Overseas Models of Community Policing

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The focus of this paper is on the models of community policing and crime prevention found in France and The Netherlands because many of them have been evaluated and positive results achieved. Some have been included in the recently released South Australian Government's Strategy on crime prevention, *Confronting Crime* (Sutton & Fisher 1990).

France

France has two levels of government, one national, and the other local. Their local government has many of the functions that state governments do in Australia. Mayors of local government are very influential within the community and they and the town councils have a lot of direction over the French police, a national force. Some mayors are also members of the French National Assembly.

National Committee on Crime Prevention

There is a French National Committee on Crime Prevention chaired by the Prime Minister. It has 80 members including representatives from Ministries, Mayors of major cities and towns and also representatives from trade unions, employer and other groups. There are now over 500 Crime Prevention Councils at local level and the number is increasing.

Crime prevention is generally planned and implemented by each town or city council. The police, who are represented on local crime prevention councils, are guided to a certain extent by community requirements. This, arguably, is the model for community policing.

Funding for crime prevention programs is provided by the national government to a large extent, but supported by local government and the private sector.

There is a national agency known as the National Committee for Districts of Social Development which examines local crime prevention programs, assesses them, ensures they do not overlap adjacent areas and sees that no council area gets more advantage than another.

Ultimately a written contract is drawn up between the national and local government where each undertakes to achieve the objectives of the crime prevention program proposed. Funding is then provided to do this.

Crime prevention programs are directed towards social justice strategies including:
- education of young people;
- re-training of those who failed to cope in the education system;
- better housing;
- employment;
- adequate health service;
- aid to victims of crime;
- better conditions for immigrants and ethnic minority groups;
- drug abuse treatment;
- after school activities for the young;
- provision of youth, cultural, training and recreation centres in each council area.

Epinay Sur Seine

Epinay was one of two French towns visited. The Mayor of Epinay, Monsieur Gilbert Bonnemaison, MP, was one of the foremost proponents of a national crime prevention policy and was responsible for the introduction of the so-called 'Bonnemaison' strategy in the early 1980s. That strategy has been implemented across France.

Epinay is run by a town council under the chairmanship of the mayor. There are many flats in this particular township and some light industry. Most of the population have to leave town to go to work. The town has a young population in which there are 10,000 school children of primary, secondary and university age.

Crime Prevention Bureau and Victims of Crime

The Epinay Council has an office for the victims of crime which is part of the Bureau for Crime Prevention. At the Crime Prevention Bureau, the staff provide counselling and victim assistance, such as providing a court helper, advising people what to do in court, introducing them to the police and other similar functions. In addition, thousands of disputes are settled in the Crime Prevention Bureau—it has a type of mediation service available. The Bureau also assists victims by providing resources. They have two small trucks, so if someone's house or shop is broken into, a worker with a truck goes out and refits the door, boards up the windows and secures the premises. This is seen as a primary, 'first aid' response for the victim—rapid intervention by the Bureau.
Local Centre to Assist the Youth

There is a local centre for youth assistance in this community area. 'Youth' means persons up to the age of twenty five years. In the Centre, the workers examine crime data provided by the police, identify offenders, counsel them and refer them to training programs at the Training Centre. In this way, they are provided with new skills and knowledge to obtain employment and participate in other activities. There are private companies in Epinay to which the Centre refers the trained and re-trained people. The Centre acts as a coordinator between the corporations, businesses and the youth. When these programs first commenced it was found that many of the employers and youth had stereotypical views. This situation no longer exists due to the publicity given to it in the community in newsletters and magazines produced by the City Council.

Medical Service

Located within the Local Centre To Assist Youth is a medical service. Doctors treat the young people for illnesses and also, drug abuse. The doctors also provide advice and lectures on medically related topics because it was found that healthier lifestyles contributed towards crime reduction.

Cultural Centre

The Cultural Centre was built in Epinay when there were 4,000 flats erected. The Cultural Centre is in the middle of the town and is surrounded by a large number of high rise buildings where many immigrants live.

The role of the Cultural Centre is to educate young people about the French culture and improve their oral and literacy skills. The Centre contains an extensive library, a small museum, drama facilities, arts and crafts. The training at the Cultural Centre takes 50 per cent of the young person's time, the other 50 per cent is taken up by on the job training. One problem in France is that many of the people who graduate from schools are not fluent in French. The cultural centre helps meet these educational needs.

Training Centre

The training centre is located in the Epinay Council area. The people who go there are generally those who cannot cope with the mainstream education system. It is the role of the training centre to assist them with attitude modification and how to become better orientated with their community. The students write out a learning contract between them and the training centre. The students do an early test to identify knowledge deficiencies and these become part of their learning contract. The contract is renewable after two months. At the centre, French, maths, accountancy, English and other subjects are taught. The students are shown how to study and make their learning meaningful.

