

Community Oriented Policing and Community-Based Crime Reduction Programs: An Evaluation in New York City¹

Anthony L. Sciarabba

This article presents findings from a yearlong evaluation of a Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office, community-based “Weed and Seed” program operating in an urban, mostly minority community in New York City. The program operates on the central premise of first using law enforcement and prosecutorial resources to “weed” out the criminal elements in the neighborhood and, second, establishing positive community-based programs in the specified target areas by way of “seeding” activities. Findings following the yearlong evaluation, which used community survey data in addition to official crime statistics, indicate substantial levels of community dissatisfaction with the crime situation in the neighborhood. Additionally, findings indicate overall dissatisfaction with the official agencies operating in the neighborhood. The author attributes these findings to the current community oriented policing policies in New York City and, in his discussion of the findings’ implications, asserts the need for integrating theory with criminal justice community-based policy.

Key Words: policy ♦ neighborhood crime ♦ criminological theory ♦ integration

One major avenue in crime reduction policy is the development of community-based initiatives. One such endeavor, the Weed and Seed strategy, is a community-based program designed to enhance neighborhood-level crime control initiatives while simultaneously restoring the positive elements of community that neighborhood crime reduced. Maintained by the Community Capacity Development Office of the United States Department of Justice, the Weed and Seed policy has, as its name implies, two components: “weeding” and “seeding.” The weeding component entails the efforts of law enforcement in fighting crime and criminality in the specified neighborhood or target area. Such efforts include increasing the activities of law enforcement by providing additional funding for officer overtime and various law enforcement outreach initiatives. The expectation is that such law enforcement activities will promote greater cooperation between members of the community and the criminal justice agencies operating within the immediate neighborhood.

Anthony L. Sciarabba is the director and principal consultant for AccuData: Criminal Justice Consultancy. In addition to his field research activities evaluating neighborhood-level crime reduction policies for the U.S. Department of Justice, he has published widely and serves as the associate managing editor of *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*.

In addition to the primary policing agency operating in the neighborhood, other law enforcement agencies, including the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), are often incorporated into the overall law enforcement role as a result of this increased cooperation among criminal justice agencies. Such interagency cooperation arises from the increasingly complicated criminal activity such as transnational drug and weapons activity. Another component of the law enforcement strategy is the work and activities of the local district attorney's office in prosecuting those arrested as a result of neighborhood "weeding." The success of the law enforcement segment of any Weed and Seed strategy hinges on the level of cooperation between police and prosecutors. In short, it is their collective responsibility that negative elements operating within the specified Weed and Seed target area are removed or suppressed by way of arrests and deterrence and prosecuted and sanctioned.

The second component of the Weed and Seed strategy involves establishing and enhancing community and social initiatives. This "seeding" segment includes beautification and restoration activities and development strategies designed to repair aspects of the community that have been neglected and weakened as a result of the criminal elements operating in the community before implementation of the Weed and Seed strategy. An example of this activity is establishment of a community youth center in an area formerly plagued by gang violence. Therefore, the goal of the seeding component or, more accurately, the prevention, intervention, and treatment and neighborhood restoration subcommittees is research, development, and implementation of programs that restore the positive aspects of the community.

Congruence of the "weeding" and "seeding" components is essential, but it depends on the effectiveness of the community oriented policing taking place in the targeted neighborhood. Community oriented policing is, according to the Department of Justice, the lynchpin of the Weed and Seed strategy in that it is responsible for joining the activities of law enforcement and prosecutorial efforts with those of prevention, intervention, treatment, and restoration. Thus, the success of an entire Weed and Seed strategy depends on the success of the community oriented policing strategy in place in the neighborhood.

The current research presents findings from a yearlong evaluation of a Weed and Seed program operating in a mostly minority community in metropolitan New York City. Initiated in November 2007 and concluded in October 2008, the purpose of the evaluation was to measure program effectiveness of the Weed and Seed strategy. As noted, a primary component of any Weed and Seed strategy is the contribution of community oriented policing initiatives. Research assessing the impact and effectiveness of community oriented policing as a strategic component of a major neighborhood-level

community crime reduction program, such as Weed and Seed, is warranted as such research can better influence criminal justice policy. As the author will argue, some insight as to the effectiveness of a community oriented policing strategy can be ascertained by examining the success of its policies. The current research discusses the effectiveness of the community oriented policing strategy of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in light of the agency's participation and activities in the Weed and Seed strategy operating in New York City. It seeks to answer the question of whether a criminal justice policy that depends on a strong community oriented policing program can be effective if community oriented policing is weak or replaced entirely with another, more aggressive, form of policing.

