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ABSTRACT

The employment of nonprofessionals in a career line in the police department can contribute toward the following objectives: (1) provide new sources of personnel for the department, thus reducing shortages; (2) improve police-community relations; (3) expand and improve the preventive and protective functions of the department; and (4) provide needed meaningful employment for unemployed and underemployed poverty area residents. (Author)

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

and

THE ROLE OF THE NON-PROFESSIONAL

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The intelligent utilization of nonprofessionals as law enforcement community aides may be the strategic factor for a new approach to the much needed reorganization of police-community relations and the provision of a meaningful protective service.

Police departments throughout the country today are facing serious shortages of personnel. According to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, approximately 2/3 of the police departments in medium-sized cities are below authorized personnel size. The Commission calculates that bringing police departments up to 1967 authorized strength will take 50,000 new policemen. In dealing with the problem of recruiting police department staff, it is becoming increasingly clear that conventional recruitment techniques and requirements are not satisfactory.

According to THE NEW YORK TIMES, August 18, 1967, Los Angeles, California, plans for important changes in recruitment and training, designed to head off a serious manpower shortage. Police Chief Tom Reddin reports that police recruitment in that city has fallen far short of their goals despite the incentive of one of the highest salary scales in the country as well as an intensive advertising campaign utilizing all media.

The President's Commission on crime in the District of Columbia states that the metropolitan police force in Washington, D.C., in 1966 remained 266 men short of authorized personnel despite intensive efforts to recruit in the Washington area and 23 other cities (plus the institution of an employee incentive plan utilizing bonus payments for successful referrals). The seriousness of these shortages in urban police departments is highlighted by the statement of the President's Commission:

> "Two striking facts that the Unified Crime Report and every other examination of American crime discloses are that most crimes, wherever they are committed are committed by boys and young men and that most crimes, by whomever they are committed, are committed in cities."

In particular, it is in areas characterized by poverty, high rates of unemployment, racial segregation, social and family disorganization that the greatest amount of crime occurs. While any attempt to analyze the basis of crime must take into account complicated sets of circumstances, the President's Commission repeatedly underscores the connection between poverty, social injustice, frustration of opportunity and the incentive toward criminality, particularly as these pressures are exerted upon the young. The eruption of violence in ghetto areas has made it clear that the stability and welfare of a city as a whole is deeply affected by what goes on in its poorest areas.

The riots of the last two summers have, in addition, brought into clear focus some persistent problems of crime prevention and community relations. Most urban police departments now recognize that their relationship to the community especially one containing minority groups is crucial to dealing effectively with crime and maintaining order in a crisis. Here are some of the factors that make good police-community relations difficult in areas where there are minority groups.

Most police departments employ relatively few Negroes or Puerto Ricans, certainly nowhere near a percentage representing the community as a whole, and few of those employed in police departments are in positions of major responsibility. As a result, very few of those police department members detailed to predominantly minority neighborhoods will have been recruited from within those neighborhoods.

> "The occupying army aspects of predominantly white store ownership and police patrol in predominantly Negro neighborhoods have been many times remarked. The actual extent of

the alienation thereby enforced and symbolized is only now being generally conceded." *

Increased centralization in many large cities has had the effect of decreasing the amount of contact between the police force as an agency, and the community. While the patrolman is still visible, the agency he represents is relatively inaccessible to the ghetto resident, who is usually less able to maneuver the administrative system on his own behalf than his more middle class counterpart. As a result, people from low income areas rarely think of the police force as an agency of assistance.

All these factors isolate the police department from the inner life of poor communities, which in turn cuts off this agency from the kind of information, related to causes of unrest, which might help to prevent trouble.

In an effort to maintain communication with the community, most urban police departments maintain some kind of public relations program. These vary considerably. Most major police departments have a specific department for officers detailed to police-community relations work. These officers attend meetings of community organization, visit schools, and in general, provide information about police department programs. The department, in turn, depends on these officers for their information about the problems and attitudes of different segments of the community.

In many communities a committee of citizens meets with the police-community relations officers on a regular basis. In St. Louis, for example, the Citizens Committee holds monthly meetings attended by from one to two hundred people. In addition, some communities have run series

* The President's Commission

of conferences between police patrolman and representative members of Negro and Puerto Rican communities, specifically to explore areas of misunderstanding and difficulty. For example, a program of this sort run by Scientific Resources, Inc., was successfully conducted in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In addition, the Justice Department, through the Office of Law Enforcement funded some special community relations programs during 1966. Such a project was established in Newark, New Jersey, for example, under a one-year grant. The project was staffed by a civilian director, three specially hired neighborhood people and two people supplied by the Human Rights Commission. Each neighborhood worker was assigned a ward and brought in neighbors to participate. Every group contained 30 to 40 civilians and 25 to 30 policemen and was led by a man or woman, specifically recruited for this purpose. There were five groups in all and each group met five days a week. The function of the project was to provide an opportunity for direct discussion between the patrolmen and residents of poverty areas in an effort to increase mutual understanding and decrease prejudice and hostility.