On the Job Training

Many companies have systems that allow people from the training centre to work in their areas. For each trainee, a company gets about $400 per month subsidy from the Government. They also get a subsidy from the National Crime Prevention Council. The companies who participate in these job training schemes also receive positive publicity in the community publications.

Epinay Police
There are approximately 130 members in the Epinay Police Department. The Commissioner, M. Jean-Claude Muscat said that M. Bonnemaison, the mayor, considered that the police had to hand over more of the responsibility for crime prevention to the council of Epinay. The mayor and the council wanted the police to keep a high profile in the community rather than have too many police doing 'non-police work'.

The police in Epinay keep computer records on all crime in their own district. Anything at all, for example vandalism, theft, burglary, assault, or drug dealing that comes to police notice is entered into the computer and also given to the Crime Prevention Bureau. Between 1982 and 1988 there was a decrease in all crime by 20 per cent. The police believed by having better crime prevention measures, improved statistical collation, proximity to the community, improved identification of gangs, drug offenders and local criminals, that it enabled them to achieve their objectives. According to their statistics, for every 100 offences recorded, 25 per cent of them were cleared up by arrest, whereas the national average in France was 18 per cent.

The Commissioner believed that the attitude of police towards community policing had improved because they had local knowledge of the area and involvement with the people. He found that better training of police in crime prevention was extremely worthwhile but it took about one year to change officious attitudes of police into participative ones. The police hierarchy had to convince the officers that the citizens were not aliens—they were in fact, part of the community.

In summary the Police Commissioner was supported by the CIB chief and the deputy mayor that, with a properly planned community policing strategy with built in evaluation, they were able to measure their success or otherwise.

The Community Policing 'Model'

In summary, the Epinay community policing model followed the 'Bonnemaison' strategy and in fact, was replicated in many cities and towns across France. Provided there was:

- a national crime prevention strategy
- commitment by Government
- an organisation established to coordinate local strategies and policies
- funding,

and at local level, there was a crime prevention council chaired by the mayor with representatives from the:

- crime prevention bureau
- victims of crime unit
- community youth centre
- cultural centre (education)
- training centre (training, education and development)
- private industry
medical unit

police,

then community policing would work and, reduce crime.

Coordination

The Crime Prevention Council, (CPC) with the representatives referred to above, met regularly to review developments and plan future initiatives as part of the community policing process. The Crime Prevention Council produced very detailed records on the outcomes of the various programs and, their budget costs. It appeared that their successes in Epinay were due to strong leadership by the Mayor and his deputy with a willingness by everyone to participate in the problem solving by open communication at frequent meetings. In other words, they had discarded some of the traditional rivalries between professions.

The Netherlands

The Dutch have a centralised bureaucracy which formulates policy for the government on crime prevention. Most of the crime prevention policy of the Netherlands can be found in the government's policy paper Society and Crime 1985. There are three principles around which the policy paper revolves. These are:

- crime must be dealt with not just by prosecution of offenders, but by society as a whole.
- distinctions must be made between serious offences and common crimes.
- there must be close coordination between the police, prosecutors and local government.

The Community Policing Model

The community policing 'model' could be extracted from the above mentioned principles in that crime must be dealt with by society as a whole through coordination of the police, prosecutors and the people through their representatives on local government. Initiatives and funding are provided by the government through public service departments to the people. The 'community policing' occurs when the various committees are set up at local level and implement their own programs to prevent crime (Sutton & Fisher, Confronting Crime, pp. 35 and 36).

The Prime Minister chairs a Committee whose members are the heads of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior. They have a budget of A$5 million per year for subsidising seventy different municipalities with 250 crime prevention projects. The universities are also given a large budget to conduct independent research into crime prevention methods.

The government in Holland believes that more police and more resources put into the police forces and courts are not satisfactory ways of tackling crime prevention; they believe there needs to be a Minister, preferably one with a high profile, specifically responsible for crime prevention. The feature about Holland is that, unlike Australia, much of the programming and determination of enforcement procedures is carried out by local
government under the direction of the local mayor. In Holland, local mayors are appointed by the government; this is in contrast to France where they are elected.

Ministry of Justice

Dr Jan Van Dijk, the Director of the Research and Documentation Centre in the Ministry of Justice at The Hague provided a detailed overview of the government's policy on crime and crime prevention. One of the most important ingredients in the Dutch policy is that of evaluation. The Dutch believe it is the best way to identify the problems and provide solutions to get value for money. Specific objectives have to be defined first; the schemes which are implemented have to be measured against the objectives. The people who devise, implement and conduct the schemes also have to submit meaningful progress reports to the Ministry of Justice; annual reports are not considered enough. This has a positive effect in keeping people merely procuring funds for dubious reasons out of the 'system'.