Community Oriented Policing and the Weed and Seed Strategy

Law enforcement agencies operating within a designated Weed and Seed area are incorporated into the overall program strategy. This incorporation occurs in two distinct ways. First, local, and in some cases, regional, and federal law enforcement agencies strive to remove the criminal element from the targeted neighborhood, thus reducing the crime rate as well as reducing the levels of fear of crime among community residents. The second incorporation of law enforcement occurs through the practice of community oriented policing. As noted, in any Weed and Seed strategy, community oriented policing is essentially the bridge joining the "weeding" segment with the "seeding" segment. According to the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO), which provides national oversight of the Weed and Seed strategy, "community policing embraces two key concepts—community engagement and problem solving. Community policing strategies foster a sense of responsibility within the community for solving crime problems and help develop cooperative relationships between the police and residents" (U.S. Department of Justice CCDO, n.d., ¶ 6) Therefore, the elements of a successful community oriented policing strategy, according to the Department of Justice, include the community's overall satisfaction with local law enforcement. Additionally, and in the broader sense, the elements of overall successful law enforcement participation in the Weed and Seed strategy would include a decrease in the neighborhood crime rates and reduced fear of crime levels among community residents.

While this compartmentalized organization of the Weed and Seed strategy seems simple, the reality is more complex as the success of any Weed and Seed strategy depends essentially on the success of the much debated idea of community oriented policing.

The Community Oriented Policing Paradigm in New York City

Research focusing on community oriented policing is in no short supply. Conversely, research assessing the impact and effectiveness of community oriented policing as a strategic component of a major neighborhood-level community crime reduction program, such as Weed and Seed, is limited in the scientific literature.

Community oriented policing, as defined by Skolnick (1999), “is the actualization of the concept that in a democracy, the police are not supposed to be insular, self-contained, or cut off from the communities from which their power derives” (quoted in Walsh & Vito, 2004, p. 55). In the community oriented policing paradigm, the police form working bonds with community residents with the expectation that relating to the community more effectively promotes more effective methods of fighting crime. As each community possesses its own unique characteristics, individualized relationships with the police offer the potential to develop more “custom” approaches in the fight against neighborhood crime, taking into account these community-level differences. Kelling and Coles (1996) assert that as “problems are most often local—requiring identification and crafting of responses at this level—authority must be devolved to lower levels of the police organization if a department is to be responsive to neighborhood needs” (p. 160).

Concerning police tactics, “community policing eschews *general tactics*, like preventive patrol and rapid response to calls for service, in favor of *specific tactics*, targeted on particular problems and developed in collaboration with citizens and city, governmental, and private sector agencies” (Kelling & Coles 1996, p. 159, emphasis in source). These specific tactics also encompass more traditional law enforcement, including “strategies that repress crime, fear, and disorder within neighborhoods” (Fyfe, Greene, Walsh, Wilson, & McLaren, 1997, as quoted in Walsh & Vito, 2004, p. 55). Thus, the effectiveness of community oriented policing requires a congruent level of cooperation between the police and the community. However, what happens when a community oriented policing style shifts to a zero-tolerance policing style?

The NYPD has shifted its approach to crime fighting by moving away from community oriented policing strategies toward a more aggressive approach. Currently, the NYPD practices zero-tolerance policing, embracing its more aggressive and traditional law enforcement ideals and its high priority for quality of life crime enforcement (see Eterno, 2003; Greene, 1999; Kelling & Coles, 1996). Additionally, the Compstat program of the NYPD (see Eterno & Silverman, 2006; Silverman, 1999) has hindered a number of community oriented policing elements the NYPD used before the appointment of former Police Commissioner William Bratton in 1994 by then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Such an erosion of these elements acts as a detrimental force against police-community relations.