While these programs and others like them may have contributed to increased mutual understanding between the participants, they have some serious drawbacks:

1. They rely on a relatively brief period of contact to overcome a lifetime of misperception and distrust.
2. The line patrolmen are not involved by choice and their commitment to the cause of the program may be questioned, though there are doubtlessly some officers seriously concerned with police-community relations.

3. They tend to be used primarily as a public relations technique rather than as a mechanism for possible change and adjustment.
4. Most fundamentally, they do not provide any mechanism for dealing with problems. So, while the meetings may bring the two groups together, they fail to provide any means for utilizing the information gained or the energy mobilized for the benefit of either group. Thus a program which has a positive intent on the part of the police department, may actually result in more frustration to the community as it realizes that the police department cannot take any positive action.

One move that might help the situation would be to take young men from the communities into the police force. It is ironic that police departments are having difficulty finding sufficient recruits to meet their personnel needs, while unemployment, particularly of young men, remains one of the crucial factors contributing to delinquency and disorder in urban communities. There may be obstacles to the employment of these youths in police departments but there are also many possible advantages. They possess a valuable fund of knowledge about the communities in which they live and are apt to share the life style of the community. Furthermore, an opportunity for meaningful employment might provide a powerful alternative to delinquency and subsequent criminal activity. Such employment, as a result, would have a direct impact on the condition of the community as well as on the interaction between the police department and the community.

As one answer to increasing personnel in some cities, police cadet programs are being developed as a means of utilizing younger men for

some police work and developing a potential group for inclusion in the regular police force in the future. In these programs young men from 17-20 are hired on a regular basis and trained to do routine police work which does not require making arrests and carrying weapons. Most such programs require high school diplomas, a clear police record, and in general, closely approximate the requirements for the regular police force. Vacancies are filled through city-wide examinations. A common feature of these programs is that the cadet is required to work toward a college degree during the cadet training period. An accommodation is made in the scheduling of his work for his academic needs.

For example, in St. Louis, a police cadet program is open to youths from 17 to 20. They are required to attend college programs at least 3 hours a week. Allowance is made for this in their regular work schedule. At 20, they become regular members of the police force and are expected to complete a B.A. or equivalent degree. Similar programs are in existence in Alabama, Chicago, and Newark, New Jersey.

The principal advantage of this program is that it allows the police department to utilize the manpower of young men below the age requirement for regular policy duty. There is no question that such a program is attractive to some young men from minority groups. However, in such programs the educational requirements and lack of police records do, in effect, shut out a large proportion of disadvantaged youth. These standards may result in the exclusion of those very young men whose employment would be most valuable to the community in terms of redirected lives, and whose inside expertise, particularly with juvenile activities in inner-city areas might be most valuable to the police department.

For those who do qualify, this program offers an opportunity for meaningful employment at an early age. It also provides a model of an education for a professional career, combining education and work designed for professional advancement.

A second kind of police cadet program is being tried in several cities designed to include more of the disadvantaged youths. In New York City, for example, a cadet training program is in effect which does not require a high school diploma and from which cadets are not barred by police records involving misdemeanors or minor juvenile offenses. This program is funded Federally through the New York City Manpower and Career Development Agency. Remedial education is provided, as well as training specifically related to the work of the police department.

The education component of this program is coordinated by the New York City Board of Education. Program and Administration is the responsibility of the New York City Police Department.

Since it is the specific intention of this police cadet program to bring Negro and Puerto Rican youths into the police force, cadets are recruited through city-wide poverty agencies. The police department records indicate that, to date, approximately half of the cadets who have enrolled have completed the training.

A similar program using funds made available through the Scheuer Amendment, is in effect in Newark, New Jersey. These programs make a more effective effort to draw on unemployed youths from the inner-city, and make careers possible for potentially suitable young men who would otherwise be disqualified from considering police work. Ultimately, it should provide a

a police department more representative of the ethnic and racial makeup of the city as a whole and should therefore help to decrease the distance and distrust between the police force and minority groups.

