problems do they present?
  - Do the police know when they are dealing with such an individual, as distinct from a person who has never had contact with the mental health system?
  - Are such individuals, when they violate the law, to be processed through the criminal justice system? How does this square with the now well-established practice of avoiding the criminal justice system in dealing with those who appear to be mentally ill?

#### B. Established Authority

- What authority do the police have for dealing with the mentally ill, short of criminal prosecution and use of emergency commitment proceedings? (If, for example, they are disturbing others by their conduct or simply frightening some individuals, can they be ordered out of a restaurant? a welfare office? the vestibule of an apartment house?)
- What is the authority of the police to make an emergency commitment? What criteria must be met? What procedure must be followed?
- Are the police acting properly if they arrest and jail an individual who commits a minor offense, but who is obviously mentally ill? What about the opposite? Are the police acting properly if they do not make the arrest? Are there specific factors that would justify taking one course or the other?

#### C. Police Practices and Their Effectiveness

- What appear to be the objectives of the department in responding to the problem of the mentally ill?
  - identifying and dealing with potentially dangerous conduct?
  - eliminating conflicts that arise in the relationship between the mentally ill person and the rest of the community?
  - providing direct assistance and help to the mentally ill?
  - referring those who appear to be mentally ill to agencies that can be of help to them?
- What is the relative importance of these objectives?
- What priority does the department give to calls from mentally ill persons and to complaints received from others about their conduct?
- How are telephone calls from mentally ill persons handled? What determines if a police officer is dispatched?
- What guidance is provided to officers in deciding what to do in handling a case involving a mentally ill person?
- What resources, if any, are available to an officer in helping the officer to make a judgment on what to do?
- In choosing from available forms of action, what choices does the officer assume that he has?
- Individual police officers frequently develop their own very special kind of response for mentally ill persons with whom they have frequent contact. What do we know about such responses? Are they proper? Are they effective? Do some officers consistently handle the mentally ill more effectively than others? What is it about their style of response that makes them more effective?
- What effort is made, if any, to maintain a record of contact with mentally ill people so that officers having subsequent contact will know the nature of previous complaints and will know how officers responded to them?

10. Do the police ever take the initiative in trying to arrange consultations for an individual who frequently turns to them for help--or who is the source of frequent complaints--and who appears to be mentally ill? Should they?
11. What has been the experience of the police in utilizing emergency commitment proceedings?
12. What experience, if any, have officers had in responding to the urging of mental health workers that persons being treated in the community be dealt with as the officer would deal with the average citizen?
  - Has this resulted in an increase in arrests?
  - What has been the experience in jailing such individuals?
  - Is there a willingness on the part of the rest of the system to prosecute, or does a "taste of jail" become the final step in this procedure?
13. Are there cases that seem to fall "between the cracks"--with mental health workers unwilling to commit and police concerned about the danger that the person poses for himself or others? What is the specific nature of such cases?
14. What is the capacity of psychiatrists to predict dangerousness? Is there knowledge that should be conveyed to the police which they would have the capacity to use and apply in judging the potential for dangerous conduct?

#### D. Analysis

1. What is the proper role of the police in relating to the mentally ill? Should it be limited to incidents in which there is a potential of danger and to incidents which involve conduct (such as disorderliness) that is offensive to others? Or should the police go beyond and assume a responsibility for directing those who appear to be mentally ill on how they can obtain help, for aiding in the care of those who have obtained help, and for contributing to their integration into the community?
2. Is there need to provide police with the services of those trained in dealing with the mentally ill so that more professional judgments can be made in deciding how best to respond to the cases the police are called on to handle?
3. Is there any need to request legislation to provide special limited authority for the police to deal with the mentally ill in ways that do not require invoking either the criminal or the mental health systems? (e.g., authority to convey home similar to that now provided in many jurisdictions as an alternative for handling a person intoxicated by alcohol)
4. What additional training should be provided to police personnel?
5. Should the police be pressing the community to provide additional mental health services to meet the needs of those who are in treatment in the community and who spend much of their time on the streets or in public facilities? What is the specific nature of these needs?
6. What specific guidance can be provided to police officers for choosing from among the alternatives available to them? Specifically, what guidance should be provided in the use of emergency commitment powers?
7. What can be done to advise citizens of the rights of the mentally ill, the limitations on police authority, and the rationale behind community treatment so that fewer demands will be made for the police to deal with incidents that neither require nor justify police intervention?
8. Are there more effective ways in which police can handle their telephone contacts with citizens who are mentally ill?