The Hague

The mayor of The Hague Council and his staff provided an overview on the approach to petty crime in the Hague.

The Council is responsible for running the police force, and had a number of programs aimed at crime prevention. They outlined a number of schemes involving education, victims of crime, research, police re-organisation, vandalism, and community group coordination, which in many respects seemed very similar to Epinay, France.

Crime Prevention in The Hague

Crime control in The Hague is determined by the city council. Crime in The Hague costs the city A$3.5 million annually. The Council knows exactly what crime costs them and they can assess whether or not their crime prevention programs are successful or not. To give an example of how an evaluation was carried out, the Council devised a new scheme to lessen the incidence of graffiti. The council already had records of how many hundreds of litres of paint it had bought to clean up the city. The anti-graffiti program was put into place. Twelve months later, the program was considered to be successful because the Council found that it was no longer needing to buy paint in such large quantities as before.

Policy on Minority Groups in The Hague

The minority groups, including immigrants from Surinam and Turkey are generally people who do not have their own culture and many of them are unemployed. The council wanted to create employment projects for them because of its known potential to reduce crime.

In one project, the Council engaged three professionals to work with the minority groups and get them involved in education, health, employment and schooling programs. Ultimately, they formed better relationships with the police. Initially there were problems between police and the workers running these programs but now they have written agreements between each other for mutual co-operation. The City Council believes that you have to improve the lot of the young people before anything else and that once you do this, all the good things flow upwards.
Local Programs

Some of the programs implemented in The Hague include the following:

- alternative sentences for young people guilty of vandalism;
- minimisation of football hooliganism;
- vandalism reduction;
- information campaigns aimed at preventing crimes against the elderly;
- regulation of meeting places used by homosexuals;
- improvement of street lighting in some areas; lights to be switched on sooner;
- training of caretakers (caretakers of buildings are encouraged to observe what people are doing in certain areas and report crime where necessary).

Other Crime Prevention Initiatives in The Netherlands

Education

It is part of the education curriculum in Holland that many issues in relation to crime and crime prevention are taught in subjects within the schools at all levels.

Public Transport Problems

One very successful crime prevention program was that relating to public transport. It was found that automation of ticketing procedures caused problems with fare evasion and vandalism on the carriages. An evaluation was done to find out how much damage was being done on the transport system and how much in terms of fares was being evaded. They found that millions of guilders were being lost. The government found that by employing 1,350 surveillance personnel both on trains, buses, trams and also the railway stations, fare dodging decreased from 24 per cent to 7 per cent. Vandalism was almost eliminated. Whilst a figure of 1,350 persons being employed sounds a lot, it was found that by taking them all off unemployment benefits, it lessened the number of people getting unemployment benefits, and gave them some goal in life. In any event the cost of their salaries was far less than the vandalism and fare dodging.

Shop Stealing

A campaign was run as a trial in two selected shopping centres for crime reduction in respect to shopstealing. Firstly surveys were carried out to find out what amount of shop stealing was occurring. Signs were put up in the shopping centres explaining that shopstealing measures were going to be stringently enforced. The owners of shops and their staff were given lectures on how to identify potential shop stealers and were given special training to detect shopstealing. Five persons were then employed as security officers. A
subsequent evaluation led the Dutch to believe that the information campaign was not useful but that the use of the five people was successful. The five security officers, who work shiftwork, were paid by the shopkeepers in the centres. Initially when the program started, the shopkeepers resisted the concept of paying the security officers—they wanted the government to do it. In the end, the shopkeepers were more than glad to pay because shopstealing was significantly reduced.

Truancy

A pilot scheme was introduced in Utrecht to minimise truancy in schools. It had been found that many of the truants from the schools were out committing crimes instead of being at school. Part of the project involved having a computer in the school with a software program devised to register truancy. Not once but twice a day, parents would be checked by telephone to see if they knew where their children were. Finally, the project showed there was a regular type of person who was a truant and that instead of punishing them, they formed a special problem class for the regular offenders. They found that one of the main reasons for truancy was very severe child sexual abuse at home. Secondly, that many of them were of ethnic background (Moroccan, Turkish) and they did not like being at school because they were given a hard time by the others. In addition to having them placed in special problem classes, other social agencies became involved in their training. It was intended that this program would be evaluated four years after implementation.

Drugs

Contrary to popular belief, trafficking and use of drugs in Holland is unlawful. The use of narcotics, particularly in the Amsterdam district is brought out into the open. (Engelsman, E.L. 1988, *Responding to drug problems: Dutch policy and practice*). Research projects indicated that abuse of narcotics was lessening amongst the young people. The average age of narcotics users is now between 35 to 40 years; younger people were not getting involved in using narcotics as they were previously.

