



## Course Learning Outcomes for Unit I

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Explain how the United States Constitution makes the role of American law enforcement different from other countries.
2. Examine the three eras of policing in the United States and how police/community relations have changed from era to era.
10. Examine the use of excessive force by police and citizen complaints.

## Reading Assignment

### Chapter 1:

The Evolution of Community Policing

### Chapter 2:

Inside Police Agencies: Understanding Mission and Culture

*The following article can be found in the Academic Search Complete database, located in the CSU Online Library:*

Tomlins, C. (2008). Necessities of state: Police, sovereignty, and the constitution. *Journal Of Policy History*, 20(1), 47-63.

## Unit Lesson

Community policing has become the current focus of law enforcement efforts and is the result of the progression of law enforcement practices over several eras. So, what is community policing? How did we arrive at a place in which community policing was the benchmark for acceptable policing strategies? Let's start with the first question. What is community policing? This is a question that is not easily answered as there is no completely agreed-upon definition of community policing. However, there are two primary concepts that permeate all of the definitions of community policing: "police-community partnerships and a proactive, problem-solving approach to the police function." (Miller, Hess, & Orthmann, 2014, p. 5).

Now, let's address the second question. What does policing history teach us about the evolution of policing strategies? The expectation that community members would all be responsible for maintaining law and order in their communities can be traced back to the beginning of policing. This expectation is evidenced in the structure of the tithing system and the frankpledge (i.e., shire reeve and hue and cry).

Modern policing, as we know it here in the United States, can be directly traced back to the efforts of Sir Robert Peel in the passing of the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, which led to the development of the London Metropolitan Police. The London Metropolitan police force adhered to what has been deemed the Peelian principles. Those principles emphasize the prevention of crime and disorder and the importance of the interdependency of the police and citizens. The Peelian principles emphasize that while the duty of the police is to maintain order and prevent crime, the power by which police are able to carry out those duties is derived from the approval of the citizens they serve and protect. Sir Robert Peel understood that without the respect and cooperation of citizens, it would be impossible for the police to maintain order, ensure adherence to the laws, and prevent crime. It was understood that the police are citizens, and that the citizens are police. In essence, the policing of the community was the responsibility of the entire community. Ultimately, Sir Robert peel emphasized that police do not necessarily have to be visible to demonstrate that they are upholding the

laws, but that the evidence of that will be seen in the levels of crime and order that exist in the community (Miller et al., 2014).

While the United States did not immediately adapt the Peelian principles utilized by the London Metropolitan Police force, as it was still using other systems such as the watchman system in the North and the slave patrol system in South, we began to see the development of policing agencies in the northern United States during the late 1830s. Since that time, policing in the United States has evolved through several paradigm shifts, which have been divided into three eras: political, reform, and community.

The political era (1840 to 1930) was a period in police policing history in which we saw the formation of police departments and a desire for police to have close interaction with the community. However, that era was known for the use of the patronage and spoils systems, in which politicians gave people (including police officers) jobs or special privileges as a reward for voting for them. As a result, there was widespread corruption throughout the policing agencies in the United States (Miller et al., 2014).

The reform era (1930 to 1980) was birthed in direct response to addressing the corruption that existed in policing agencies. This era was known for the development of police administrations that were centralized, adhered to the highest standards, and were marked with expert leadership. The reform era is also known as the progressive era, in which professionalism became the main focus of policing agencies in the United States. In the reform era, there was a withdrawal of police from intimate contact with the community, and there was a shift to having police use vehicles to allow for rapid response to calls for service from the community. Thus, this era sought to accomplish crime control through preventative measures instead of the intimate interaction of police within the community. It is argued that it is in the reform era that the concept of the “thin blue line” was coined to describe the separation that exists between law-abiding citizens and criminals, as well as the separation that exists between the police and the citizens that they serve. It is the latter meaning of the term, “thin blue line” that is most commonly associated with the use of the term (Miller et al., 2014).

Although sustaining professionalism is a noble goal, it had negative effects on the relations between the police and the community. In the 1960s and 70s there were numerous studies conducted to evaluate police services. Public, community, and human-relation efforts worked together to improve the relationship between the police and the community, and the introduction of crime prevention programs (e.g., neighborhood watch and automobile and home security systems). During the late 1960s, The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) was developed as an organization to fund studies and programs to assist law enforcement agencies in improving community relations and preventing crime. The 1960s also marked the introduction of seminal cases that impacted how law enforcement personnel were allowed to carry out their duties (e.g., exclusionary rule, Miranda rights, and stop and frisk procedures). In addition, research experiments like the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Study found that preventive patrols did not have a significant impact on reduction in crime, reduction in citizen fear, or community attitudes toward police. Despite concerns about the study designs, one thing was clear: many of the strategies employed during the reform era were not producing the desired result: crime prevention and good police-citizen relations (Miller et al., 2014).

The community era (1980 to present) was born out of the understanding that close relationships between police and the community are essential to being able to “protect and serve” the community. Community policing incorporates the positives of the preceding eras (i.e., intimate relationship with the community, foot patrols, decentralization, and professionalism) with new strategies (e.g., proactive policing, task forces, public relations, and expanded service provision). In essence, the role of law enforcement was expanded to problem-solving and community advocacy instead of solely crime-fighting. The community era marked a return to one of the primary Peelian principles: police officers are citizens and citizens are the police.