This erosion was especially significant in minority neighborhoods. In assessing the effects of Compstat, the managerial product of the zero-tolerance movement of the NYPD, Eterno and Silverman (2006) note that the implementation of the program created a significant divide between police and many of the city's minority residents:

Minority communities were particularly outspoken about police abuse (see e.g., Haberman, 1997). They cited events such as the sexual abuse of a prisoner, Abner Louima, who had a stick placed up his rectum by the officers who had him in custody; the shooting of an unarmed black man, Amadou Diallo, 41 shots by police; and the shooting of another unarmed black man, Patrick Dorismond. These are just a few examples of incidents in which issues between police and minorities became tense. To some, especially those in minority communities, the police were like an army of occupation. During this time, citizens were quoted as stating that people, 'are locked up because of their race or their politics, as in Nazi Germany' (Haberman, p. B1) (p. 222).

A key finding from Eterno and Silverman (2006) was that Compstat is, in fact, a dividing force between minorities and police.

There is additional evidence that zero-tolerance policing in New York City has created a substantial rift between minority community members and the police. The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, or CCRB, investigates civilian complaints of alleged misconduct against NYPD officers. Originally established in 1953 by the NYPD, the CCRB today is composed entirely of civilian investigators. Eterno and Silverman (2006) note that CCRB statistics offer evidence that the minority population of New York City has essentially bore the brunt of the aggressive zero-tolerance policing policies employed by the NYPD as the majority of the civilian complaints alleging police abuse are filed by minority residents, mainly African Americans. In the 2001 CCRB annual report, 51% of the alleged victims of police abuse were Black. In 2002, this figure had increased to 52%. In 2003, it remained at 52%. In 2004, the figure increased to 53%. In the 2005 annual report, the figure again increased, this time to 54%. In 2006, this figure increased to 58%, a five-year high. Interestingly, during this period, roughly 25% of the population of New York City was African American. Therefore, there is evidence that African Americans are overrepresented in police abuse allegations in New York City. While this finding can be attributed to a number of causes, prior research indicates that a rift does exist between many minority residents of New York City and the NYPD as a result of zero-tolerance

policing. Thus, these CCRB findings of alleged abuse act as additional evidence that such aggressive policing by the NYPD tends to focus more heavily on the minority community.

The practice of heavily focusing on minority communities by the NYPD is counterproductive in building and strengthening police-community ties as outlined in the community oriented policing doctrine. As such, it can be argued that the success of any type of community-level crime reduction program implemented in a minority neighborhood, whose success depends on the strength of the community oriented policing capabilities of the NYPD, faces significant challenges. The implementation of the more aggressive zero-tolerance policing style in New York City by the NYPD has dealt a serious blow to the original community oriented policing efforts previously in place, and as Greene (1999) asserts, "New York City has turned away from community policing" (p. 186). Other scholars have gone as far as suggesting that community policing was "perhaps a failed paradigm" in general (Kania, 2004, p. 80). This brings the discussion back to the original research question: can criminal justice policy, which in this case depends conceptually on a strong community oriented policing program, be effective if more aggressive, zero-tolerance policing has taken hold?

An Overview of the Weed and Seed Site in New York City

The original evaluation examined a Weed and Seed strategy operating in a metropolitan community of New York City from November 2007 through October 2008. The community is located in southern Queens County, just east of Manhattan. The original Weed and Seed grant allocated \$250,000 in funds annually for two areas: the original target area and the expansion area.

Demographic Analysis—Original Target Area

Within the original target area, the United States Census Bureau identifies two areas as individual census tracts. Of particular interest are census, income, population, and housing data. The first census tract is home to 8,752 residents. Ninety-three percent of these residents are minority (8,142), mainly African American (6,374) and Hispanic (1,466). The census classifies this tract as a low income area in which more than 40% of the tract population live below the poverty line. The second census tract is home to 3,270 residents, more than 99% (99.3%) minority (3,248). Similar to the first track, the majority of the minority population is African American (2,667) and Hispanic (505). The census classifies this tract as a moderate income area in which 23% of the tract population live below the poverty line.