Needle Exchange

In Amsterdam a syringe exchange program exists; 1,000,000 needles are collected every year. Some ex-users get a small fee for collecting used needles. The government believes that by having a needle collection service, the spread of AIDS and other diseases is lessened.

Canada

Developments in Canada related to a concentrated effort on crime prevention strategies at the federal level. A project was underway to write a strategic crime prevention document for the Federal Government (Waller 1988). The Canadians have fully researched the European and English crime prevention strategies. They believe that the French model of localised community responsibility for crime prevention was good, but that it probably needed some of the Dutch evaluation programs built into it. They felt that in Canada, the local councils had to do more for crime prevention.
United States

The population of the United States, the number of States, the huge number of law enforcement agencies and a massive crime rate resulted in a plethora of crime prevention programs being in operation and run by a multitude of agencies. However, the Federal Justice Department and the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) provided a good overview of what was happening nationally in respect to crime prevention strategies. For example, there is a 'Crime Prevention Coalition' comprising over 140 representative agencies, that is organised by the NCPC. The NCPC also run a 'spokesdog' called 'McGruff', who is the focal point for public and school crime prevention programs. McGruff is used in a similar way as 'Smokey the Bear' is here for fire prevention. His logo appears on many crime prevention strategy documents.

The Justice Department organises many projects to be completed internally and funds external projects on crime prevention. Some of their views or findings on police crime prevention programs were that:

- timely statistics must be available for police to plan effectively. The public need to be given accurate and timely crime data, so as to receive positive feedback, rather than no information resulting in fear of the unknown;
- the local divisional commander must assess the specific requirements for his or her area in conjunction with the patrol officers;
- research must be undertaken to evaluate the programs;
- the police alone will never prevent crime. There has to be total community involvement and funding schemes developed so that the private sector contributes to crime prevention.

Probably, one of the best assessments of how 'community policing' could work at local level was that if the American public wanted to live in safe and secure neighbourhoods then they were the ones who could bring it about. It was more likely to be successful when they worked in close cooperation with public sector agencies (Lavrakas 1985, p. 105).

The South Australian Model

As mentioned earlier, many of the overseas schemes and policies that were examined by the members of the study group were ultimately put into the South Australian Government's Crime Prevention Strategy. Many of the topics I have referred to in this paper are in Confronting Crime.

The underlying theme was spelt out by Commissioner David Hunt in the Preface to Confronting Crime when he wrote:

'. . . the community at large has an integral and indeed a substantial role to play, if efforts aimed at addressing the problem of crime are to meet with success . . .' 

The South Australian model on crime prevention from which community policing flows, now has a Coalition Against Crime, chaired by the Premier, in much the same way the Dutch have. The Deputy Chairperson is Mr Chris Sumner, MLC, Attorney General and Minister for Crime Prevention. Members of the Coalition include the Police Commissioner, Mr Hunt, chief executive officers of other government departments and community leaders (Newsletter no. 2, May 1990, South Australian Government Crime Prevention Policy Unit).
The Coalition is serviced by an executive secretariat and has already implemented a number of schemes including:

- funding of $450,000 over the next three years in a program to enhance senior citizens' sense of security and involvement;
- formation of an Inner City Cooperative Action Group with representatives of the police, Victims of Crime Service, Crime Prevention Policy Unit; the Adelaide City Council and various welfare agencies;
- a grant of $10,000 for 'street kids' to be taken on camps;
- a pilot scheme for 'problem orientated policing' to occur in an operational division;
- formation and funding of the Police Deputies Club;
- a $45,000 grant to the Police Department for a crime mapping project.

**Conclusion**

In the past, jurisdictions in Australia have perhaps replicated in total, overseas models of various schemes without consideration of differing social, economic, cultural, geographical and political situations. This has probably resulted in failures and wastage of resources. In South Australia it seems we have got it right this time because we have not just picked up the overseas model and installed it, but rather, adopted our own from various, evaluated ones. For example, local government in France and Holland has much more control than state governments in Australia. Consequently, the South Australian model is controlled and funded to a major extent by the State.

In his very compelling paper 'Community Policing—Nothing New Under the Sun', Braiden has argued that there is no common definition for community policing. What is important is that each individual looks at the ingredients and uses imagination and innovation to build his or her own model (Braiden 1987, p. 19). Whilst the countries we visited had different models to suit their circumstances, they did have one common theme. That theme was to tackle the social justice issues with a multi-disciplinary agency approach and endeavour to stop crime occurring in the first place. Police were not seen to be the automatic choice to direct community policing, but rather, as being part of a community group with an equal share of the decision making.

The preceding outline of strategies adopted in Europe and North America may provide the concepts for building models of community policing as part of the crime prevention process.
References