While it is not yet possible to draw conclusions about success of the cadets from these police department programs, the employment of young people from delinquent, disadvantaged backgrounds in research and schools provides a helpful model. For example, at Howard University a group of highly delinquent boys and girls were successfully training for employment as research assistant. In Grant Rapids, Michigan, during the past summer, "Human Resources Consultant, Jim Knox (a former delinquent now employed by Scientific Resources, Inc.) played a decisive role in alleviating tension in recent turmoil."

However, these cadet programs in general can be criticized on several grounds:

1. Because of general police department shortages the cadets tend to be used for clerical and other routine work.
2. The cadets are fitted into an existing police department structure which, as it stands, is limited in its ability to reach inner-city residents. This despite the fact that the recruiting structure of the program is designed to affect this problem.
3. No specific mechanism is developed within the cadet program to utilize the special skills of the inner-city recruits, i.e., their community background and know-how; nor does it utilize significantly the conspicuous fact of the cadets' youth.

In other words, the police department is introducing a group of people with special attributes into its police force with several intentions which are then ignored.

In addition, the police cadet program may encounter difficulties from a quite different quarter. The incentives of pay, position and security which the cadet program does in fact offer to disadvantaged youths may be in large measure offset by the negative image in Negro and Puerto Rican communities about policemen in general. This factor is reflected in the fact that the New York City Police Department in general is failing in its effort to recruit Negroes.

In a NEW YORK TIMES article of August 8, 1967, Deputy Chief Inspector Eldridge Waith talks about why Negro men do not select police work as a career, "We have a bad image." Many say that "by being a police officer, we are finks." "This means the choice of a police career for many Negro youths is a choice between their own community or the Police Department.

As the drive for identification within the black community grows, as it is likely to do, the choice will increasingly be made on the side of the community if something is not done to change the image of the police department. Furthermore, while it is difficult to pinpoint the conflicts which exist between predominantly white policemen and Negro and Puerto Rican youths, these difficulties must be reflected (on some level) within the cadet program itself. While it is difficult to assess, the ultimate inclusion of both groups within the ranks of the police force does not, in itself, assure any resolution of this problem; and there is, at present, no specific provision within the police department for coping with particular aspects of it.

Thus, the final criticism of the program is that at best, it makes for more Negro and Puerto Rican policemen. Admittedly this is good, both for the individuals involved and for the general welfare of the community. But cadet programs cannot singly be expected to create any new relationships between the community and the police departments.

The conculsion that must be drawn at this point therefore is that neither community relations programs nor the cadet programs are really designed to create an effective bridge between inner-city communities and the police department. Yet the area for such a bridge does exist. Police work is by its nature intimately connected to and affected by just those areas of most concern to the residents of poor communities, i.e., delinquency, bad housing, unemployment, family disorder and direct criminal victimization. What is needed is an area of action in which the police department can be identified in a helpful rather than a punitive role and in which the commuity can be encouraged to come to them for assistance.

Several metropolitan centers have already recognized the need for involvement by police departments in the area of social action. In St. Louis and Kansas City there are new store front operations being run by the police department called police-community relations centers, including one situated in an apartment in a housing project. Two of these were originally funded by the Justice Department and two were subsequently aided by City funds. The director of the program is a civilian appointed by the Police Commissioners Board. Each center is staffed with one full time officer from the police department's community relations department. Additional part time assistance is provided by juvenile, sanitation and limited duty officers as well as a worker from the State Employment Bureau.

The function of these centers is to assist the community in making complaints, obtaining needed social services, giving information, and enabling police departments to keep more directly in touch with the community. However, use of regular police department personnel to man such departments must inevitably be an increased strain on an already overburdened staff. Nor does it offer any new solution to the present problem of communication between the police and the poor.

One answer may be the use of nonprofessionals from the inner-city community as civilian employees of the department in the capacity of police aide. Just such a program is envisioned by Commissioner Leary of New York City. According to THE NEW YORK TIMES August 18, 1967, Police Commissioner Howard Leary has plans for using some precinct houses in slum areas as social information centers in which follow up mechanisms will be provided to make certain that the slum resident receives needed services. Commissioner Leary believes these new services should be provided by civilian aides and neighborhood residents assigned to the precinct house rather than by policemen. In general, he indicates that New York City intends a massive increase in the number of civilian employees working within the department.

By using such non-professionals in service capacities within the police department, many needs can be met. Employment requirements can differ considerably from those for regular members of the police force, thereby making it possible to take advantage of the large supply of manpower which is not utilized in poor communities. As a result, a direct impact can be made on unemployment in ghetto areas and as a corollary on a source of unrest there.

In addition, employment as a civilian lessens the possibility that the police aide will be seen as an agent of the police. It is this distinction which makes his function as a bridge between the police department and the community possible. Inside knowledge of the community life and identification with its problems enables the police aide to reach people in a way not possible for the uniformed policeman. Through the use of police aides, the department may manifest concern for the solution of social ills without confusing or diluting the role of the regular policemen.

