

DRAFT

The Police and the Prevention of Youth Violence

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I. Introduction

The central question for this paper is whether and how municipal police departments can contribute to the prevention of youth violence. One could begin by observing that general police operations -- e.g. patrolling, responding to calls for service, investigating criminal offenses, etc. -- may make an important contribution to the prevention of youth violence through the usual mechanisms of deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation. Indeed, in 1992, the police arrested some 2.3 million youth, including 3,300 for murder and non-negligent manslaughter, 46,000 for robbery, and 74,000 for aggravated assault. (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995, p.100) These arrests led to some 1.5 million delinquency cases being handled by the juvenile courts, and 12,000 being tried in adult court for criminal offenses. (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995; p. 126, p. 154.) Approximately, 120,000 end up in some kind of juvenile correctional program, including "boot camps." (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995; p. 133)

For the purposes of this conference, however, these observations seem unresponsive. To many, such efforts are not really "prevention." They are too reactive to constitute real prevention. And they rely too much on the uncertain and unforgiving mechanisms of deterrence and incapacitation to produce their results. Nor are such efforts specially focused on unique opportunities to prevent violence among children. Indeed, they distract attention from important opportunities to prevent crime that focus on supporting the healthy maturation of children, or the economic and social development of communities. Therefore, one might reasonably say these preliminary observations do not even touch on youth violence prevention.

This is a somewhat sad commentary on the way that society seeks to prevent youth violence. It says that much of what police departments (and the criminal justice system as a whole) do has little impact on the prevention of youth violence. Yet the real problem may be in the way that we think about youth violence prevention. Specifically, we may be failing to appreciate the kinds of

partnerships that could be developed between police departments with their powers to make arrests and initiate criminal proceedings against individuals on the one hand, and a wide variety of community-based efforts to foster the healthy development of children and the economic and social development of communities on the other. The police may not be all that there is to youth violence prevention, but they may be a very important backstop for other kinds of preventive work.

In this paper, I will outline several lines of attack that police departments have taken (or could take) to prevent youth violence. But I also try to locate the police responses to youth violence in a broader context. This broader context has three distinctive features. First, it views youth violence as a social problem that has a wider set of adverse social consequences than the harm done to the youthful victims. Second, it finds the causes of youth violence not only in the inexorable mechanics of structural factors such as demography, poverty, and racism, but also in the more "situational" and "contagious" factors such as the unhappy confluence of a drug epidemic with a plentiful supply of guns. Third, it recognizes and seeks to exploit the important changes in the overall strategies of policing that go by the name of "community" or "problem-solving" policing. I set out this larger framework before reviewing specific police programs designed to prevent youth violence because it allows us to see all the ways in which police departments could contribute to the prevention of youth violence, and to begin the process of understanding the relationship between police, criminal justice, and other important social institutions such as families, communities, employers, and social service agencies.

It turns out that the police have very important roles to play in supporting the healthy development of children. (New Haven Program; DARE;). They also may play very important roles in supporting the economic and social development of communities. (Crime causes poverty/Broken Windows)

Their most important and distinctive role, however, lies not in this domain of "primary social prevention." It lies, instead, in the domain of "secondary situational prevention;" that is, in the regulation of the "routine activities" of youth that can lead to youth violence; in controlling the availability of "criminogenic commodities" such as guns, drugs and alcohol; and in the identification and response to "situations" that seem to lead to youth violence. In all these roles, the police make their contributions through their most distinctive competence: their ability to bring to bear (or to threaten, more or less particularly, to bring to bear) the authority of the state against conduct that is illegal and dangerous to others. Let's start, however, with a picture of the problem to which the police could make a response.

II. Youth Violence as a Social Problem

By now, the basic facts documenting a horrendous epidemic of youth violence are well known. (Blumstein, ____; Zimring, ____; Cook and Laub, ____)
Since 1985, we have seen a dramatic increase in the rate of violent juvenile offending. This is most shockingly revealed in the increase in youth homicides, but is also observable in increases in robberies and aggravated assaults as well. (_____) Particularly painful is the fact that the offending seems to be disproportionately coming from minority groups, and that the offenders seem to be younger and younger. (_____)

As in all crimes, the violence committed by young offenders takes its toll primarily on those similarly aged. Thus, violence has become a major cause of death for young people in the society. (Mercy, ____)
But some of the youth violence has spilled out into the general population. Some very young have been injured and killed by young offenders, and some adults have been caught up in the violence. (Sherman, _____)

These basic facts create the public face of the "epidemic" of youth violence. Public anxieties have been fanned still further by predictions that a generation of "super-predators" is about to arrive on the scene. (Dilulio, ____)
The predictions are based on demographic projections of the absolute number and proportion of children raised in risky circumstances who are now reaching the most crime prone years. Taken together, the immediate past and the tangible future have generated a great deal of anxiety about crime.

What is interesting to note, however, is that, so far at least, the epidemic of youth violence has not dramatically increased the overall crime rate. Indeed, even as the epidemic of youth violence continues, overall levels of violence in society seem to be falling. (Blumstein, ____)
The reason is that young offenders and victims have never been a large part of the overall crime problem. (Cook and Laub, ____)
Even when youth violence doubles, the overall violent crime rate does not move very much -- particularly not when the adult violent crime rate (for whatever reason) seems to be declining a bit.

