

**SMALL TOWN, PROFESSIONAL, AND  
COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING: REFORMATIVE  
AND STRATEGIC RHETORIC**

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## Abstract

In this article, we explore the ideological construction of the concepts Small Town Policing, police Professionalism, and Community-based Policing (CBP). Professional policing responded to the major deficiencies of Small Town Policing while modestly effecting harmony and congruence with respect to the myths of community and demands for solidarity and privacy. Simultaneously, Professional policing created a major disjunction between ideal policing and many of the realities of non-urban policing. Although Community-based Policing may better fit small town practices and allow a more equitable inclusion of community segments, CBP ideology and rhetoric may be more a strategic myth than a practice.

## SMALL TOWN, PROFESSIONAL, AND COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING:

### REFORMATIVE AND STRATEGIC RHETORIC

#### INTRODUCTION

Community-based Policing, an ideological movement in police culture over the past twenty-five years, developed in cities, often large cities, but one of its imperatives according to many advocates and evaluators has been to effect the kind of policing deemed characteristic of small towns. The writings on Community-based Policing (CBP) as a social movement have been focused more on theory, for example, the social construction of CBP (Greene and Mastrofski, 1988) and programmatic (Rosenbaum, 1994; Trojanowicz, 1983; Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1994). The accounts of CBP have, virtually exclusively, been focused on policing in large cities.

Simultaneously with the elevation of Community-based Policing (CBP) as the benchmark of progressive policing, there arose a counter, critical interpretation claiming variously that CBP had not been implemented or that attempts at implementation actually had little impact on police culture. According to the debunking motif, regardless of the content of the reforms undertaken, CBP was essentially a government-sponsored movement designed to restore the legitimacy of the policing establishment in the wake of the public relations disasters of the last quarter of the twentieth century—inner-city riots and apparent crime waves (Mastrofski, 1991; Crank, 1990). CBP survives as part of the official morality for policing, despite the fact that it is largely not implemented. We wish to examine the Community-based Policing movement as it has been introduced in small towns, concentrating on the ideational level. Our focus is the impact that this social movement has

had on small town policing at the level of values, attitudes, and strategies.

In this article, we intend to explore the ideological construction of the concepts Small Town Policing (STP), police Professionalism, and Community-based Policing. Although CBP may have originated as a reformed urban model which was claimed to be derived from small town policing, Community-based Policing is now, in turn, being introduced (some would say reintroduced) into small town and rural policing in the absence of any severe legitimation crisis, although not without a certain legitimating (or, we will argue, strategic) function. Thus, we look at the interests, pressures, and knowledge that have generated and sustained CBP and its associated myths such as, perhaps, the image of small town policing itself. In this regard, our approach is contextual social constructionism in that we think it relevant to examine how these constructions and myths relate to experience and we assume that, to some extent, claims can be assessed.

Edward Sapir (1964) distinguished between externally imposed spurious cultures and internally generated, spontaneous, and holistic “genuine” cultures. In this view, an activity such as policing may be considered relatively congruent or not in contradiction with other practices or needs of the policed community. In the context of the contemporary small town and small town policing, Sapir’s distinction directs one to examine the fit of cultural elements, in this instance, of models of progressive policing with actual sanctioned police activities, and of the myths of community and communitarianism with sanctioned practices of inclusion and exclusion.

To what extent is there role congruence or incongruence between the demands and needs of the small town and the policing styles practised by the local police as they

have evolved over time? Are there contradictions among the social construction of small town, professional, and community-based policing? Would Community-based Policing ideology be more congruent with community norms than a more legalistic, professional model?

