

Sociology 3395: Criminal Justice and Corrections: **Lecture 9: Police Operations**

Today we will begin our look at the police. We will consider the following topics:

1. History of the police;
2. Distribution of the police in Canada;
3. The organization/efficiency of the police;
4. The Police role/operational style;
5. The Patrol function;
6. Criminal investigations;
7. Policing modern society;
8. Intelligence-led policing
9. Aboriginal/First Nations Policing

(1) History of the Police:

Our Canadian police are rooted in early English history. There were no police before the 11th century, but after the Norman Conquest a pledge system arose whereby everyone became responsible for assisting neighbors and protecting the village from criminals. Groups of 10 families (“tithings”) were set up, and grouped into a “hundred” (who were looked after by a “constable” appointed by local nobles (the first real police officer). The community dealt with its own minor problems; the constable with more serious ones. These hundreds were then amalgamated into shires, and the top law-enforcement official (the “shire reeve”) gradually evolved into the position of sheriff. The Crown or a local landowner appointed this individual to supervise a specific area.

In the 13th century the watch system was created to further protect larger towns and cities. Watchmen patrolled these areas at night and reported to the area constable (who ultimately became the primary law enforcement officer).

In 1326, shire-reeves were replaced by the justice of the peace (JP’s), a position created to control an entire county. Over time they took on judicial functions. Later the position of parish constable emerged and were expected to oversee criminal justice for parishioners. Acting as agents for JP’s, they supervised night watchmen, investigated offences, served summons, executed warrants, and ensured the security of accused before trial.

By the mid-1700's, London got to the state where it didn’t have an organized system of law enforcement. Crime was a big problem and the only recourse to authorities was to call in the military. Yet, this proved

unpopular as soldiers often acted harshly. The military had also come under the direct control of city officials, who frequently abused the power of the military for their own ends.

Henry Fielding introduced an alternative in 1753: "The Bow Street Runners," which consisted of volunteers who mainly retrieved stolen property. They soon became so successful that they were hired out to control crime in other areas as well.

This success, along with much migration into the city, resulted in parliament debating the best approach to control crime. After Sir Robert Peel was appointed Home Secretary, a formal plan was approved. In 1829 the Metropolitan Police Act was passed, creating the London metropolitan Police. There were 4 operational philosophies for this force: (1) to reduce tension and conflict between law enforcement officers and the public; (2) to use non-violent means in keeping the peace, with violence to be used only as a last resort; (3) to relieve the military from certain duties, such as controlling crime; and (4) to be judged on the absence of crime rather than by high-visibility actions. This force of "bobbies" were so successful in controlling crime and disorder that they were soon copied in many other countries.

In colonial Canada during the 1700's and early 1800's, various law enforcement agencies were established. For example, French settlers in Quebec replicated the system in France in the 1600's. However, the first permanent constables under the control of their respective city councils didn't appear until 1833, well after the British conquest. In Ontario, in contrast, settlers followed the law enforcement system being practiced in England. In 1835 Toronto hired 6 men to be the first constables to patrol the town at night. Other Canadian cities followed, forming their own municipal police forces (e.g. Halifax in 1841). In the West, however, scattered communities created policing systems based largely on what had gone on in their original homelands. The Hudson's Bay Company also policed areas within its jurisdiction. The North-West Mounted Police were established in 1873 (later renamed the RCMP in 1920). Its purpose was to police and control the Western areas purchased from the HBC by the federal government in 1869.

The early municipal police departments that had been established in the 19th century had 3 major functions: (1) to maintain public order; (2) to control and prevent crime; and (3) to provide services to the community. Over time, the most significant development was the improvement of communication technology (e.g. the introduction and gradual improvement in call boxes, then telephones, followed by two-way radios, police cars, as well as scientific crime investigation methods). Much of this encouraged a separation of police officers from the community - something that was to

last until the introduction of community policing in the 1980's.

(2) Distribution of the Police in Canada:

Just over 84,000 people were employed by police forces in Canada in 2005. Of these, just over 61,000 were officers and the rest civilian employees. The number of officers grew by 1% since the previous year.