Problem #3  
ROBBERIES OF ALL-NIGHT  
RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS

Madison Seminar on  
 Problem-Oriented Policing  
 July 30 - August 1, 1979

A. Defining the Problem

1. What is the incidence of such robberies?
2. What can be said in summary fashion, based on traditional crime analysis, about those robberies that have occurred? (location, time, type of business, characteristics of offenders, modus operandi, use of weapon, etc.)
3. What, aside from their hours of operation, makes these establishments especially vulnerable to robbery? (e.g., lone attendant?)
4. Are some chains more subject to robbery than others? Why?
5. What amount of money is typically taken?
6. How do these robberies differ from other forms of commercial robbery?
7. What has been the extent of injury, if any, to the victims of such robberies?
8. What can be learned from analysis of those who have been apprehended and charged with the robbery of such establishments? (juveniles? past record? local or nonresident?)
9. What has been the experience in prosecuting those individuals who have been apprehended?

B. Established Authority

1. Are there any special problems that arise in using the robbery statutes when charging individuals who rob such establishments?
2. What is the authority of the police to stop and question individuals immediately after such a robbery occurs?
3. Are all-night establishments subject to any special regulations? Are there any special conditions they must meet in their operations? Should there be?

C. Present Police Practices and Their Effectiveness

1. What has been the experience of the department in receiving reports of robberies? (in all cases? speed? accuracy of information? etc.)
2. Is there a special pre-set response to such reports? What is it? To what extent do operating officers conform with it?
3. What considerations have been given to the sometimes conflicting concerns for apprehending the offenders as distinct from protecting the victim and others in the immediate vicinity of the robbery?
4. From the experience of recent years, does it appear that one response is much more effective than others?
5. What use is made of stopping and questioning immediately following a robbery of this kind? What specific guidance is given to officers? Of what value is this investigative method in these situations?
6. What is the form of the traditional crime scene investigation in such cases? How valuable is it?
7. What level of cooperation is received from the establishment's management in the investigation and any resulting prosecution?
8. Have the police undertaken to train attendants in how to respond to a robbery? (protecting themselves, acquiring descriptions, contacting the police, and conveying needed information)
9. What steps, if any, have been taken to prevent such robberies by changes in the operation of the establishments? (e.g., immediate deposit in safes of large denomination bills, frequent removal of cash from the premises, maintaining clear windows so that the interior is subject to clear view from the street) What do we know about the value of such changes?
10. What use have the police made of proactive techniques for apprehending those who rob such establishments? (e.g., hidden cameras, alarms, stake outs, directed patrol) What do we know about the value of such techniques?
11. Of what value, if any, is regular preventive patrol in dealing with the problem?

12. What do we know about the experiences of other jurisdictions in dealing with this problem? Have they been collected? Are any significantly more successful than others? What responses appear to be most effective? How rigorously have they been evaluated?

#### D. Analysis

1. Based on what is known about the problem, the effectiveness of current police practices, and the experience elsewhere, what should be the response of this department to the problem of robberies of all-night retail establishments?
2. What requests, if any, should the police make for changes in zoning ordinances, building codes, and various licensing requirements that might impact on the incidence of such crimes?
3. What specific suggestions might be included in communications with the owners of such establishments regarding their location, design, and management? How much of the police department's response should go into working with management on a day-to-day basis to prevent robberies from occurring and, if they do occur, to maximize the likelihood that the robber will be apprehended?
4. What use, if any, should be made of private security services?
5. What use should be made of proactive techniques designed to apprehend or to assist in apprehending the offender if a robbery occurs?
6. What should be the standard response to a report of a robbery? What specific instructions should be given police personnel in balancing the desire to apprehend the offender with the desire to aid the victim and others who might be present?
7. What effort should the police put into the prosecution of those responsible for such robberies, compared with other prosecutions? How important is a successful prosecution as a deterrent? Is the prosecutor aware of the total problem of this type of robbery and how the prosecution of the person apprehended might affect the problem? Is the judge, in sentencing a person convicted of robbing an all-night retail establishment, made aware of the total problem so that he or she can consider how the sentence imposed might affect the problem? Should the judge be provided with such information in the presentence report?

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