The use of non-professionals from the community would also allow the department access to information about unrest in poverty areas, thus strengthening its capacity to alleviate trouble before it builds into crime or riot. This is not to suggest that the aides be informers. In fact, it is crucial that they not be and that the community not view them as such. However, the involvement of the police department in the core problems of the community, will inevitably give the agency greater knowledge and insight. The use of civilian employees in many capacities is strongly urged by the President's Commission. According to the Commission's report "Even more damaging to the effectiveness of police work is the failure to use civilian manpower where it's needed."

The President's Commission specifically recommends for the prejudicial handling of juvenile cases: "In cases where information on the child is needed, it should be sought through home visits as well as through official records, and the police should be aided or replaced by paid case aides drawn from the neighborhood within the police district and selected on the basis of their knowledge of the community and their ability to communicate easily with the juveniles and their families."

A program employing non-professionals as police-community aides in conjunction with the Juvenile Bureau has been operating in Richmond, California for two years. All of the participants were selected from low income areas of the city and were selected from low income areas of the city and were either marginally employed, on welfare, or below the poverty level for a family of four. The Police-Community Aides work with community groups, with the families of youngsters in trouble, and with the police. They interpret to those concerned, the problems and laws which involve youths with the police as well as the programs of agencies which can assist them. They also bring back to the police department some of the attitudes and perceptions of the department which are often not expressed by residents.

The success of the program can be measured by how well it has reached the community. One report by a citizens review committee comments: "The police department staff feels that they are now able to help many families which they had not been otherwise able to help. In several cases Juvenile Bureau patrolmen have requested the assistance of aides. The services provided by the aides give many families the feeling that the city really does care about them and wants to help them."

A strongly affirmative response was also elicited by a questionnaire sent to recipients of the Police-Community Aide services as part of evaluating the program. All of the police-community aides originally employed by the project are still employed. In addition to aiding families in trouble with the law, this project has also demonstrated that unemployed residents of low income areas can be responsible employees of the police department doing work for the benefit of the department, as well as themselves, and the communities in which they live.

An effort to deal with a wider spectrum of social problems and to reach into the heart of poverty areas in the city is being made in New Haven, Connecticut, where until now, the police department has been becoming increasingly centralized.

Three neighborhood police centers are being planned in predominantly Negro sections of the city as part of a program to increase communication between them and the police department. These centers will be staffed from 8 a.m. to midnight by young men in the neighborhood as well as by policemen. The civilian employees will be Negroes and Puerto Ricans in their teens or 20's. They will hear complaints, make welfare and legal aid referrals, offer mediation of neighborhood disputes, and attempt to resolve minor difficulties without arrest. The civilian employees will follow up local problems and help solve them on the scene. They will also provide follow up services to see that the needed help is received from referrals to other agencies. Hopefully the civilian employees may become regular patrolmen.

In addition to such official use of non-professionals as police aides, last summer provided many clear examples of young men from ghetto areas dealing effectively with problems within their own community. They could often do exactly what the police could not--go directly into the streets and talk to the residents, help to "cool" and in some cases prevent riots.

Neighborhood Youth Corps men in New York and Detroit played an important role in keeping communications open between the police and the community as well as freeing regular officers for duty by manning telephones. In Tampa, Florida, after two nights of rioting, the disorder was halted when the sheriff agreed to remove the National Guard and peace officers and to let "White Hat Patrolmen" composed of young men from the community take responsibility for patroling the area and maintaining order. They were

later credited by Governor Kirk and Mayor Nuccio with restoring peace to Tampa. It is expected that the youth patrol will be retained and expanded as a result of the summer's experience.

Negro youths are also employed by the Community Alert Project of the Washington Urban League under a grant of the Labor and Justice Department as field workers in police precincts to rush emergency mediation assistance wherever there is unrest.

All these examples serve to underline the fact that non-professionals--particularly young men from ghetto communities--have special skills and capacities of great potential value to the work of police departments.

Programs of social services situated in poor communities and utilizing skills of non-professionals can be the means of achieving a new role for the police in relation to crime prevention. They may also create a significant source of employment for young men from ghetto areas and offer the promise of a vital new relationship between the police and the poor.

Summary:

The employment of nonprofessionals in a career line in the police department can contribute toward the following objectives:

1. Provide new sources of personnel for the Department, thus reducing shortages.

2. Improve police-community relations.

3. Expand and improve the preventive and protective functions of the Department.

4. Provide needed meaningful employment for unemployed and underemployed poverty area residents.