Demographic Analysis—Expansion Target Area

Within the expansion target area, the census identifies two areas as individual census tracts. Additionally, a significant portion of a third census tract is also within the expansion target area. As such, this discussion includes demographics from this third tract.

The first census tract is home to 5,701 residents, nearly 96% (95.7%) of these residents are minority (5,461). Most of the minority population is African American (3,994) and Hispanic (1,117). The census classifies this tract as a moderate income area in which 33% of the tract population live below the poverty line. The second census tract in the expansion target area contains 6,670 residents. Sixty percent (60.7%) of these residents are minority (4,051), with most of the minority population being Hispanic (2,056) and African American (1,753). The census classifies this tract as a moderate income area in which 24% of the tract population live below the poverty line.

A significant portion of the expansion target area falls within a third census tract. According to the 2000 Census, this tract is home to 9,835 residents, 85.08% of these residents are minority (8,368). Many of the residents are African American (5,202) and Hispanic (2,175). The census classifies this tract as a middle income area in which 19% of the tract population live below the poverty line. This study used data from all of these census tracts.

Methods

This research is based on a yearlong evaluation of a Weed and Seed strategy operating in a metropolitan community of New York City. The study period began in November 2007 and concluded at the end of October 2008. The primary goal of the study was to evaluate the success of the program.²

Data

Data were obtained over the course of the study period from several different sources. First, official crime statistics were obtained from the NYPD through the Compstat program. While very general, these statistics can provide some insight the official crime situation for the evaluation period. Additional data was collected through community surveys. The community survey was designed following an examination of both previous Weed and Seed and policy based research (see Eterno, 2007) as well as planning sessions with academic researchers. Among the items the survey measured were residents' perception of crime in the community; residents' satisfaction with components of community structure (i.e. jobs, education, and housing); residents' satisfaction with official agencies operating in the community (NYPD, Queens County District Attorney, and the New York City

Housing Authority); residents' awareness of the Weed and Seed program operating in the community; and residents' concerns with respect to the community.

The community survey was administered in three individual waves. The first wave of surveys was distributed in June 2008 during a community event at a large housing project in the community. The second wave of surveys was distributed during a second community event in August 2008. The third wave of surveys was distributed at another community event, also during August 2008. All the community events were well attended by residents and occurred in both the original target area and in the expansion target area. During these three community events, a total of 85 surveys were administered and returned for the evaluation. While small in size, this sample is relatively consistent with other Weed and Seed evaluations.³ Participation in filling out the surveys was voluntary, and participants were informed that their responses were anonymous. The data collected were then imported into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The pooled results from all three waves of surveys appear in the Results section.

Measures

Residents' Perception of Crime in the Community. Residents were first asked to indicate their perception of crime in their neighborhood. By using a five-point ordinal scale (1 = much worse, 2 = worse, 3 = about the same, 4 = better, and 5 = much better), residents indicated how the following crimes changed since the previous year of 2007: violent crime, property crime, gang crime, youth crime, fear of crime, drug crime, gun crime, and graffiti. These types of crimes were selected for the analysis as the evaluation identified them as significant issues in the community.

Fear of Neighborhood Crime. Respondents were asked to indicate their personal level of fear of crime in the neighborhood and how this level varied since the previous year of 2007 along a five-point ordinal scale (1 = much worse, 2 = worse, 3 = about the same, 4 = better, and 5 = much better).

Satisfaction With Law Enforcement Agencies Operating in the Community. As the role of law enforcement in the Weed and Seed strategy is crucial to overall program success, assessing resident satisfaction with the law enforcement agencies in the community (NYPD and the Queens County District Attorney's Office) provides valuable insight into the relationship between law enforcement and residents in the Weed and Seed area, many of whom are minority. As noted, previous research has identified significant rifts between the NYPD and minority residents of New York City after the shift from community oriented policing to zero-tolerance policing in the early 1990s (see Eterno, 2001; Eterno &

Silverman, 2006; Green, 1999). Satisfaction with law enforcement was measured by using an eight-point ordinal scale. Residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with both the NYPD and the Queens County District Attorney's Office with regard to their operations and activities in the community.