There are 3 different levels of police in Canada corresponding to the three levels of government. In 2005, 65.3% of these were municipal police officers, 25% provincial police (e.g. OPP, QPP and Royal Nfld. Constabulary), and the rest RCMP. The single largest force is the Toronto police, followed in size by Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and Ottawa.

There is no single model for determining the appropriate size of a police force or its workload. One problem is determining the population base (e.g. census figures are a problem given significant daily changes in population in most urban areas). The size of police agencies also varies significantly both in terms of personnel numbers and in the number of officers per person served. Yet two measures are generally used to establish the appropriate size of a police force by analyzing and identifying population trends: (1) the population to police officer ratio (this compares changes in the number of police officers to changes in the Canadian population); and (2) comparing the number of Criminal Code incidents (excluding traffic offences) reported to the police with the number of police officers in a force that handles those incidents. This ratio is used as an indicator of police workload.

Compared to 28 other developed countries, Canada ranks quite low in terms of the number of police per 100,000 population (#25), far down the list from Italy, Mexico and Greece, but above Sweden and Finland.

(3) The Organization/Efficiency of the Police:

Police forces are basically bureaucracies, so in order to provide policing services as efficiently as possible, the professional model of policing emerged in the 1930's and remained dominant for the next 4 decades. It was characterized by: (1) a hierarchical differentiation of the rank structure; (2) functional differentiation, with job specializations developing to better deal with particular crime problems; (3) the routinization of formal, written procedures and practices; and (4) the centralization of command where ultimate authority rests at the top, and decision-making is accountable thereto and protected from outside influences. These four characteristics remain today, although most forces have attempted to shift their focus to more of a community based-model -

one that in theory attempts to limit the top-down approach by eliminating middle managers and giving patrol officers more discretion. Yet, since police forces generally operate on a paramilitary basis, it is difficult to eliminate entirely.

Of particular importance to the professional model are specialized job roles. These are said to enable the force to operate in a more efficient and effective manner (e.g. large forces are subdivided into operational areas, and then further divided into various specialities such as homicide, sexual assault and gang units). Recently, such “top down” organizational features have been criticized as failing to suit the needs of contemporary society (e.g. there may be disagreement, confusion, or overlap between divisions, lack of lateral communication, and not enough information flowing from the bottom to the top re: the sentiments of the public). Other problems include the failure to promote personal ingenuity as well as the reduction of contact among members of the police organization.

When police efficiency itself is examined, the traditional measures of statistical efficiency are (1) response time to calls; and (2) arrest rates. The problem with using the former as a measure of police efficiency is that citizens, even in emergency situations, often wait 5-10 minutes before calling police for help, and by that time the perpetrator has often fled. Thus, even the quickest responses don't have the anticipated effect on either measured crime rates or police efficiency. Of course, when police realized this, management systems were put in place to quickly distinguish between emergency and non-emergency calls. This categorization enabled “differential response” (e.g. emergency calls being responded to more quickly), ultimately facilitating adjustment of workloads, and better use of resources. Indeed, these “differential response” programs are now standard policy across Canada. When police are able to quickly identify the most serious criminal incidents, rapid responses may be more efficiently apportioned and other methods used to deal with the rest. In addition, by analyzing calls for service, police administrators are able to restructure their patrol activities without diminishing public satisfaction. This frees up resources for other things without adversely affecting the crime rate.

As noted above, the second traditional measure of police efficiency is the arrest rate. Following a deterrence model, it is assumed that arresting most offenders will prevent crime, so the crime rate will go down. Of course, while accepted for decades, this approach is flawed because self-report and victim surveys reveal that much crime is not brought to the attention of the police. Moreover, many people are arrested but not all are prosecuted. Hence, some police administrators favor the clearance rate as a better indicator of police performance (i.e. the % of crimes solved over a specific time period). This enables the police to separate and analyze various categories of crime. The clearance rate for violent crimes is usually

the highest since most of these are committed by persons the victim knows. In contrast, property crimes are often committed by strangers, so clearance rates are much lower. High clearance rates indicate that the police response to crime is good, while low rates typically indicate that more resources should be applied to the area. On average, in 2003, just 28.3% of all crimes known to police were cleared by an arrest or "otherwise." This is so low due to the low proportion of property offences cleared (compared to violent and "other" offences, where the rates are much higher). This means that only about 1 in 5 criminal offences lead to an arrest.