This leaves us with a puzzle: why is it that there is so much public concern about youth violence? I would offer the following reasons. First, youth violence is the component of the crime problem that is growing the fastest. In all likelihood, social perceptions are influenced more powerfully by rates of change than absolute levels. Second, the situation seems beyond control now, and threatens to get worse in the future. Third, the violence committed by youth seems particularly

random and out of control; therefore more of a threat to innocent strangers (like us!). Fourth, there is a particularly tragic quality to the epidemic of violence among the young that not only frightens us, but makes us despair. Among these reasons, the role of the fear and heartsickness generated by the epidemic of youth violence may be particularly important.

An important finding in the police research community has been the recognition that fear is an important problem in its own right. (Rosenbaum, ____; Skogan, ____; Wilson and Kelling, ____). It is fear that impoverishes the quality of life in many communities. It is also fear that prompts citizens to take actions such as buying weapons and staying indoors that tends to increase the overall dangerousness of a community. Perhaps more important and unexpectedly, levels of fear turn out to be affected by many things other than the real risks of victimization. Particularly important in producing fear are "signs of disorder" in a community such as broken streetlights, public drunkenness, and graffiti. (Wilson and Kelling, ____; Skogan, ____)

Often overlooked in this assessment of the fear problem but important to work on youth violence is how much of this fear is linked to youth. They are the ones who do the vandalism and graffiti. They are the ones that congregate in somewhat threatening groups. And, because they spend much of their time on the streets and are extremely mobile, they seem to be around us all the time. Thus, when society begins to fear its own children, the fear quickly becomes omnipresent, precisely because the children are.

There is less compelling evidence that society feels heartsick about as well as afraid of its children, but my bet is that the despair we feel about a society that could so neglect its children adds an additional emotional load to the subject of youth violence. The intrinsic innocence of the youth who become involved makes us grieve for the offenders as well as for the victims. And it focuses preventive efforts on avoiding the development of offenders as well as avoiding the occurrence of violent events.

So, the important social consequences of youth violence go beyond the wounds inflicted on victims. It is also the fear that is spread, and the sense of despair and disintegration that is fostered. Such observations lends increased urgency for action. They may also change some of the focus, for the response must be concerned with controlling the fears and restoring community morale as well as with reducing violent victimization; and with preventing the development of violent offenders as well as violent events.

II. Sources of the Violence: Structural and Epidemic Factors

Where did this problem come from? How did it arise? At the moment, more theories exist than facts or definitive causal explanations. Still, for purposes of thinking about the potential role of the police in preventing youth violence, it is worth making a distinction between two different kinds of explanations for the violence, and to consider their implications for plausibly effective control.

A. Social Structural Factors

In one view, the youth violence emerges from broad social factors. These include a worsening economy, increasing economic inequality, a resurgence of racial bias, white and middle class flight from urban areas, reduced investment and increasingly ineffective public services, a culture of violence encouraged by T.V., etc. One could think of this as the "structural" explanation of youth violence, since it finds the causes in large, slow moving, aggregate social conditions.

No doubt, such factors play an important role in creating the conditions under which an outbreak of youth violence could occur. In this sense, they may be seen as the "fundamental" or "root" causes. It may also be true that it is only by altering these adverse social conditions may society be completely and permanently safe from any future outbreak of youth violence. In this sense, these conditions must be the focus of "primary prevention" efforts to reduce the epidemic of youth violence.

B. Epidemic Factors

Yet, there is a somewhat different way of looking at the situation that is prompted by some unusual features of the current situation. The relatively slow movement of the structural factors cannot account for the sudden, swift increase in levels of youth violence, nor with the somewhat patchy cross-sectional pattern. The observed patterns of youth violence seem more consistent with an explanation that finds some of the causes of youth violence in the system dynamics of positive feedback loops in which an event at time 1 leads to an event in time 2 which leads to a further escalation at time 3. Such mechanisms, of course, are at the heart of "epidemics" of contagious diseases.

No one thinks that youth violence is contagious in the same way that malaria or small pox is, but it is not hard to tell stories about "positive feedback" mechanisms that could lead to rapid increases in youth violence without any important changes in aggregate social conditions. The most common story goes

something like this: In the late seventies and eighties, the social and economic structure of many urban neighborhoods began to collapse under a variety of economic and social pressures. Small merchants left town; employment dwindled; families broke apart under the economic pressure. Social services could not fill the gaps. Thus, children grew up under increasingly adverse conditions. (These are the structural factors that produced conditions ripe for an epidemic.)

In response to these conditions, some youth joined gangs in search of affiliation and security. The gangs produced fears and rivalries that caused other gangs to form and more kids to join the gangs. The infrastructure of gangs increased the number of potential conflicts. On top of this situation, an epidemic of crack cocaine hit the already troubled areas. The epidemic exploded families and communities still further. But the epidemic also created an economic opportunity for the community. Some of the youth gangs that already existed began selling cocaine. Other kids, not previously involved in gangs, got organized in drug selling enterprises. To protect themselves from external attack and internal betrayal, the drug dealing gangs armed themselves. The arming of both drug dealing and non-drug dealing gangs produced both dangerous conditions on the street as well as a cultural style that encouraged many other kids to arm themselves in response. The large supply of guns in the society made it possible for youths to arm themselves once it became important and stylish to do so. The arming of youth, in turn, made many conflicts much more lethal. And, since there were now many more potential conflicts among gangs and others than there had once been, society experienced an epidemic of youth violence.