Our referent point is that Professional-based Policing (PBP) created major contradictions for Small Town Policing while modestly effecting harmony and congruence with respect to the myths of community and the factors of inclusion/exclusion. It did modestly effect equal opportunity with respect to the policing service, thereby, in that sense, having a relatively more “genuine” component. PBP/COP was a style that was congruent with modern community demands for solidarity and privacy, and also with the requirement for an equal opportunity model of policing. Simultaneously, PBP created a major disjunction between ideal policing and many of the realities affecting policing in a small town. In this perspective, CBP may be seen as instrumental in effecting a more genuine type of Small Town Policing in both these respects: where the conception of policing ideals better fits small town practices, and where there is a greater and more equitable inclusion of community segments. On the other hand, CBP ideology and rhetoric may be utilized as a strategic myth to justify intrusive policing as well as exclusion of some community segments, and only specific elements of CBP may be highlighted.

#### THE COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING MOVEMENT

The literature on Community Based Policing is extensive. CBP, which is more a philosophy than a specific programme (Murphy, 1988; Clairmont, 1991; Mastrovski, 1991),

has three main features: an expanded role for the police in society, a movement away from the militaristic hierarchy towards more participatory management, and expanded linkages between the police and the community. These elements entail more decentralised decision-making, job enrichment and autonomy, proactive, problem-solving policing, involvement of the community in police planning and accountability, and the creation of a more expansive constable-generalist role for uniformed officers (Keeling and Watson, 1982; Braiden, 1987; Loree, 1988; Koller, 1990; Clairmont, 1991; Cordner, 1997).

The literature on CBP also includes a social constructionist perspective which is sceptical of both the images of the community upon which CBP rests and the depiction of small town policing practices, which Crank (1990) claims represent legitimating myths. Crank argues that the CBP ideology has broad social appeal, but it is capable of including a wide variety of policing strategies and adjusting to opposite political swings. Crank (1990) distinguishes between more "liberal" CBP programmes focusing on crime prevention and problem solving, and "conservative" practices, such as aggressive order maintenance, which emphasize community interests above individual rights and thereby promote a model of non-negotiable coercive force. Within the implicit myth of an homogenous, consensual "community", the enhanced role of the police runs the risk of anti-individual and extra-legal tactics in the name of communitarianism.

Clairmont (1991: 3) argues that, "Successful constructionism appears to depend upon the congruence of three factors, namely interests, pressures and knowledge." Community-based Policing originated from internal organizational pressure as well as from external pressures in multi-cultural urban centres deriving from a reform movement the

objective of which was to provide an alternative to the revealed short-comings of legalistic, big-city policing. In this respect, knowledge is a mobilizing tool through the critique of the existing model and by “proffering a persuasive alternative thrust” (4). Ideologically, CBP harkened back to a supposedly earlier and simpler model of policing which had developed spontaneously in rural and small town communities. According to this perspective, CBP was neither new nor innovative; it was simply small town policing writ large. This connection between CBP and small town policing (STP) is made explicit in the perceptions of small town and rural police officers. According to Weisheit, Wells and Falcone (1994: 566), small town and rural “policing presents an ideal type example of community policing.”

The CBP movement, then, also refers directly to the myths of “watchman” and “community”. The parallels between Community-based Policing—at least the liberal version—and the small town model will become apparent. The police are quick to point out that community-based policing is what they have always done in a small town. The discussion below suggests that there is a justifiable kernel of truth in this claim, although even the urban constable generalist is different from the small town constable because the former will actually do more complex investigative work while the latter will continue to perform a diverse set of tasks. Furthermore, small organizational size prevents much formal devolution of command and management, and the geography of the small town causes greater visibility therefore diminishing opportunities for widespread use of uncontrolled discretion.

Community based Policing was originally an urban phenomenon. Legalistic policing, particularly in minority urban neighbourhoods in the United States and Britain,

was fraught with contradictions which were starkly exposed in the upheavals of the 1960s. The need for greater police accountability to the "community" was a demand voiced by representatives of specific ethnic or sub-cultures which had been the target of aggressive, legalistic policing. Military-style pacification had failed; new police tactics were urgently required. Subsequently, the re-legitimation of the police rested on an official foundation of state financial and ideological support for CBP.