Another performance indicator in this vein is the number of arrests made by the police that lead to prosecutions. While lack of prosecution may have nothing to do with the police (e.g. reluctant victims, Crown decisions), still most arrests have been shown to lead to convictions - overshadowing some of the limitations found in other indicators used to evaluate police performance.

A more recent measure is that of fear reduction - considered by advocates of community policing to be the most important indicator of all. Reducing fear of crime in a community is seen as a way to increase police-community interaction and allow the police to gain the trust of residents. This trust then gives the police much-needed community support when it comes to reducing criminal activity or risky behaviors. Some successful techniques of fear reduction include: (1) community-organizing response teams to build new community organization; (2) a police contact service for victims of crime; (3) police community centres; and (4) neighborhood activity programs for youth sponsored and operated by police/volunteers.

(4) The Police Role/Operational Style:

Police have changed from being predominantly involved in criminal investigation to now being involved more in non-crime activities (e.g. crime prevention/ addressing social problems). This may involve things like peacekeeping, law enforcement, emergency medical treatment, etc. As a result of this complexity, part of the socialization of police officers involves the development of a working attitude, or style through which s/he approaches the job. These may be classified as: (1) The social agent (i.e. problem solvers who work with community members, protect them from outsiders, and respond attentively to their local concerns); (2) The watchman (i.e. an emphasis on maintaining public order without necessarily making arrests, such as with moving drunks and the mentally ill along); (3) The law enforcer (i.e. enforcing all laws to the limit of their authority, including minor ones); (4) The crime fighter (i.e. focusing entirely on the detection and apprehension of serious criminals, and seeing any social service function as diminishing their effectiveness).

(5) The Patrol Function:

Police patrol has been seen as the backbone of policing since the beginning, the assumption being that police patrols deter crime. The purposes of patrols include: (1) deterring crime through a visible presence; (2) maintaining public order and a sense of security in the community; and (3) the 24 hour provision of services that are not crime related (this last purpose has been more controversial in police circles).

The importance of police patrol cannot be underestimated. It is patrol officers that are visible to the public, mobile, maintain a community police presence, provide a quick response to emergencies, and most often detect crime. Indeed, officers on patrol are expected, as a result, to prevent potential crime. The main activities of patrol officers today are as follows: (1) To deter crime through maintaining a visible presence; (2) To maintain public order within the patrol area; (3) To enable quick response to law violations or other emergencies; (4) To identify and apprehend law violators; (5) To aid individuals and care for those who cannot help themselves; (6) To facilitate the movement of traffic and people; (7) To create a feeling of security in the community; (8) To obtain statements from crime victims and witnesses; and (9) To arrest suspects and transport them to a police facility for investigation. Whether visibly working the beat in marked or unmarked vehicles, on foot, bicycles or horses, police patrol 24-7 in their designated areas. They also, at times, receive a specialized assignment (e.g. traffic patrol or security checks). Mostly, however, they patrol their beat and respond to citizen calls of some sort or another (many of which are not crime related, such as noise complaint, animal control, finding lost kids, etc.).

Beginning in the 1930's, the police car and two-way radio enabled police to be in constant contact with headquarters and to respond to incidents almost immediately. This led to what is known as incident-driven policing where the primary role of the police is to respond to such citizen calls for help. This was viewed as the most efficient approach to organize patrols and maximize deterrence. While reactive in nature, this didn't prevent officers taking a more proactive approach such as in stopping and questioning suspicious persons or engaging in 'crackdowns' on vice crimes. Both reactive and proactive styles may be used in conjunction with one another (e.g. noting similarities in break and enters for patterns and then acting).

One of the most important tests of police deterrence has been studies on whether arrests reduce crime. While some are critical of this, Shapiro and Votey (1984) discovered, for example, that an arrest for impaired driving leads offenders to fear a second arrest if engaging in such behavior again. However, Choi (1994) indicates that if police arrests are to have a

deterrent effect on things like domestic violence, it is essential for victims to start the legal process by laying a formal complaint.