What is important in this story is not just the worsening of aggregate social conditions, but also a response to that situation that seems to feed on itself. It is the growth of gangs that begets other gangs and produces both arming and conflicts. It is the crack epidemic spreading from one user to another that further erodes informal social control and creates incentives for illicit drug dealing that spawns its own rivalries and violence. It is the widespread availability of weapons that allows the increased gang and drug dealing activity to become very dangerous. And it is that danger that causes new gangs to form and more kids to join gangs or arm themselves in self-defense. These mechanisms seem different -- more explosive, but also more superficial and vulnerable to intervention -- than the deep structural factors. These could be called the "epidemic" factors.

The "epidemic factors" represent a different kind of target for public policy interventions than the structural factors. Perhaps society could gain control over the epidemic of youth violence by attacking some relatively superficial factors such as the density or behavior of youth gangs, the size and character of local drug

markets, or the availability of guns to young offenders. Where would such approaches fit in an overall effort to prevent youth violence?

III. Approaches to Youth Violence Prevention

Much of the emerging thought about preventing youth violence emphasizes what might be considered "primary prevention"; i.e. broad social efforts undertaken to eliminate or significantly reduce the "risk factors" for engaging in youth violence. Primary prevention efforts, in turn, tend to focus on one or the other of two important targets: 1) the development trajectories of "at risk" youth; or 2) the social and economic conditions that exist in poor communities.

A. Preventing the Development of Violent Youth

The fundamental idea that lies behind the idea of altering the trajectories of "at risk" youth is that youth violence might best be reduced by preventing the development of children who seem inclined to use violence. Implicit in this conception is that it is the individual's development, the process by which individuals become particularly prone to violence, or to victimization, that is driving the current growth in youth violence, and it is this process that must be interrupted. Note that such efforts have the important advantage not only of reducing the number of violent offenses (by reducing the number of potential offenders), but also of reducing the number of violent offenders, which is an important goal in its own right. Such efforts also have the advantage of conforming to the attractive idea that society might have an obligation to ensure that all its children had a reasonable chance to grow into resourceful citizens.

In considering the potential of various programs to interrupt harmful trajectories, we imagine encountering "at risk" youth at different ages: e.g. in their teenage years, in their pre-adolescent period, in their youth, and even in their infancy. Because we believe that many behavioral patterns are established relatively early in life, we tend to think that the earlier we reach the kids the more effective the intervention is likely to be (though this approach has the potential disadvantage of focusing social attention on a large number of kids and families who have not yet really given any clear signs of serious misconduct). Indeed, in our enthusiasm to reach children earlier and earlier, we sometimes try to reach even behind the point of conception to discourage young people from having children in the first place.

The form that such programs take depends critically on the stage of the child's development. In early stages, programs focus on the child, but also on the family context. We intervene to guard against abuse and neglect, to improve parenting, and to enrich the environments of children. At later stages, when family

is less important and peers more so, we intervene more directly with the youths and their peers. We respond to minor offenses with supervision and control, teach methods for resolving disputes without resort to violence, and seek to create recreational and employment opportunities for children. The aim, throughout, is to reduce those risk factors that are known to be correlated with future criminal and violent offending: some that are internal to the child, and some that are characteristics of their family and social context. But the effort is made for individual kids at risk.

B. Promoting the Social and Economic Development of Violent Neighborhoods

The fundamental idea that lies behind efforts to improve the economic and social conditions of violent neighborhoods is that it is unreasonable to expect children to grow up in healthy trajectories in communities that are dangerous and without hope. They need to be surrounded by parents who have jobs and enough self-respect to serve as attractive role models and to exercise effective control over their development. They need to be able to walk to school without being attacked by gang members, or accosted by prostitutes and drug dealers. There must be things for children to do after school if their parents are working. There must be enough economic activity in their neighborhoods, or enough safe transportation available to them, to be able to get and hold jobs. As in the case of promoting the healthy development of children, such efforts have the advantage not only of promising to prevent future youth violence, but also of achieving other valuable purposes for the society such as helping lift everyone in society out of poverty and helplessness.

Note that neither of these fundamental and important ideas about youth violence prevention focuses much attention on the "epidemic" factors described above. They tend to be focused much more on the "structural factors" that create the dangerous conditions from which epidemics of youth violence might arise.

C. Focusing on More Superficial, Epidemic Factors

This suggests that there might be a different way of thinking about the prevention of youth violence -- either as an alternative or as a complement to these more fundamental approaches. These other approaches would focus on the relatively superficial conditions that may be powerful factors in translating dangerous conditions into real epidemics; namely, the "routine behavior" of young people in the society as they go to school, hang out on street corners, join gangs, arm themselves, and respond to imagined slurs with aggressive reactions. (Felson,

_____) They might also focus on such things as the availability of criminogenic commodities such as guns, drugs and alcohol. (Moore, _____) And, finally, they might focus on "situations" that seem to produce high levels of conflict and violence among youth such as continuing gang rivalries, or active drug markets, or simply congested bus stops where students from rival high schools are forced into close contact with one another. (Clark, _____; Sherman, _____) While such efforts may seem relatively superficial, and their effects relatively transient compared to the ambitions of the other programs, they may nonetheless have an important role to play in an overall strategy for controlling youth violence. That is the possibility that is held out by viewing the epidemic of youth violence as at least partly caused by "epidemic" as well as "structural" factors.

