Course Learning Outcomes for Unit II

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

3. Assess the viability of the broken windows theory in the 21st century.

6. Discuss police-community relationships regarding the media, gangs, and the process of assimilation.
    6.1   Discuss police-community relationships regarding the process of assimilation.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 3:
Understanding and Involving the Community

Chapter 6:
Communicating with a Diverse Population

Unit Lesson

The term "community" has varying definitions. Thus, it is important to specify how community is defined when referring to community policing. In this context, a community is defined as a "specific geographic area served by a police department or law enforcement agency and individuals, organizations, and agencies within that area" (Miller, Hess, & Orthmann, 2014, p. 61). Inherent in this definition of community are several basic concepts. For example, the notion of social contract, which suggests that justice is linked to the relinquishing of some of your individual freedom, and the notion of social capital which refers to a community's social structure and the collective actions of individuals within that structure. It is also understood that law enforcement must be a part of the community in order to fulfill their mission and that there must be a "sense of community" that assists in uniting the community and maintaining order.

Wilson and Kelling's (1982) article entitled "Broken Windows" is one of the most well-known assessments on community dynamics and its impact on crime. They argued that if you have a community in which there are signs of a lack of caring of the citizens, you will also have a community in which crime will occur. This notion of "Broken Windows" spoke to the existence of broken windows as a sign of the absence of caring for the community. That is to say that in communities in which there is actually a sense of community, broken windows will be repaired, abandoned lots will be kept clean, broken down cars will not be allowed to sit endlessly on street corners, and loitering will be controlled. We can all think of communities that we have lived in, lived near, or passed through that showed obvious signs of decay. We can probably recall our initial reactions regarding how much the community was not valued and the type of citizen that lived in the community. We can also think of communities in which there were minimal or no signs of decay and what our initial thoughts about that community and the types of community members that lived in that community were. Thus, if we can recall our thoughts about the two aforementioned communities, as an outsider looking in on those communities, we can only imagine what insiders looking out from those communities might see.

It is often said that perception is reality. This is why some people often rush to clean up their home before guests are allowed. The same concept can be applied to communities. If the community is perceived by insiders and outsiders as a caring community, then it will be treated as a caring community by members of the community and outsiders. However, if the community is seen as a non-caring community (that is to say, a community that allows decay and crime to fester), then the community will be treated as a decaying and crime-infested community by community members and outsiders.

Law enforcement must address several factors that impact their ability to implement and sustain community policing strategies in their community. In addition to addressing the neighborhood decay, law enforcement

must also deal with issues of diversity, violent crime, and community buy-in. There are also phenomenon that take place within the community in response to changes in community demographics, which can also impact the implementation, sustainability, and effectiveness of community policing (e.g., displacement, tipping point, and "White flight").

Communities are constantly changing, and these changes can be both good and bad. Community changes to demographics can include changes to community size, population size, employment rate, race/ethnicity composition, and vital statistics (e.g., age, education, and income). Law enforcement agencies have implemented various programs to encourage citizens to become involved with law enforcement in the community. As a result, citizens have the opportunity to serve on civilian review boards that provide oversight to law enforcement agencies, participate in citizen patrols, attend citizen police academies, participate in police "ride-alongs," and volunteer in various capacities with law enforcement agencies in the community.

Differences between the types of law enforcement (i.e., public or private) can also impact the implementation, sustainability, and effectiveness of community policing strategies. Public and private law enforcement agencies do not always have the same mission. As a result, there is a potential for conflict between public and private law enforcement agencies as they attempt to fulfill their mission. In addition, the regulatory guidelines that apply to public law enforcement agencies do not always apply to private law enforcement agencies. Thus, there may be differences in policing styles that further complicate the ability for public and private law enforcement agencies to collaborate within a community. Although these differences exist, it is possible for both public and private law enforcement agencies to work together to achieve the objectives of community policing strategies: citizen and law enforcement collaboration in protecting and serving their community.

The criminal justice system as a whole can also be actively involved in strategies that enhance the collaboration between community members and criminal justice agencies. The use of "community justice" initiatives, which involve the prosecutor, courts, and corrections in some communities. The ultimate goal is to reach dispositions that will have a positive impact on the community (e.g., keeping communities together and improving community life). Such initiatives include the use of plea bargaining and diversion programs by various court systems. Restorative justice is also a form of community justice in which the offender, victim, local community, and government work together to identify a disposition for the offender that will benefit the offender, the victim, and the community.

The ultimate goal of restorative justice strategies is:

- to renew a sense of community in the offender that encourages his or her to investing in the community after completing his or her disposition,
- to restore a sense of community in the victim that enables him or her to stay engaged in the community after experiencing the victimization, and
- to create a sense of community among community members that results in their working together to ensure that the crime that was perpetrated will not be perpetrated again, and as a result of dealing with the crime in this manner future crime will be significantly reduced or eradicated.

Communication (i.e., nonverbal and verbal) is essential to maintaining a sense of community and to initiating and sustaining interaction between law enforcement and community members. One of the most beautiful things about communities is the diversity that exists within that community. However, there are elements of diversity in a community that can contribute to communication barriers. Barriers to communication include language barriers, cultural barriers, ethnic diversity, religious diversity, socioeconomic diversity, disabilities (i.e., mental and physical), age diversity, and being a victim of and/or witnessing a crime. The aforementioned barriers to communication also include covert issues such as the use of jargon, ethnocentrism, assimilation, acculturation, bias, stereotyping, prejudice, racial profiling, poverty syndrome, crisis behavior, Alzheimer's disease, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and fetal alcohol syndrome. Therefore, it is important that both law enforcement and community members work together to address barriers of communication and to develop a sense of community that facilitates the initiation, sustainability, and effectiveness of community policing strategies in their community.

References

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

Wilson, J. Q., & Kelling, G. (1982, March). Broken windows: The police and neighborhood safety. *Atlantic Monthly*, 29-38.

Suggested Reading

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

The articles listed below highlight community policing strategies designed to address the broken windows theory:

Hoffmann, J. (2007, September-October). LAPD gentrifies skid row: As the affluent take the city, poor Black residents are pushed out with force. *Colorlines Magazine*, *10*(5), 6.

Miller, D. W. (2001). Poking holes in the theory of 'broken windows'. *The Chronicle Of Higher Education*, *47*(22).

Murphy, M. (2005, July 18). Putting the broken windows theory to the test. *Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration News, 225*(12), 50-51.

Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

Community Dynamics

This is an opportunity to better familiarize yourself with your community. Take some time to research the demographics of your community (e.g., community size, population size, employment rate, race/ethnicity composition, and vital statistics). You may be able to conduct this research based on your knowledge of the community, and/or you may have to spend some time searching the internet and/or talking with key stakeholders in the community that will be able to provide you with the information you need. Once you create a demographic sketch of your community, take some time to make note of any related communication barriers that could exist in community based on the demographic information you obtained. Next, take some time to identify strategies that are being used by law enforcement agencies and other government agencies in your community to address the communication barriers. Again, you may be able to identify the strategies based on your knowledge of the community and/or you may have to spend some time searching the internet and/or talking with key stakeholders in the community that will be able to provide you with the information you need. Lastly, make note of any suggestions for improvement and/or creation of strategies for addressing the communication barriers you identified in the community.

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.