With regard to the organization of police patrols themselves, a variety of approaches are used. In directed control, officers spend some of their time in certain locations and watch for specific crimes. One form is the “hot spots” patrol that requires an analysis of all incoming calls based on geographic origin. Then, the “hottest” areas in the city are specifically targeted with extra patrols. When this was tried in Edmonton in 1986-87, one year later there was shown to be a slight reduction in the number of calls to these repeat addresses, as well as a reduction in the total number of calls (although this merely begs the question as to whether this approach merely moved the problems elsewhere).

A second type of patrol is the traditional foot patrol. This reemerged as popular since the late 1970's in response to citizen complaints about the lack of contact with officers in patrol cars. In foot patrols the emphasis is on greater interaction with the community and the proactive solving of underlying community problems that may lead to crime. Relatively common in Canada today, studies have shown that while foot patrols reduce crime only slightly, they significantly reduce citizens' fear of crime and improve police-citizen relationships (e.g. in the Jane-Finch ethnic community in Toronto). However, some suggest that this approach works better for middle-class communities than in the inner city. To be successful, research has indicated that foot patrol must operate in areas with large numbers of community members and the size of each beat should be small - thereby enabling police to walk their beat area at least once a day.

As for the issue of whether preventative control actually reduces crime, the Kansas City preventative Patrol Experiment provides classic evidence on this issue. During a 1 year evaluation, police studied the effects of preventative patrols by applying different patrol strategies in different areas (reactive, proactive, and preventative control). While expecting to find that proactive patrols would be the most effective in reducing crime and improving citizens' feelings of safety, the results showed that, in fact, the different types of patrol did not effect crime rates, citizen attitudes toward police services, citizens' fear of crime, or rates of reported crimes. These findings were both revealing and controversial. For example, contrary to police expectations, preventative patrol was no more effective than reactive patrol in reducing crime or fear of crime. Moreover, the presence of more patrol officers did not lower crime rates. This led to the idea that the best way to go was to have a constant level of patrols in a given area (enabling administrators to experiment with alternative tactics and strategies). The findings of this study may reflect the fact that patrol officers may be so thinly spread that they may not be seen often, that many crimes that occur in residences are not deterrable by police patrols, and that many offenders

in high patrol areas may simply change their approach to committing an offence rather than avoid offences altogether.

(6) Criminal Investigations:

Criminal investigation is the second main function of the police. Once a crime has occurred and the offender has left the scene, patrol officers conduct a preliminary investigation. Then detectives take over in an attempt to find the offender. In most mid to large police services, detectives make up 15-20% of all personnel. Usually organized in a different division of the force, they are usually assigned to sections specializing in a particular type of criminal activity (e.g. homicide, robbery, vice squad) or support services (e.g. breathalyzer operator). While much detective work is reactive, they also engage in proactive activities such as arranging “stings” to catch fences who buy stolen goods. Technological advancements such as DNA tests have greatly facilitated detective work, enabling detectives to maintain high clearance rates for certain offences such as murder.

While the “ideal” criminal case is one where the offender is arrested at the scene, there are many witnesses, and the suspect quickly confesses, seldom do things go quite so smoothly. Hence, detectives typically investigate by collecting evidence through personal interviews, doing background checks on potential suspects, and by waiting for an analysis of any forensic evidence available at the crime scene. Generally, detectives categorize cases into three types: (1) Unsolvable cases; (2) Solvable cases; and (3) Already solved cases. These are differentiated on the basis of a cost/benefit analysis re: the amount/worth of investigative effort required to solve the case. Detectives are generally able to successfully solve most of the cases that have a moderate amount of evidence.

Basically, if patrol officers are unable to solve a serious crime at the scene, detectives take over the case. They first conduct a preliminary investigation, reviewing any available files and securing the crime scene for evidence (e.g. weapons, fingerprints, bloodstains, clothing fibres and hair samples, including in many cases DNA evidence). Statements are also taken from any witnesses and photos are taken of any relevant information. Any evidence collected is placed into evidence bags. Further, investigators will typically walk through the crime scene, trying to recreate the crime as it happened, enabling them to place the parties, their entry and exit points, whether there are signs of forced entry, etc. Written notes are taken on all of this.