IV. The Role of the Police in Preventing Youth Violence: From Professional to Community Policing

If one had asked about the role of the police in preventing youth violence 25 years ago, one would have gotten an answer that focused on how the police reacted to and handled juvenile crime. The focus would have been on the development of specialized units, often called Juvenile Delinquency or Youth Bureaus, created for handling arrests of young offenders. (President's Crime Commission, _____) In some cities, one would also have heard a discussion of how youth gang units were working with street gang workers to temper gang violence on the streets. And, one would have been told about the Police Athletic League, and the recreational opportunities it created for young men. (Kelling, _____)

Much of this discussion would have occurred in a context in which it was assumed that the fundamental goal of the police was to enforce the law, and the most important role of the police was to serve as the initial point of contact with the criminal justice system. (Kelling and Moore, _____; Sparrow, Moore and Kennedy, _____) In this context, much of the activity focused on youthful offending would seem a bit anomalous. The response to arrests of juveniles, for example, would be consistent with the law enforcement paradigm insofar as it prepared cases to go to juvenile court. But much of the work of the Juvenile Offense Bureaus focused on deciding which cases could be diverted, and what kind of response could be made other than referral to the juvenile court. The gang mediation activities were controversial then (as they are today) because they did not seem focused on enforcing the law. And the Police Athletic League would be seen as an "extra-curricular" activity of the police; a charitable contribution that they made to the community that was potentially important in reducing juvenile crime, but most important simply as an important link between the police and the

community, and an avenue for the expression of many police officers' desires to act as role models for young men.

In the last 10 years or so, changes have emerged in policing that importantly change the way the police think about and respond to youth violence. In many departments, the response remains unchanged. But some departments that have embraced the ideas of community policing or problem-solving policing now think and act on problems of youth violence differently than they have in the past. (Moore, _____)

These emerging philosophies have importantly changed police thinking about the overall goals of policing. Specifically, they have elevated the status of efforts to prevent crime by intervening in the processes that lead to crime relative to the status of reacting to crimes once they have been committed. They have also focused the attention of departments on the goal of reducing fear as well as reducing criminal victimization, and thereby re-discovered important reasons for dealing with minor disorder offenses such as vandalism, trespassing, and public intoxication. And they have reminded the police of their important role as an agency of municipal government as well as the entry point for the criminal justice system, and thereby illuminated the important contribution that enhanced security could make to the economic and social development of a city.

The new philosophies of policing have also changed police thinking about the important means they use to achieve their goals. In the past, the police thought about their work primarily in terms of responding to incidents. Their primary responsibility was to determine whether a crime had been committed, and if so, to arrest the offender. Thus, the patrolled in cars searching for violations of the law, responded rapidly to calls alleging that crimes had been or were being committed, and conducted retrospective investigations of crimes to determine who had committed the offense, and to develop evidence against them that would support a prosecution. Under the new philosophies of policing, the idea that the fundamental police role is to respond to incidents with arrests is beginning to yield to the idea that the police should respond to problems with a wide variety of interventions designed to solve (or alleviate) the problem. (Goldstein, _____) Thus, instead of simply patrolling and reacting to calls for service, the police examine patterns of calls to identify "hot spots," then figure out how to intervene in the places and situations that are producing large numbers of calls to reduce the number of incidents that require a police response. (Sherman, _____) The goal is to find some pro-active measures that can prevent the incidents from arising in the future. If that involves arresting someone, that is fine. But effective responses to problems often requires other things such as bringing civil actions against landlords who are

allowing their abandoned property to be used as drug markets, or negotiating with bus companies to change their routes so that students from rival high schools do not routinely encounter one another in large unruly groups at particular bus stops.

(_____)

These emerging strategies of policing change the way the police think about and respond to youth violence. They see youth violence as important not only because it involves crimes and victims, but also because it frightens and demoralizes the city. They can imagine responding to youth violence not simply by arresting offenders, but also by regulating the routine conduct of youth, reducing the availability of criminogenic commodities, and developing other responses to "hot spots" that tend to produce conflicts and violence among juveniles. Moreover, it is now routine for the police to think of taking such actions not through a permanent, city wide program, but instead through a series of more tailored, neighborhood based efforts to deal with specific local problems. Finally, it does not seem odd to the police that they might be called upon to play an important role in primary prevention efforts directed either at ensuring the healthy development of youth, or at encouraging the social and economic development of the city's poor neighborhoods. As an agency of city government, they know that their job is to support and protect a variety of institutions that the city relies upon such as families, communities, churches, schools, and merchants. Their job is to keep these institutions from being attacked from the outside, or torn apart from within through some combination of arresting criminal offenders and supporting these institutions through other kinds of protection and encouragement.