In Canada, the "movement" for Community Based Policing had similar entrepreneurial support through the Department of the Solicitor General. In its institutionalization, CBP was a top-down "movement" and is now the official morality in policing despite relatively modest implementation and impact. Rather than being simply passé, however, it has been absorbed into policing and embedded at the mythical level. The institutionalization of CBP is evident in the changed terminology which makes policing more legitimate and acceptable in the eyes of other institutional actors. For example, in towns and cities of all sizes, the "Police Department" has become officially the "Police Service" and the police officer provides "community services" not "operations".

#### EVOLUTION OF SMALL TOWN POLICING

Despite greater interest in the last decade, Winfree and Taylor (2004) assert that "we have only a partial and fragmented picture of non-urban policing." A few studies have examined the perspectives of police officers in rural settings and small and medium-sized towns (Crank and Caldero, 1991; Thurman and McGarrell, 1997; Weisheit, *et al.*, 1994). In Canada, Murphy (1986) contrasted the legalistic RCMP style of town policing with a municipal model (MPD). Apostle and Stenning (1988), in their "Public Policing in Nova



Scotia”, discuss STP in terms of peacekeeping and informality, and they note the great variation in style, effectiveness, types of policing services provided, and so on. They also provide data substantiating the claim that STP is characterized by tangible political interference, citing evidence from small town Chiefs who claim that local political elites believe they “own” the department and can dictate to the Chief.

Swanson, Cohen and Swanson (1979), in their *Small Town and Small Towners*, argue that small towns continue to have a “deep sense of community” (1979: 51) which involves seven attributes: “It stimulates enduring loyalties to a place, creates immobility, increases attachment to conventional approaches, enforces a narrow moral code of behaviour, personalises issues and events, generates myths and heroes, and ensures solidarity among the citizens.” Furthermore, “the value that is most deeply held is that of privacy, and the implicit right not to be bothered or even governed” (54). To the extent that such a deep sense of community, conceptualised by Swanson *et al.* in an American context, characterises Canadian small towns, than a non-intrusive, professional, and reactive style of policing might be generated spontaneously.

The small-town chief of police has long been the subject of social satire. The Hollywood perception of small town policing has, similarly, not been very positive, at worst characterising it by a "cracker" image and, at best, by paternalism. It is from this position of relatively limited prestige that contemporary small town policing has developed. The image of rural/small town policing was essentially peace-keeping within a reputedly consensual, watchman style (Wilson, 1970); an essentially social, non-intrusive, community-influenced,

conciliatory style that was based on majority shared values. The reality of this appearance was substantially different for those excluded from the “consensus”. In contrast, legalistic policing was reactive and the goals were crime solving and public order maintenance utilizing legal recourse as the primary means of policing. Uniform enforcement regardless of social status was the chief legitimating claim.

As described by Weisheit (*et al.*, 1994: 552), small-town policing is characterized by greater concern with crime prevention, "problem-solving and order-maintenance functions", and the delivery of a wide range of services deriving from "irregular occurrences." Rural police officers were "viewed as an integral part of the community", interacted with citizens in a relatively informal way, achieved personal respect from citizens, knew and appreciated "the history and culture" of their community including offenders, and were more responsive to the local community (552-554). This closeness has, in addition, a dark side. As Lindsey and Kelly (2004) assert, police officers in small towns who are well-known to residents, business owners, and community members “live in a fishbowl” and “almost never have an opportunity to decompress”.

Weisheit *et al.* claim that this style of policing small towns corresponded with Wilson's "watchman" typology. Wilson's watchman was an urban beat cop who patrolled an established block of streets on foot, knew community residents personally (businessmen and trouble-makers), was primarily oriented to peace keeping, and solved most disputes informally. It should be noted, however, that he was also prone to minor corruption, gave preferential treatment to local elites, and dispensed crude street justice to low status peace-breakers. Poor training and inadequate supervision allowed for a continuation of

unjust, discretionary treatment.