If a suspect is arrested, detectives will perform an interrogation to provide prosecutors with enough evidence to prosecute. If the case remains unsolved, detectives and their superiors have to decide if they will pursue it further (based on “solvability factors” as above).

In some cases, detectives may go on to solve a cases through more aggressive tactics, such as in setting up “sting” operations to entrap people engaged in illicit transactions. They may also “go undercover” in order to gather information concerning an offence (e.g. infiltrating criminal organizations in drug cases), or recruiting and relying on informants (paid or otherwise). Without such tactics, it would be almost impossible for the police to tackle certain types of crime.

(7) Policing Modern Society:

Due to concerns about the proper role of the police in modern society, police administrators and analysts began to study what was wrong with traditional styles of policing and to develop and experiment with new ones. By the mid-1980's, research had shown the limits of traditional policing: police patrols didn't reduce crime rates, detectives didn't solve a lot of crimes, and arrests didn't necessarily would-be criminals. Most police work was reactive, and that didn't seem to work particularly well. Surveys showed that citizens didn't report a significant number of crimes and that victims had lost faith in the police responding quickly and effectively. Indeed, when police did respond, many people remained uninformed about the case until they went to court. On top of that, officers had become removed from neighborhood concerns and hence seemed unreliable. People ultimately didn't call police to report crimes and lived with significant fear of crime. Indeed, some communities took to hiring private security companies to protect them from crime due to their lack of faith in the police being able to do so.

As a result, some police administrators felt a need for fundamental change. What emerged is community policing - an attempt to close the gap between the police and the community. There are many types of community policing in Canada, and it is generally seen by many as the future of policing. How did this new style of policing develop so quickly?

The start of this approach can be traced to “the broken windows model.” Originating in a 1982 article by Kelling and Wilson in The Atlantic Monthly, the argument was that police can't successfully combat crime themselves without community assistance and support. Indeed, the basic police role must change to enable this to occur. Moreover, it was argued that disorder, if left unchallenged, signals that no one cares, and, as a result, further disorder (and crime) results. These ideas were traditionally ignored in the professional model of policing.

The broken window model argues that visible, minor offences such as loitering and public drinking, when coupled with physical deterioration of neighborhoods, cause residents and workers to be more fearful of crime. This causes some to leave and others to become fearful and isolated. Three

components make up this argument: (1) Neighborhood disorder creates fear; (2) Neighborhoods give out crime-promoting signals (i.e. deteriorated surroundings suggest to criminals that nobody will care about them being there); and (3) Police need citizens' cooperation.

The idea is that there is a significant correlation between disorder and perceived crime problems in a neighborhood (this underlies laws that target panhandlers, squeegee kids, etc.) Proponents of such measures point to research from community housing projects that have reported that both serious crimes and fear of crime can be reduced by reducing disorder. It is also suggested that police include local residents in decisions about policing priorities in their area, as well as to review areas of policing that had been largely ignored for decades

Then there is the issue of problem-oriented policing. Goldstein proposes this as a style of policing where, instead of spending most of their time reactively responding to incidents, the police would direct their energy to addressing the causes of crimes. The idea is that unless those causes are dealt with, the problem will persist, leading to more criminal incidents and greater fear of crime. In this respect, five principles have been identified that emphasize the potential sources of criminal activity: (1) a problem is something that concerns the community and its citizens, not just police officers; (2) a problem is a group or pattern of incidents and therefore demands a different set of responses than does a single incident; (3) a problem must be understood in terms of the competing interests at stake; (4) responding to a problem involves more than a quick fix such as an arrest. Problem solving is a long term strategy; (5) problem solving requires a heightened level of creativity and initiative on the part of the patrol officer.

As this approach came into practice, four stages in the problem-solving process were developed: (1) scanning (ID issues/assess whether a problem); (2) analysis (collecting info); (3) response (developing and implementing solutions); and (4) assessment (checking if actions were effective and modifying approach if not).