Demographic Characteristics

Dichotomous (dummy) variables were used to measure the gender of the respondents (0 = male and 1 = female) and race (0 = not minority, 1 = minority). Four-point ordinal scales were used to measure additional demographic characteristics, including age (1 = younger than 20, 2 = 20–40, 3 = 41–60, and 4 = 61 and older) and education levels (1 = less than high school; 2 = high school graduate; 3 = some college; and 4 = college graduate). Table 1 outlines these characteristics of the residents surveyed. As Table 1 illustrates, the majority of the respondents are both Black and Hispanic. Additionally, most are relatively young—64% are 40 years old or younger. Also, most of those surveyed (67%) report that their educational level is at the high school graduate level or below.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents in the NY City Weed and Seed Target Area*

Characteristic	Percentage (N = 85)
Age	
< 20 years	33
20–40	31
41 – 60	27
61+	7
Gender	
Male	29
Female	67
Race	
Not Minority	15
Minority	78
Education	
< High School	19
High School Graduate	48
Some College	17
College Graduate	13

Results

This research is primarily concerned with assessing the impact and effectiveness of community oriented policing as a strategic component of a major neighborhood-level community crime reduction program (i.e. Weed and Seed). As stated previously, some insight into the effectiveness of a community oriented policing strategy can be ascertained by examining the success of its policies, and the current study discusses the effectiveness of the community oriented policing strategies of the NYPD in light of the agency's participation and activities in the Weed and Seed strategy operating in a metropolitan area of New York City.

Also as noted earlier, the success of a Weed and Seed strategy depends on the strength of the community oriented policing program operating in the specified neighborhood. The strength of the community oriented policing program, as far as its intended effect on the Weed and Seed strategy, further depends on three factors: (1) positive levels of satisfaction with law enforcement operating in the community; (2) a decrease in crime rates; and (3) low levels of fear of crime among neighborhood residents.

Level of Satisfaction With Law Enforcement

Findings from the evaluation revealed that the majority of the residents surveyed were not satisfied with law enforcement operating in their community. Sixty-eight percent of the residents reported dissatisfaction with the NYPD operating in the neighborhood. In addition to the NYPD, the law enforcement segment of the Weed and Seed strategy consists of the local district attorney's office prosecution of offenders. Similar to the previous finding, 68% of the residents surveyed reported dissatisfaction with the Queens County District Attorney's Office. A primary aspect of program success of the Weed and Seed strategy are positive levels of satisfaction with law enforcement operating in the neighborhood. As the Department of Justice states, the mission of community oriented policing is to help establish these positive levels of satisfaction among community members. The findings that the majority of residents are dissatisfied with the role the NYPD plays in their neighborhood suggest that community oriented policing in New York City does not support the success of the Weed and Seed strategy, which depends on an effective community oriented policing program. Additionally, these findings support previous research that highlighted the disconnect between many of New York City's minority residents and the NYPD (see Eterno & Silverman, 2006).

Neighborhood Crime Rates

When assessing neighborhood crime rates, both official crime statistics and citizen perception of crime levels are vital in understanding the true crime situation at the neighborhood level. Findings from the evaluation reveal substantial differences in the official crime statistics and citizens' perceptions of neighborhood crime levels. According to the official crime statistics published by the NYPD's Compstat Unit, rates for violent murder and robbery in the Weed and Seed neighborhoods have increased, while other violent crimes, namely rape and felony assault, have decreased. During the evaluation period, the NYPD reports that neighborhood murder rates increased 125% and robbery rates increased 14.6%. As noted, some violent crime decreased in the neighborhood. During the evaluation period, the incidence of rape declined 16.6%, and the number of felony assault decreased 5.8%.

While the official statistics the NYPD published are mixed, results from the community surveys indicate a very different picture. The community survey asked residents to rate, on a scale of 1 to 8, whether they believed a particular crime was either "much worse" or "much better" when comparing 2008 with 2007. Results indicate that the vast majority of the residents surveyed reported that many types of crimes were either "worse" or "much worse." For example, 84% of the residents reported that they believe that violent crime in 2008 is "worse" or "much worse" compared with 2007. Likewise, 83% reported that they believe that gang crime is "worse" or "much worse" than during the previous year. Similarly, 83% indicated that they believe that youth crime is "worse" or "much worse" than during the previous year. Additionally, 89% reported that they believe that gun violence is "worse" or "much worse" than during the previous year, and 69% indicated that they believe drug crime is "worse" or "much worse" than during the previous year. These findings indicate that while crime may have, according to the NYPD, decreased in some instances (rape and felony assault), community residents perceive that neighborhood crime levels have worsened since 2007.