Certain aspects of this watchman model approximate the style characteristic of small town police departments into the 1970s and 1980s. At least relative to urban areas, small towns were characterized by an abundance of primary rather than secondary relationships. Personal relations were more likely to be face-to-face and multi-dimensional. People -- including police officers -- had a diffuse sense of obligations. The essence of small town policing was this close affinity between the police and those citizens on behalf of whom they policed. The fundamental issue that arises here is the optimal social distance between citizens and enforcement officials. An officer with diffuse and widespread friendship networks may be prone to turning a blind eye to even serious criminal matters. Being hired and fired by Town Council, in addition, puts the police officer in the pockets of the political elite, giving rise to preferential treatment for the elite.

It might be safe to claim that there was a general agreement among the town elite (small business owners and professionals) as well as the majority of stable and established residents that the primary responsibility of the police chief was to maintain public order. Too narrow an adherence to specific community norms, however, might induce the police officer to enforce rigid standards on unpopular but generally socially harmless deviants.

The targets of this public order maintenance were youth, particularly but not exclusively disadvantaged youth, and the lower social classes. Policing helped keep the lower orders in their place and preserved the tranquillity and order of the town on behalf of the majority of the residents. Small town policing, then, could often be highly discriminatory and inequitable. Finally, it must also be emphasised that there is considerable variation in small

town policing depending on such variables as policing model (e.g., RCMP vs. MPD), or region.

#### CRIME-ORIENTED, LEGALISTIC POLICING (PBP -- PROFESSIONALISM)

The disadvantages of the small town “watchman” model became increasingly apparent given the changed nature of local communities in the second half of the 20th century. The change in size, diversity and nature of the communities, as well as an increased number of public complaints about disorder and crime, precipitated the adoption of a legalistic policing model in small towns. Police chiefs had been hired on the basis of local politics and were often incompetent to meet the new demands of their job. Local politicians, who ran the police as they did any other town "department", became increasingly dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the police and with the people running the department. Towns were prepared to adopt an alternative policing model, consistent with the wider image of policing which newer residents brought with them and which everyone imported from the national media.

This new conceptualisation was termed "professionalism", although a more precise designation would be crime-oriented, legalistic policing. This “modern” conceptualisation contained elements which compensated for some of the deficiencies of the small town model, but also included elements which made the new style depart substantially from community needs and concerns.

The RCMP epitomised this crime-oriented professionalism in Canada. Returning to Wilson's typologies, the RCMP provided a "legalistic" style of policing which endorsed maximum social distance between the police and the community rather than intense

community involvement, claimed to offer non-discriminatory treatment for all, and focused on crime-fighting and the legalistic laying of formal charges rather than service. The equivalent force in the United States is the State Police. Both rural police forces (at least in the pre-CBP era) had “relatively little connection to local social networks”, were frequently transferred and were “statistically oriented” (Weisheit *et al.*,: 564). This orientation would be modified subsequently by what became known as Community-based Policing. Rather than being opposed to professionalism in general, Community-based Policing may be compatible with some of the social justice components of police professionalism more than the crime-oriented, legalistic aspects which were essential to the definition of professionalism adopted by modern police departments.

One question is the extent to which a particular policing style can be said to be congruent with the needs and expectations of the policed community. Kaill’s (1986) study of urban and rural crime statistics indicated that, compared to urban areas, non-urban areas had similar rates of violent offences but lower rates of property crime. Non-urban areas also had the highest rates of public order crimes—obstruction, disturbing the peace, trespass, and wilful damage to public property-- and the highest rates of offences involving municipal by-laws and provincial statutes (principally, Liquor Control). According to Murphy (1986), these public order offences are proactive in the sense that the police initiate the citizen contact. They also reflect the adoption of a formal, charge-oriented, legalistic style.