Thus, modern police see a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the goal of preventing youth violence. They see it not only in arresting offenders; and not only in the kind of secondary prevention that focuses on situations and circumstances that lead to youth violence (such as unsafe schools, on-going disputes among gangs, or the ready availability of weapons); but also in the contributions they can make to the primary preventive efforts that focus on supporting the healthy development of children, or the economic and social development of neighborhoods. In the remainder of this paper, I will describe some particular programs in each of these broad categories to illustrate the wide potential of the police to contribute to the goal of preventing youth violence.

V. Police Programs Focusing on "Routine Behavior" Supporting Youth Violence

In a recent, seminal work in criminology, Marcus Felson argued that much of the observed patterns of crime could be explained by noting some important features of the "routine behavior" of individuals. (Felson, ____). In this conception, crimes did not emerge only from the specific intentions of offenders, but also from the opportunities and provocations that more or less criminally inclined individuals encountered in the course of their daily activities. Some individuals, more inclined to criminal offending than others perhaps, would find in their routine patterns more occasions for committing offenses than others. Others, for whatever reasons more inhibited, would find fewer. But both the overall rate of offending by individuals, as well as much about the particular patterns of offending would emerge from the ways in which differently motivate individuals would be brought into contact with more or less provocative opportunities for criminal offending.

This general idea may have some important implications for the prevention of youth violence. If violence (as well as criminal offending) occurs in this same way, then it might be possible to prevent some portion of the youth violence that now besets us by regulating the "routine behavior" of adolescents into patterns that are less likely to create occasions for violence. Such a view may not be implausible, for one of the important "risk factors" for violence almost certainly includes non-violent criminal offending. The reason is that nearly all criminal offending creates the conditions for a "dispute:" the victim, if aware of his victimization, will often feel indignant. Sometimes even witnesses to law-breaking will become indignant. Their indignation may cause them to intervene. The intervention carries a substantial risk of escalating levels of violence. Indeed, in reading anecdotal accounts of the development of young people who go on to become violent, one is impressed by the frequency with which the first violent offense emerges from a property crime that is resisted by the victim or other witnesses, which then leads to escalation. (Carcatterra, 1995: pp.133-143) So, violence can emerge from property crimes. And it is possible that violence, like crime, could emerge from routine activities.

Felson's theories about the way in which much crime and violence occurs provides one reason to be interested in the "routine behavior" of adolescents. Another is contributed by the important role that youth play in creating a sense of disorder that produces a sense of fear in the general population. If we are afraid of our children, and particularly afraid when we encounter them in some particular circumstances such as in groups, late at night, in vulnerable spots such as waiting for public transit, then insofar as we are interested in dealing with the fear that is generated by the current epidemic of youth violence, we might be tempted to

regulate the "routine behavior" of adolescents to achieve fear reduction objectives as well as to prevent violence.

A. Youth Curfews

It may these considerations that have prompted increased reliance on youth curfews. In a recent editorial, William Ruefle describes the justification for youth curfews succinctly:

"The logic behind a curfew is simple. Teenagers kept at home -- and away from the influences of the peer group -- are less likely to indulge their thrill-seeking natures through criminal activity, are less likely to succumb to irresistible opportunities to steal or fight, and are less likely to be victimized. Further, curfews bolster the authority of parents who are struggling to set limits on the nighttime activities of their children, and they impose a community-wide standard on parents who are unable or unwilling to set such limits." (Ruefle, 1996; p. 6)

This logic has proved sufficiently persuasive that, as Ruefle reports, "75% of the 200 U.S. cities with populations over 100,000 now have juvenile curfews. In just the last five years, over 95 of these major cities either enacted a new curfew or revised an existing one -- including such cities as San Francisco, Austin, and Washington, D.C." (Ibid, p. 1)

Whether such measures actually can reduce youth violence remains uncertain. Despite the widespread adoption and use of these measures, no rigorous evaluations have yet been undertaken or completed.

There is, however, growing concern about the "cost" of such measures on the civil liberties of youth. Opponents of curfews argue that such laws violate the rights of juveniles and young adults, and will be discriminatory in their effect. (Spitzer, 1996: p. 7) It is a non-trivial point: some 85,000 teenagers were arrested for curfew violations in 1993, many of them minority youth. (Ruefle, 1996: p. 1)

One response to the concerns about the high cost of youth curfews (in terms of perceived or real injustice) is to tailor them more specifically, and make special efforts to legitimate them in the eyes of the populations likely to be most adversely affected by them. Thus, some have decided to impose youth curfews, or enforce them, only in those areas of a city where youth violence at night is a problem, and only after consultation with those living in the area -- both adults, and youth. This is consistent with the general ideas common to the philosophy of "community,

problem-solving policing," which encourages both precisely targeted police initiatives, and wide community consultation in deciding which problems are to be worked upon through what particular means. It is also consistent with focusing efforts to regulate youth conduct even more narrowly on specific kinds of conduct, or specific segments of the youth population whose routine activities are known to include crime and violence: namely, gangs and youth involved in drug dealing. These more tailored programs are described below. Before reaching those, however, it is worth pausing for a minute to consider a variant of youth curfews that could be described as the more aggressive enforcement against "disorder offenses."