These findings lend additional support to the argument that community oriented policing in New York City is not working as it should be as the strength of community oriented policing can be partially assessed by a measured decrease in neighborhood crime. Such findings also indicate that the NYPD is, in fact, practicing zero-tolerance policing. Citizen perceptions of neighborhood crime levels play an important role in assessing overall program effectiveness of the Weed and Seed strategy as well as the strength of community oriented policing in this New York City neighborhood. This finding also provides some insight as to the effectiveness, in a broader sense, of the role of law enforcement in this particular community and its participation in the Weed and Seed strategy as a necessary component. Results in this study indicate that success of the law

enforcement component in the Weed and Seed strategy is somewhat conflicted as there is a substantial disconnect between official crime statistics and community perceptions of crime levels.

Fear of Crime Among Neighborhood Residents

Another measure of the strength of a community oriented policing program is the level of fear of crime among neighborhood residents (see Cordner, 1995; Dietz, 1997; Riechers & Roberg, 1990). One of the tenets of community oriented policing is that police officers' development of strong bonds with neighborhood residents helps reduce crime and, subsequently, reduces residents' fear of crime. As the findings so far indicate that community oriented policing in New York City is not effective, the following finding is of little surprise. The community survey asked residents to rate their level of fear of neighborhood crime on a scale from "much worse" to "much better" than during the previous year of 2007. Sixty-seven percent of residents surveyed reported that their level of fear of crime is either "worse" or "much worse" since 2007.

The finding that the majority of residents in the Weed and Seed neighborhood report that they are more fearful of crime in 2008 compared with 2007 further indicates a weak community policing strategy. A statement by an older female resident who volunteered to fill out a neighborhood survey exemplifies the residents' feeling: "My grandkids are unable to come out everyday they want to come out...I have to say no [to them]. I'm also staying in the house. I'm only out [at this community event] because the police are out here...when they leave, I leave."

The fact that many community residents are fearful of crime in the community and many, as indicated, are not satisfied with the efforts of law enforcement in controlling neighborhood crime indicates that the relationships between law enforcement and residents within this particular community are not strong.

Discussion and Conclusion

Results from the community surveys illustrate that the majority of residents are dissatisfied with the NYPD and the role of law enforcement operating in the Weed and Seed neighborhood. Additionally, a substantial disconnect between the NYPD and the residents of the Weed and Seed area exists as residents' perceptions regarding crime incidence differ from actual incidence in the NYPD's Compstat reports; that is, the NYPD is spreading the word that crime has fallen drastically throughout the city, when in reality, community residents are reporting that many crimes are on the increase in their neighborhoods. Findings also indicate that fear of crime levels among neighborhood residents in the Weed and Seed area are substantial when compared with the previous year of 2007.

The Department of Justice outlines measures of success of community oriented policing. An analysis of these measures, which include resident satisfaction with neighborhood law enforcement, a measurable decrease in crime rates, and low levels of fear of crime among residents, can ascertain the strength of a community oriented policing program. In addition to revealing the shortcomings of this particular Weed and Seed strategy in this New York City community, these findings indicate that community oriented policing is a weak police strategy of the NYPD within this particular community and quite possibly led to the overall failure of the Weed and Seed strategy, which, as noted, depends on a successful community oriented policing strategy.

As with any policy and program evaluation, there are some significant policy implications as well as recommendations in light of these findings. First, the Department of Justice, in funding a policy that depends on a policing model that has been considerably weakened and even replaced by a more dominant policing strategy, has essentially sponsored a policy with odds stacked against its success. That is, with the success of the Weed and Seed strategy essentially dependent on the strategy of community oriented policing, assessment of the strength of the selected area's community oriented policing strategy should be a prerequisite to funding. Even a cursory review of the scientific literature examining the community oriented policing capabilities of the NYPD reveals that some major weaknesses exist. First, the NYPD has adopted more aggressive zero-tolerance policing strategies and has turned away from more community-based policing. Second, the relationship between many minority residents of New York City and the NYPD is significantly weak. In the current research, the Weed and Seed strategy was situated in a mostly minority community. As such, the overall success of the strategy was essentially an uphill battle against a weakened policing strategy and significant resident-police division.