The trade-off for the towns which adopted this legalistic model was, first, a loss of control. The RCMP style of legalistic policing demanded maximum independence from local political control. The second trade-off was service. Where the small town model of

policing differed from the urban "watchman", described above, can be demonstrated using another of Wilson's typologies: the service-oriented policing model. According to Wilson (1970), the service style characterized ethnically homogeneous suburbs where neither crime-fighting nor order-maintenance were high priorities. Instead, the police adopted a low-profile enforcement image, a relatively wide service orientation, and a rapid response provision. Affluent suburbanites didn't want to see the police often, but wanted them immediately when they were summoned.

Small town municipal forces, knowing that they are dependent on the good will of the Town Council and, ultimately, of influential citizens, perform a host of service functions, from escorting funerals to making daily inspections of temporarily vacated private property. Minor complaints from established residents are handled carefully because such treatment of significant community members enhances the public relations image of the department. Legalistic policing, on the other hand, does not provide a service-orientation but, instead, emphasizes such elements as competent crime investigation and the equitable processing of charges. Initially, it was this competent and equitable "professional" image for which many small towns contracted and, in the process, they knowingly sacrificed the service component.

In municipal policing, legalistic norms were grafted onto the earlier watchman/ service orientation, which did not disappear (in contrast to the RCMP model of small town policing described above). To the extent that equitable, just treatment of all becomes police practice, the policing style meets one of the most important criteria established by most community members; however, the further professionalism went in the small towns, and it

tended to go furthest in the larger as opposed to the smaller centres, the more certain negative consequences of this new style became apparent.

#### DEFICIENCIES OF LEGALISTIC, CRIME-ORIENTED POLICING

In the past, small town police looked to big city policing style as the cutting edge. At the root of the deficiencies of this new “professionalism” is the extent to which the style is congruent with the expectations and requirements of small town policing. Under the legalistic mandate, there is less interest in community consultation, school liaison, etc., narrowing the policing mandate considerably from the community model derived from Swanson *et al.* As Murphy's research on small town police has indicated (1986), officers trained in crime investigation, weapons use, street survival, and hostage negotiation find the routines of walking the beat, rattling doors, chalking tires and directing cross-walk traffic frustrating if not demeaning. The self-definition of offices as basically crime fighters is accompanied by a disdain for the "social work" aspects of a service-oriented department. By legalistic standards, service is not "real police work". Second, modernised equipment meant, above all, the patrol car. As constables began to walk less and drive around more, the social distance between them and both the town elite and the citizens widened. Alienation grew and the officers' job satisfaction declined. This social separation is aggravated in situations where a strong police union buttresses an independent police culture, as the example of Cape Breton communities shows, discussed below.

The standards of crime-oriented, legalistic policing are somewhat incongruous with the actual experiences of policing a small town. Even though police, to an extent, construct crime through their daily decisions and classifications of acts, the offences police construct

(or “discover”) are usually relatively minor. Even in large departments it has been learned that only a small part of most officer's time is spent on criminal investigation. This discrepancy is magnified greatly in a small town. The experience is inconsistent with the crime-fighting, legalistic ideology. It may be more consistent with the new standard of modern policing which claims to be community-based.

#### COMMUNITY-BASED AND SMALL TOWN POLICING -- THE LINKAGES

From the point of view of small towns, CBP ideology derived from urban policing and has diffused to rural settings where there are some affinities. Most importantly, since CBP is now the most widely accepted definition of progressive policing, the small town model has a new legitimacy. If in urban areas, CBP means rationalizing and institutionalizing elements which occur more spontaneously in small towns, once diffused back to small towns, CBP means more than a simple reiteration of the "service" components which had been provided under the older small town model as well as practices made inevitable by the small scale of the community, such as close contact with the policed population and intense community involvement.