B. Stronger Enforcement Against Youth Disorderly Conduct

At the core, the issue of youth curfews can be seen as a reflection of a broader issue; namely, the extent to which police efforts to enforce against minor offenses can be helpful either in reducing fear or in actually reducing serious offenses as well. Curfews have this character because they essentially widen the liability of youth activity to police action. That same widening effect could be produced simply by having the police enforce laws against disorder offenses such as vandalism, public intoxication, loitering, etc. much more aggressively. An important question is whether that could be expected to produce any valuable impact on levels of youth violence and the fear it engenders.

For much of the last three decades since the President's Commission, society has been skeptical of the value of such efforts. After all, police enforcement against minor offenses was one of the most important targets of the Commission's report. Such efforts were viewed as "inefficient" because they seemed to waste scarce police resources on minor crimes, when there were so many serious crimes that went unsolved. The efforts were also criticized as potential sources of conflict between the police and the community, and as breeding grounds for corruption. Because such arrests always seemed to involve a high degree of police discretion, because they seemed to be focused on poor, minority communities, and because there was evidence of both racism and corruption in the ways these laws were enforced, it seemed prudent to de-emphasize their enforcement. Thus, the police were counseled to reduce their attention to instances of disorder in the interests of greater efficiency, effectiveness and fairness in law enforcement. For the most part, the police took the advice, glad to be rid of the burden of policing against disorder, and happy to be installed in their cars waiting for a robbery to happen.

More recently, however, some are beginning to reconsider the value of policing against disorder. The first argument in favor of focusing attention once

again on so-called minor offenses was based on the discovery, noted above, that such offenses were: 1) very important in escalating fear in the general population; and 2) possible for the police to control with relatively little effort, but through efforts that differed from the then dominant strategy of policing (e.g. foot patrol). (Kelling, ____; Trojanowicz, ____). If fear was an important problem in its own right, if the police could reduce fear by enforcing against disorder, then maybe the police should return to this abandoned mission, the argument went.

Shortly thereafter, the argument got another boost. In an important article, Wilson and Kelling argued that there was an important relationship between levels of disorder and fear on one hand, and levels of serious crime on the other. The argument was that "visible signs of disorder" signaled to people -- both offenders and others -- that a particular area was unprotected. That frightened the good citizens still further, leading them to stay away from the dangerous others, and emboldened the offenders. Thus, by creating spaces where informal social control would not be exercised due to fear, spaces within which violent crime could occur were enlarged. This theory received badly needed empirical support from Wesley Skogan who showed that what Wilson and Kelling had imagined was true was in fact true in his observations of neighborhoods in Chicago.

The last important contribution to the idea that minor offenses should be taken seriously came from William Bratton who made a focus on disorder offenses the core of his strategy of policing, first when he was the head of the Transit Police in New York City and second when he became the police Commissioner of New York. At the Transit Authority, he mobilized his officers to take aggressive action against fare-beating and panhandling even though the most urgent problem facing the Transit Authority seemed to be robberies and mugging. He justified such efforts initially in terms of the expectation that such efforts would reduce fear and increase ridership. He was startled to discover, however, that his efforts against minor offenses resulted in a dramatic reduction in robbery as well as in fare-beating and panhandling. As Commissioner of the New York City Police Department, he once again focused on "minor offenses." The symbol of the minor offenses were the "squeegee men" who cleaned motorists windshields without being asked and then demanded payment. But the practices he stimulated in the precincts went far beyond the squeegee men to focus on youth disorder, illegal gun carrying, etc. Once again, the aggressive enforcement against minor offenses seemed to produce big reductions in serious offenses: homicides were cut in half in New York City.

These results are not yet firmly established. But they are interesting enough to raise questions about the mechanisms that could link effective enforcement against minor offenses with significant reductions in serious offenses. One

mechanism had already been postulated by Wilson and Kelling: namely, that reducing fear would cause ordinary law abiding people to exercise more informal social control than they otherwise would, and that would effectively control serious offending. Other mechanisms, however, could link enforcement against minor offenses to serious offenses more directly through the mechanisms of deterrence and incapacitation.

Suppose, for example, that some minor offenses escalated into situations that became major offenses: thus, disorderly youth could escalate into a robbery or a gang conflict. If one intervened at the earlier stage, the serious offense might be avoided. Or, suppose that those who committed serious offenses also committed less serious offenses, and did so much more frequently than the serious offenses. In this case, enforcement against the less serious offenses could result in the incapacitation of the serious offender. In essence, by stopping farebeaters, one kept robbers off the subway platform. Or, perhaps this mechanism works because the police feel like a more palpable presence when they are working on the street to enforce against disorder offenses than when they are in their cars waiting for the robbery to occur and be reported. The more palpable presence makes them a more effective deterrent force. Just such a mechanism was reported informally by Mercer Sullivan who observed a large deterrent effect among some youth in New York who were impressed by the fact that police were "showing their pictures around the neighborhood." The fact that the police seemed to know who they were encouraged them to curtail their criminal activity, at least for a while.