As this paper illustrates, there is a significant need for more effective theory-practice integration. As changes and shifts in police practice and policy are implemented, concurrent changes must occur in crime prevention programs because programs whose effectiveness depends on inactive practices and policies cannot be successful. Law enforcement agencies must implement crime prevention programs that fit the revised practices and policies; that is, they must minimize the inconsistencies between theory and practice for criminal justice programs to produce more effective results. The current research demonstrates that inconsistencies between the practices and policies of the NYPD and the theoretical framework of the Weed and Seed strategy helped contribute to an overall ineffective neighborhood-level crime reduction strategy.

Another recommendation based on these findings concerns the NYPD taking a more proactive approach in rebuilding its relationship with the minority communities of New

Sciarabba

York City. As discussed, there is a significant divide between the NYPD and many Black residents of the City. Caused by a series of controversial events, including shootings of unarmed persons, this relationship has worsened over time. Community oriented policing, if used properly, can rebuild these tarnished relationships. The fact that this disconnect between the Black community and the NYPD has not improved is further evidence that the NYPD is not using its community oriented policing strategy. In fact, as CCRB data and this study's findings indicate, there is evidence that this disconnect is actually increasing. Blacks are reporting illegal police abuse at record rates each year in New York City. Without the assistance of community oriented policing, resources to repair this disconnect are severely limited. With zero-tolerance policing in place, the challenges associated with improving community-level issues increase.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Dr. John A. Eterno, Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Molloy College, for his close guidance during the writing of this article.

Notes

1. This research was funded by a United States Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office Weed and Seed Grant Award # 2007-WS-Q7-0048.
2. The author was obtained as an independent academic consultant by the stakeholders of the strategy.
3. Sample size is relatively consistent with other Weed and Seed evaluation research.

References

- Cordner, G. W. (1995). Community policing: Elements and effects. *Police Forum*, 5(3), 1–8.
- Dietz, S. A. (1997). Evaluating community policing: Quality police service and fear of crime. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 20(1), 83–100.
- Eterno, J. A. (2001). Zero tolerance policing within democracies: The dilemma of controlling crime without increasing police abuse of power. *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, 2(3), 189–217.
- Eterno, J. A. (2003). *Policing within the law*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Eterno, J. A. (2007). Public Housing Safety Initiative in Far Rockaway and East New York. (Final report submitted to the United States Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York.) New York: Author.
- Eterno, J. A., & Silverman, E. B. (2006). The New York City police department's Compstat: Dream or nightmare? *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 8(3), 218–231.
- Fyfe, J. J., Greene, J. R., Walsh, W. F., Wilson, O. W., & McLaren, R. C. (1997). *Police administration* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Greene, J. (1999). Zero-tolerance: A case study of police policies and practices in New York City. *Crime and Delinquency*, 45(2), 171–187.
- Haberman, C. (1997, September 12). Civil tones on a topic of violence. *The New York Times*, p. B1.
- Kania, R. E. (2004). A brief history of a venerable paradigm in policing. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 20(1), 80–83.
- Kelling, G. L. & Coles, C. M. (1997). *Fixing broken windows: Restoring order and reducing crime in our communities*. New York: Touchtone Press.
- Riechers, L. M., & Roberg, R. R. (1990). Community policing: A critical review of underlying assumptions. *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 17(2), 105–114.
- Silverman, E. B. (1999). *NYPD battles crime: Innovative strategies in policing*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Skolnick, J. H. (1999). *Ideas in American policing*. Washington, DC: Police Foundation.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office. (n.d.). *Weed & seed*. Retrieved May 28, 2009, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html>
- Walsh, W. F., & Vito, G. F. (2004). The meaning of Compstat: Analysis and response. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 20(1), 51–69.