Weisheit *et al.* emphasize three main affinities between CBP and STP: accountability, connection, and problem solving. Police in small towns are less likely to use their powers of arrest, exercise a much wider service mandate, and operate a more generalist policing style (more out of necessity than design). Probably the major assumption of congruence between STP and CBP is a close relationship between the police and the community. Weisheit (*et al.*, 1994) claim that CBP and STP tend to hire local citizens (although minority officers are more likely to be hired under CBP initiatives) who live in the



community they police, a factor which is less likely to be true of urban CBP. Consequently, the police "are much closer to the people" (556). In both CBP and STP this greater knowledge "allows . . . officers greater latitude in disposing of cases informally" using "arrests as a last resort" (557). The difference, Weisheit *et al.* note, is that these "features of rural policing . . . arise quite naturally and spontaneously and are not the result of formal policies or of specific community policing programs" (:558, emphasised in original). Consequently, it has generally been found that rural and small town residents are more positive towards the police than are residents of urban areas (Mawby, 2004; Clairmont and Murphy, 1990).

Weisheit *et al.* are aware that CBP has elements of a double-edged sword. As Maureen Cain (1973) observed, "the members of the community defined for [the pre-professional small town police officer] what was trivial and what was important and what was real police work and what was not". This process of socially defining the parameters of police work is problematic without examining the potentially negative consequences of this construction and considering what is meant by "community". Not all members of the municipality (a legal, geographical entity) were or are equally empowered to define appropriate policing.

The key distinction noted by Weisheit *et al.* is that CBP is "formalized and rationalized" whereas STP is informal and spontaneous (565). The introduction of CBP into small towns formalizes certain spontaneous elements of community policing but either transforms them or indicates that the myths of the "small town" are spurious. When local police initiate Block Parent or Neighbourhood Watch committees, these formalized

organizations can appear to offer a service component which is close to the demands on the police voiced by community residents and elites alike. Consequently, the small town police department's claim to be doing CBP gains considerable currency. Yet, the incongruity of programmes such as Block Parents in a small town is readily apparent: the programme was created in an urban environment because of the absence of close, neighbourly, and voluntary supervision of children supposedly characteristic of the small town.

Liberal CBP, whether in urban or rural areas, is the introduction, into legalistic, crime-fighting policing, of an additional component of organizational change and public service. Minimally, it is a dedicated add-on, a public-relations desk with a liaison officer whose job is to co-ordinate civilian crime-prevention, "advisory" groups and police-community relations.

CBP, then, is entirely consistent with and thrives within bureaucratic, legalistic policing. This has a great deal to do with the relatively easy adoption by the RCMP of CBP. Where there is no political accountability to the community, it is possible to construct an advisory group (by hand-picking the membership), supposedly representative of community "sectors", which is distinct from formal political control, so that the force remains accountable to the community in only the most perfunctory way. The close connection between local police and local politicians was one of the earmarks of small town policing and one of the most significant sources of controversy. It is possible that a transition from a spontaneously developed small town model of policing to contemporary CBP may be the foundation for a more "genuine" (communitarian) policing in the small towns. Contrariwise, in the context of a socially divided municipality, even the spontaneously evolved exercise of

legal power may be "spurious" even though internally generated.

Does CBP authenticate STP, making it more genuine? CBP has highlighted responsiveness to minorities and issues of social development, hardly what small town policing was all about. Ironically, the more conservative, order-maintenance style of policing, which still comes under the rubric of CBP, may be more congruent with some of the more objectionable and inequitable practices of police in small towns. Arguably, then, the police need professionalism to avoid the narrow interpretation of the "community". They need to follow the guidelines of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act, allowing for a more inclusive definition of community which recognises and accommodates to diversity.

Professionalism was supposedly to benefit small town policing, making it less politically driven and giving responsibility to the police themselves (Murphy 1986). Professional policing, therefore, had an element of genuineness about it to the extent it countered a narrow majority or elite agenda, in which the police were aligned with the myth of the unitarian small town.