These hypotheses, speculations and (few) facts raise the interesting question of whether enforcing against youth disorder in general would have an impact on youth violence more specifically. Again, though, as in the case of curfews, it would probably be important to develop a particular rationale for doing such enforcement in a particular geographic area, and to consult with local community groups before undertaking it. That would be a way of reducing the potential cost of indiscriminately (or even worse, discriminatingly) stepping up enforcement against minor offenses. There would be a strong reason or predicate that would both limit and justify the effort.

C. Gang Suppression

A more targeted enforcement effort focusing on the "routine behavior" of youth would be police programs focusing on gangs. Such programs are justified by the widespread belief that youth gangs in a city increase overall levels of youth violence. They could do so through several different mechanisms.

First, acting as a negative but powerful developmental force, gangs may direct the development of those youth who join them towards criminal or violent forms of behavior. More specifically, gangs may deflect kids who were not otherwise likely to become involved in crime or violence to these forms of behavior; or could initiate their "criminal careers" earlier; or could elevate their criminal careers to include more frequent and more serious offending; or could sustain their "criminal careers" over a longer period of time. (Farrington, _____) This effect would show up in higher rates of more serious criminal offending among those youth with gang experience.

Second, acting as a resource to young offenders, gangs could put more opportunities for criminal offending within reach. Youth acting as a group can find more opportunities for successful offending than youths acting alone. The group provides not only greater opportunities for intimidating victims, but also greater psychological support for the commission of offenses. It may also provide a ready supply of equipment needed to commit offenses such as guns or cars, or the drugs and alcohol that can bolster courage. All other things being equal, then, being in a gang would bring more opportunities for criminal offending within reach, and more of those might be acted upon.

Third, gangs might provide some of the justification and rational for committing violent crimes. To the extent that gangs are committed to "defending their turf," or "maintaining respect" on the street, their purposes may motivate a certain amount of violence. To the extent that gangs are engaged in economic enterprises such as extortion or drug dealing, they may find violence valuable in accomplishing their goals, or maintaining a local monopoly, or exercising internal discipline. These are the kinds of crime we usually have in mind when we talk about "gang-related violence," but when we measure this quantity we often typically include any crime committed by gang members which could include crimes committed on their own account.

Fourth, gangs may be "contagious" in the sense that the development of one gang may increase the likelihood that another will appear, or in the sense that the appearance of one or several gangs may end up motivating many otherwise disinterested kids to join. These effects could occur if one gang needed another to define itself in opposition (without a rival, what purpose could a gang have?). They could also occur if the one or more gangs were sufficiently frightening to other kids that each kid felt they needed to join a gang for reasons of self-defense.

All of these mechanisms could come into play to make the existence of certain kinds of youth gangs in a city a potentially important force in elevating

overall levels of youth violence. Yet, there are several important problems in assuming that youth gangs will play this role.

First, none of these mechanisms have been demonstrated empirically to be powerful factors in elevating levels of youth violence. Each seems a plausible mechanism, but we remain uncertain about whether the mechanisms operate, and if so, how powerfully on individuals, and how widely across the youth population.

Second, these mechanisms are important only for certain kinds of youth gangs -- those that are relatively durable and powerful, and are committed to criminal offending, or to committing crimes in defense of turf or in the exploitation of illegal economic activities. There are lots of other kinds of youth gangs. Many are less durable and influential in the lives of youth than those assumed in the mechanisms described above. Many more are less committed to criminal offending. The difficulty is often that neither ordinary citizens nor the police can reliably distinguish between relatively innocuous or even beneficial youth gangs from relatively dangerous gangs. They both like to swagger, and our uncertainty and fears make both kinds seem equally threatening.

Third, it is likely that the motivations that cause young people to join and form gangs are relatively attractive motivations. They seek affiliation, meaning, responsibility, mutual loyalty and accountability; in short, a kind of family or adult organization. They want these to replace things that are missing in their own lives, or to experiment with living independently of adults. These motivations lie behind the creation of both relatively benign and relatively malignant gangs. One can be indignant about the impact of the malignant gangs on both the development of their individual members and their short and long run impact on society, but it is often worth recalling that much of what motivates kids to join gangs are relatively attractive or understandable values that society has failed to channel along other more productive paths.

It is the understanding that there are many relatively benign youth gangs, and the insight that the motivations that lie behind gang formation are relatively attractive, that has encouraged many gang experts to recommend an approach to gangs that focuses on taking away the reasons for joining gangs, or providing alternatives, or working with existing gangs rather than try to suppress them by regulating or controlling their conduct. Such efforts may well be important, and there may be an important police role in supporting such efforts. But to the extent that some gangs are malignant in the sense that they are contributing to the escalation of youth crime and violence, there may also be a police role in trying to mitigate the effects of such gangs either by actively trying to suppress them, or by

using police powers to encourage them to curtail their crime or their violence. It is these efforts (rather than the efforts to prevent the formation of malignant gangs) that are my principal interest here, for there are some reasons to believe that the relatively malignant gangs that now exist do account for an appreciable part of all youth violence.

In some recent work carried out in Boston, my colleague David Kennedy has found that ___% of the homicides committed by young people with young people as victims were "gang related" either in the sense that they were committed by gang members, or were motivated by gang concerns, or both. Moreover, a review of the criminal records of those involved in these offenses showed what seemed to be very high levels of criminality among both offenders and victims: ___% of the homicide offenders had ___ or more prior felony arrests; and ___% of the victims had ___ or more prior felony arrests. He looked hard for the presence of relatively "innocent" offenders and victims who might have been swept up in the tide of gang violence, but could find relatively few candidates. The biggest piece of the youth homicide problem seemed to be gang-involved and criminally involved youth.