Yet, one flaw of the problem-oriented approach is that the police didn't always include the community when studying a crime problem. Because community policing involves community groups, the success of the police depends not only on the development of their own skills and capabilities, but on the creation of competent communities. Hence, the development of community support needs to be facilitated, often, it is suggested, by decentralized, neighborhood based policing operating out of mini-stations or store-fronts. An important goal here is to reduce fear of crime in the community, whether the intense fear of victims, the fear of specific, especially violent crimes among high risk groups (the young, women and minorities), or the formless feeling that one is unsafe (especially

the elderly and those with low incomes). To community police officers, combating such fears is an essential part of their jobs. It is also a way to increase citizen-police cooperation. Techniques employed in this respect include things like police-community newsletters, local police contact centres, foot patrols, and a variety of police programs for victims of crime. Whatever techniques are used, the most effective allow officers the time to identify key issues with local residents and to use personal initiative and community input to solve problems.

Community policing has three main goals: (1) the formation of community partnerships; (2) organizational change; and (3) problem solving. The first requires community involvement (e.g. meetings/prevention programs). The second requires police to become active in the community and ensure that their organization (structure, culture and management approach) is more flexible and open. Finally, police and residents must collaboratively work to address chronic neighborhood problems. In addition, it is important in this approach to help reduce fear in communities, whether that of existing victims, the double victimization of those who fear being treated as second class citizens by the system, or the more concrete fear of specific violent offences. Reducing fear, in the context of community policing, is a key way to increase police-citizen cooperation.

Yet community policing has not been without its critics, and some have argued that it is not the crime control panacea advocates claim. First, community policing seems to include almost any type of proactive activity by the police since it lacks any comprehensive definition. Secondly, community policing has become a 'buzzword' - more rhetoric than an approach that has taken over the operational philosophy of the police (e.g. the two most common programs implemented under this rubric, such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education and foot patrols, existed long before community policing emerged. Third, studies of community policing reveal that officers spend more time on paperwork and other administrative duties than on talking with members of the community or developing community specific programs. Fourth, it has been argued that community policing will fail because it advocates a change in the command structure. Finally, there are also problems with defining what exactly the community is, and the fact that community police officers remain poorly integrated into the rest of the organization.

Finally with regard to styles of policing, we have all heard the phrase "zero-tolerance" - another way of saying aggressive policing. This involves applying traditional law enforcement methods and organization to solve problems. The central feature is maintaining order - by suppressing those individuals perceived as the main sources of disorder. The police pursue an aggressive policy through certain designated neighborhoods, targeting individuals that they feel are responsible for disorder within the community.

Such methods gained attention after the results of such practices were published by the New York City Police Department (Rudolph Giuliani hired a new police commissioner, who made precinct commanders responsible for reducing crime rates and replaced them if they weren't successful. More staff were hired and stopping and questioning suspects was encouraged). Official police stats indicated a 37.4% reduction in the crime rate between 1990-1995, especially in homicides, robberies and burglaries. Still there was a downside to this: minority neighborhoods were often targeted, civil rights complaints against the police grew by 75%, and citizen complaints grew by 60%. Even Amnesty International claimed that this approach encouraged police brutality. Despite these problems, however, this approach garnered much interest, and other cities rushed to follow suit. This was done even though other cities that had not introduced these policies also noted remarkable reductions in their crime rates (e.g. San Diego had introduced a more community oriented approach and recorded both a similar reduction in the crime rate and a reduction in citizen complaints).

(8) Intelligence-Led Policing:

Another heavily-trumpeted approach spearheaded by the NYPD was intelligence-led policing, an approach that emphasizes computer-assisted programs for identifying high-crime places and those high-volume offenders at risk of re-offending. In so doing, it stresses the collection and analysis of intelligence and the development of targeted responses in our "risk society." Emerging in Britain in the 1990's as police struggled with the challenges of globalization using old methods (e.g. problems created by transnational crime and new technologies), the 1993 Audit Commission produced a report recommending a focus on proactive policing and repeat offenders, in particular using intelligence to target police resources where they would be most effective. There are several goals to this approach: (1) targeting repeat offenders using both overt and covert means; (2) managing crime and disorder in hot spots; (3) investigating the links between crimes and incidents; and (4) developing and implementing preventative measures, especially through multiagency partnerships.