The main point of our argument, however, is to note the growth of incongruence between the implementation of police professionalism in small towns (from the beat to the patrol car, or from informal handling to the introduction of Fire Arms Training Systems, for example), and the needs and demands of the citizens. Professional-type policing in the small town generated the fundamental problem of spuriousness, of being wedded to an urban, crime-fighting model that could cause low self-esteem among officers because of the realities of the demand on small town police, principally the absence of big crime and the

multitude of service demands. At the same time, given the diffuseness of the demands on the police, they found it difficult to remain aloof. Murphy (1986) contrasted the older cop who walked the beat in the downtown and possessed a wealth of community knowledge, with younger Police Academy graduates who cruised about in the patrol car and knew very little about the town or the policed population.

In Cape Breton, where regionalization of policing has been implemented, our research indicates that few people miss the small town model that was practised there. An aloof, Professional model was sustained by a strong police union in the midst of a strong union culture. In this situation, for example in Dominion -- unionised policing in a union town -- police rejected most CBP-type initiatives, such as school liaison. The view was expressed by Town Councillors in Glace Bay that professionalism had replaced the older community style with an inappropriate alternative. In New Waterford, the police appeared to be largely uninvolved, formally or informally, in community activities. On the Northside (Sydney), large problems had developed between police and youth and also with drug use. In addition, many local politicians were also opposed to certain CBP initiatives, particularly the establishment of grass-roots groups as community consultative committees. They were concerned that such organizations would become either pressure groups for the interests of the police organization or would provide a basis for the operation of opposition groups in local politics.

#### CBP AS A STRATEGIC FUNCTION

It is relatively easy for an alienating, repressive and socially distant police style to develop in smaller towns if the police are protected, for example, by a strong union and

subculture or a dominant local faction. While such a style may be protected by powerful forces, this crime-fighting image is difficult to maintain in a small town simply because of the everyday realities of life in a small town. Even if the officer is not a local product, he or she becomes known to the community just as effectively as police officers themselves come to know the handful of people they define as perpetual town trouble-makers. The dynamics of living in and being an active participant in the small community they police make working in a small town fundamentally different from urban policing. The problems of unequal enforcement and double standards adhere to the very nature of small town policing and are not merely a matter of poor training or supervision.

Certain standards of professionalism are the sine qua non of policing. The police must be impartial, competent investigators, capable of handling crime and order problems efficiently. Certainly, the widespread acceptance of police "professionalism" is an important ideology which police can use to maintain or expand their share of social resources. It is used successfully to justify an expansion in the size of the force, in-service training junkets, and the purchase of up-to-date equipment, such as car replacements every two years.

On the other hand, the more socially responsive police departments in small towns emphasize the service components of their work-beat patrol, cross-walk duty, property checks, the personal investigation of minor complaints. These are politically and socially popular and have the distinction of squaring better with the actual demands on the police in small towns, as opposed to fighting crime. It is here that the actual practice of small town policing, particularly the service dimension and the dense and diffuse nature of police-citizen interaction, overlaps with the more recent ideological image of policing:

Community-based policing.

Community-based Policing may have been urban-generated, but it does provide small town policing with possibilities for genuineness in two senses, namely giving a better self-image as practising progressive policing, and providing an ideology within which it is conceivable to construct better relations between the police and the non-elite constituencies. Whether this actually happens is another matter and depends more on demands from below than from the interests of the police. Again, the main rider on this optimistic view is that CBP may be used to justify aggressive order maintenance which violates minority rights in the name of the majority community.

Nowhere does CPB fulfil its potential as a movement making policing accountable to and reflective of diverse community interests. Corresponding with the more critical literature on Community-based Policing, it could be argued that CBP has a legitimating function. This can clearly be seen in large urban centres in Canada, particularly Montreal and Toronto as well as in black rural or aboriginal communities where policing from outside the community has lost its legitimacy. In the small towns in the Maritimes, to the extent there has been a general crisis of legitimation, it derived initially from the all-too-obvious deficiencies of the small town model. The solution, crime-oriented, legalistic policing, came with its own set of incongruencies. CBP, then, served a critical function although it, too, is undergoing a similar process of disenchantment.