It is in the mission statement of a law enforcement agency that one is able to ascertain what that agency has designated as its purpose in its community. It may be surprising to some to realize that most of what law enforcement personnel do has very little to do with “crime-fighting” and a lot to do with serving the community. That is why some people will say that police officers are social service agents that wear uniforms and carry weapons. For some, this may be considered a negative connotation, but for those in the communities who look to the police for protection and service it is a welcomed designation of law enforcement.

The faces and culture of law enforcement are gradually evolving, as “Traditionally, police officers have been a fairly homogenous group: white, male, with a high school education and a military background” (Miller et al., 2014, p. 35). Although there have been gradual increases in the number of women and minority law enforcement personnel, there still is a need to improve recruitment, retention, and credentialing of underrepresented groups in law enforcement. Even as law enforcement personnel move toward becoming a more heterogeneous group, the “police culture” still exists.

The notion of a police culture has negative (e.g., loyalty, secrecy, code of silence, and culture of denial) and positive (e.g., duty, honor, dedication, and self-sacrifice) connotations. There have been many studies that have researched the attitudes of law enforcement personnel in an effort to determine whether or not the negative and/or positive perceptions of police culture truly exist in current police culture. Studies have primarily found that the way in which law enforcement is perceived is a product of the individual backgrounds of law enforcement personnel, media coverage, citizens’ perceptions of various components of criminal justice system based on their personal experiences, law enforcement appearance (i.e., uniform, badge, weapon), and law enforcement behavior (Miller et al., 2014). The more positive contacts citizens have with law enforcement the more positive their perception of law enforcement. The more that it is perceived that law enforcement is meeting citizens expectations (enforcing law, not limiting the behavior of “law-abiding citizens,” controlling crime, and problem-solving), the more positive the perception of law enforcement.

Discretion is perhaps the most powerful tool that law enforcement personnel can use in upholding the law. The application of this discretion can also impact citizens’ perceptions of police. For example, if law enforcement agencies use selective enforcement and it helps reduce crime in the community, the positive perception of law enforcement will increase. However, if law enforcement agencies use selective enforcement and it is deemed discriminatory (e.g., focusing on “street crimes” instead of “suite crimes”), then the negative perception of law enforcement will increase.

Discretion allows an officer to decide to issue a warning instead of a citation and to arrest or not arrest for certain offenses. Discretion also influences the use of force by law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement personnel are expected to determine when force is necessary as well as the extent of force that is necessary and apply it accordingly. This is perhaps the most controversial use of discretion by law enforcement personnel. Thus, carrying out their duties ethically (i.e., integrity, honesty, values, standards, courage, and civility) is crucial to the ability of law enforcement personnel to protect and serve their communities (Miller et al., 2014).

## Reference

Miller, L. S., Hess, K. M., & Orthmann, C. H. (2014). *Community policing: Partnerships for problem solving* (7th ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Cengage Learning.

## Suggested Reading

*To learn more about the topics found this unit, you must first log into the myCSU Student Portal and access the ProQuest Criminal Justice database found in the CSU Online Library.*

The articles listed below highlight community policing and its importance in our society:

Melekian, B. K. (2011). Back to the future: Why community policing is more relevant than ever. *Sheriff*, 63(4), 52-53.

Myhill, A., & Bradford, B. (2013). Overcoming cop culture? Organizational justice and police officers' attitudes toward the public. *Policing*, 36(2), 338-356.

Shockey-Eckles, M. (2011, August). Police culture and the perpetuation of the officer shuffle: The paradox of life behind "the blue wall". *Humanity & Society*, 35(3), 290-309.

Wetzel, T. (2012, April). Community policing revisited. *Law & Order*, 60(4), 6.

## Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

### Law Enforcement in your Community

It is always interesting to apply the concepts that one reviews in the textbook with what actually goes on in the real world, especially your immediate surroundings. To that end, take the opportunity to learn more about the history and policing strategies utilized by law enforcement agencies in your community. You can do this by completing any of the following tasks:

1. Visit the websites of your city and/or county law enforcement agencies and review their websites to learn information about the history of the organizations and any strategies that they might use in your community.
2. Contact your city and/or county law enforcement agencies and find out what community information programming that they offer. For example, some agencies provide citizen police academies in which the citizens of community can attend a series of courses that give them a history and overview of strategies used by that policing agency. Some agencies also provide presentations to local community groups and public schools. If time permits, consider attending one of the available community information opportunities provided by your city and/or county law enforcement agencies.
3. Arrange an informational interview with one of the law enforcement personnel (e.g., public relations officer) at your city and/or county law enforcement agencies to ask questions about the history of the policing agency and/or the community policing initiatives that are utilized in the community. (The interview does not have to be face-to-face, telephone and email are acceptable formats.)

Once you complete one or more of the aforementioned tasks take some time to evaluate the extent to which what you learned from the textbook supports and/or refutes what you learned from your research about the history and policing strategies used by your city and/or county law enforcement agencies.

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to complete or submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.