Critics of this approach argue that it relies too heavily on informants, who may have their own agendas and continue to commit crimes. Questions have also been raised about the effectiveness, fairness, and accountability of the methods used, particularly given that the law often lags behind technological practices.

(9) Aboriginal (First Nation) Police Forces:

The final issue we will consider today involves the growing trend towards having Aboriginals police themselves. One of the earliest examples occurred in Quebec in 1978 when 25 reserves were policed by a semi-

autonomous force known as the Amerindian Police. These forces were set up to solve Aboriginal communities' dependency on outside police forces - a situation that often criminalized behaviors that would not necessarily have been if other agencies were involved. These forces were also founded to give a greater understanding of, and sensitivity to, the issues that confront peoples living in Aboriginal communities.

Force members were most commonly asked to perform service functions within the community (more than 1/3 of requests in the first 5 years were for non-criminal incidents requiring peace-keeping or referrals to social and health agencies. The crimes committed usually were the least serious Criminal Code and provincial statute offences (e.g. public order offences, B+E, liquor and drug offences, and interpersonal disputes). The most typical response did not involve laying charges, while in some cases individuals were detained overnight. This force basically played an important role in crisis intervention and the provision of social services. Moreover, only 33% of potential criminal offences were officially recorded, suggesting that many matters were dealt with informally.

During the late 1980's/early 1990's numerous government inquiries were unanimous that there were serious problems in Aboriginal communities, exacerbated by a lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of traditional police forces. While there was some division on how to deal with this, the Federal government created the First Nations Policing Policy in 1991 to allow Aboriginal communities more control over the operation and management of policing on reserves. Its purposes are: (1) to improve social order and security in First Nations Communities; (2) to improve the administration of justice through the establishment of professional First Nations Police Services; (3) to ensure that First Nations peoples enjoy their rights to security and safety through police services responsive to their needs; (4) to support self-sufficiency and self-government through establishing structures for management, administration and accountability of such police services; and (5) to implement these policies in a manner that promotes partnerships with First Nations, including mutual respect and participation in decision-making.

By 1995, 41 agreements had been signed with 180 First Nations communities. By 1998, 69% of the total First Nations population living on reserves were under the jurisdiction of the FNPP. These included both "stand alone" police forces and agreements with existing federal, provincial or municipal police forces. 69% of First Nations that had signed on opted for the first approach whereby fully trained officers of Aboriginal ancestry provide policing services to the community, accountable to First Nations Police Boards and Commissions.

Such approaches signal a commitment to community level political

and economic development to ensure stability and coherence in social organization. It also contains an appropriate legislative framework to sustain intergovernmental cooperation, coordination and support for such arrangements. There may, however, be difficulties over time given the relative lack of community resources and different, possibly conflicting policing styles arising out of cultural differences. Basically, though, First Nations communities want their officers to not only practice community policing but to be skilled at solving major crimes. Conventional policing skills are thus very important as well. Some have questioned how the extensive resources that have gone into First nations Policing may have been put to better use, but this approach is at the very least more culturally sensitive to Aboriginal concerns than what was done in the past.

Summary:

While police services have traditionally been organized militarily, many questions have arisen over their effectiveness. Police officials have spent the last 2 decades experimenting with different approaches, some of which appear to be effective in catching criminals and deterring further crime. In order to improve their effectiveness, many forces turned to community-based policing, including elements of community involvement and problem-solving. These have led many forces into a new era of policing in which they use resources differently in an attempt to achieve better results. Yet many issues need to be resolved, such as difficulties in changing organizational structures to decentralize decision-making authority and share some of that with the community.

Also reflective of community policing, Aboriginal police forces have emerged in an attempt to deal more effectively with the issues facing those in Aboriginal communities. In many respects these act as peacekeepers, combining the role of police officer, social worker and community activist.