In Canada, CBP originated largely as a federal government initiative, a constructed social movement which, however, has succeeded in becoming the accepted morality. In this situation and given the affinity between CBP and STP, the philosophy of CBP becomes not

so much a legitimating myth as an ideology which can serve a strategic function. For more than a decade, small town Police Chiefs have been successful in maintaining or increasing the resources allocated to them by political elites on the basis of claims that they would deliver CBP. But the RCMP makes the same claim, so replacing town police with the federal force does not jeopardize the rhetoric of doing community policing.

Ironically, as the small town model of community policing disappears through regionalization and provincialization (such as the absorption of MPDs by the RCMP), both of these alternatives are introduced as models that can combine the best of professional policing with CBP. As noted above, in Cape Breton there was certainly a clear perception that the professional model of STP was some distance from a community policing style and that there were opportunities for CBP in the new regional force. A similar perception surfaced in New Brunswick where town councillors advocated regionalization of policing on the grounds that it would mean CBP, a stance which outraged some officers who claimed that STP was, in fact, CBP.

In this sense, CBP is used strategically to undercut opposition to regionalisation. Opponents of regionalization claim that it would mean the end of the close, informal ties of police officer and community. The larger, regional police force would lose the close community connections which are essential to the provision of effective policing service. The kinds of CBP programmes which a regional force would be compelled to adopt as a result can not compensate for the loss of community identification (Apostle and Stenning, 1988: 15). CBP in regional forces would be rationalised and formalised, similar to the RCMP model, a dedicated add-on service component which reinforces an aloof,

legalistically-oriented policing style and accompanying police culture. As such, CBP may provide a necessary counter-weight to PBP while maintaining an appropriate degree of social distance between police enforcement and the citizenship. CBP may be a necessary antidote to the short-comings of PBP.

It must be reiterated, however, that CBP may not be “genuine” in the sense of equity. CBP can take diverse forms. Given the argument that community residents want and expect privacy and that small town citizens adopt a relatively narrow range of norms and values, a more intrusive and aggressive style of enforcement could still be justified under the CBP rubric. Such a style, we believe, would certainly be flawed and not genuine in the sense that it would not respond to the needs and demands of an inclusive and necessarily differentiated community.

There is also the issue of the kind of policing citizens actually want. In one sense, CPB has entailed the growth of a voluntary component in policing, particularly in the surveillance aspects of the work, for example, in citizen patrols. Again, CBP formalizes the small town “fish bowl” atmosphere. While CBP initiatives such as these are popular with most citizens, most community residents fail to get involved in crime-prevention programmes. They want to maintain their distance from the police and do not want to get personally involved in social control in their communities. If the police feel role strain in enforcing public order on neighbours and citizens, ordinary residents would likely experience even a greater degree of discomfort in playing a police role.

An alternative to CBP is a minimalist police role. From an organizational perspective, this image helps us understand the relevance of CBP ideology as offering a



strategic function for maintaining or expanding police resources. We have argued that CBP has this function in a small town. The question remains, however, whether this is beneficial from the point of view of the community. Arguably, given scarce resources and the proclivity of small town managers to be concerned about the bottom line of every item in their budget, an expanded police mandate means a reduction in resources for other, perhaps competing community services.

Are the police the best agency to be involved in, for example, community development or problem solving, or should these efforts be undertaken by other social agencies with a clearer service mandate? Funding the police at a higher level may mean decreased and inferior service for the population. Policing, however, is regarded as a fundamental necessity. Furthermore, it is often the only agency available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. While CBP may not be the ideal option for community service, in a tight-fisted political environment, it may be the only available choice.

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