If criminal youth gangs are close to the center of the current epidemic of youth violence, then finding some way to reduce their violent behavior is an important police priority. Broadly speaking, two methods present themselves: one method calls on the police to reduce the violence by helping to negotiate truces among the warring parties; the other depends on the police finding some way to suppress either the gangs or the violence directly through enforcement actions.

The first approach has scored some notable successes. Some charismatic community police officers in Chicago's notorious Cabrini Green housing project who gained credibility with the kids by forming their own rap group were apparently successful in reducing gang related violence in the project from ___ shootings to ___ by persuading the gangs that the violence was not in their best interest -- either socially or economically (they were involved in drug dealing as well as "gang-banging"). Other "gang truces" have been intermittently negotiated around the country with and without police participation.

While such efforts have the advantage of quelling the violence, they have some important adverse effects that particularly concern the police. First, by negotiating with the gangs, police worry that they increase the gangs' power and standing in their local communities. They are granted a kind of recognition and legitimacy that the police worry they may parlay into greater power and influence with local kids and residents. This would not be necessarily bad if their influence was benign on the kids and the communities. If, however, the gangs are involved in

extortion or drug dealing, and if they are socializing kids into criminal careers, then increases in their power will make it more difficult for the police to protect others in the community in the future. Second, to the extent that part of the negotiation is an implicit promise by the police that they will reduce enforcement pressures against some kinds of misconduct (say, drug dealing, or public intoxication, or vandalism) in exchange for reduced violence, the police feel that they are being compromised in their commitment to enforce the law equally and vigorously. From their perspective, there is little virtue in trading reductions in one sort of offending if increases in others are the price.

These concerns about the mediation strategy lead other police departments to decide to go in the other direction, and use their powers of arrest and prosecution to regulate and suppress gang crime. At one end, some Departments have "gone after the shooters" in the gangs; that is, they have tried to identify the particular kids in the gangs who were the ones who committed the worst mayhem, then used every investigation and patrol effort they could to successfully arrest, prosecute, and jail these particular kids. This strategy seemed to be followed in Boston and did result in a significant reduction in youth violence -- at least in the short run. We are just now coming to the time when many of these offenders will be released from prison.

Other departments have tried a broader strategy in which they asked for specific court injunctions against gang members congregating with one another, or displaying gang colors or signs, or painting gang related graffiti. Such actions may make life harder for gang members, and thereby weaken their capacity to attract new members or to encounter opportunities for crimes and violence. To the extent they are successful in actually suppressing some of this behavior, they may also be valuable in reducing the public visibility of the gangs, and the fear and uncertainty their presence engenders.

While such efforts have enjoyed some success in the short run, their propriety and long run success are still debated. As in the case of curfews, some criticize the fact that these measures strip away much of the liberty and privacy of gang members. This is particularly obnoxious when the police lack hard, convincing evidence about the important role that youth gangs in general, or the particular gangs that they are attacking, play in the overall epidemic of youth violence. To this, the police could respond by working harder to explain their reasons, or develop their predicate, for aggressively enforcing laws against specific youth gangs, or specific individuals within the gangs. There is also concern that the suppression tactics will fail over the long run; that they will merely harden both individuals and gangs in their commitments to crime and violence, and we will reap the effects of

this long into the future not as an epidemic of youth violence, but as an escalation in the endemic level of adult crime and violence. To this, the police could respond by making some effort to discover what happens to both other youth and adult populations in communities where gangs were once operating brazenly, and what happens to current levels of youth violence. If it can be shown that fewer kids feel motivated to join malignant gangs, that older citizens feel less vulnerable to extortion and fear, then and that overall levels of youth violence fell, then the short and long run effects of suppression would be judged to be greater than they now are.

D. Dealing With the Drug Trafficking Related Youth Violence

Closely related to the idea of focusing on gang activities as a kind of routine behavior which elevates levels of youth violence is the idea that the police could focus on youth involvement in illicit drug trafficking which also seems to be a kind of routine behavior that encourages violence. Indeed, to many, gang related violence is the same as drug trafficking related violence. The reason is that they assume that all malignant gangs are involved in drug trafficking, and that all drug trafficking is organized in enterprises which can be characterized as gangs. In fact, there is a distinction between the idea of youth gangs on the one hand, and illicit drug trafficking on the other, and that it might be worth it for the police to think about dealing with trafficking related youth violence somewhat independently of youth gang related violence.

One reason to think about these problems somewhat separately is that the police have somewhat different objectives in dealing with youth gangs than they do with organizations involved in drug trafficking that employ youths in them. The worst thing about a youth gang apart from the crimes and violence it commits is that it frightens people. Thus, the argument for regulating its routine activities as well as its crimes comes from trying to claim the benefit of restoring a sense of order and reducing fear as well as reducing youth violence. The worst thing about a drug trafficking organization involving youth apart from the violence it engenders is that it makes helps make drugs available to people who abuse them. Views differ, of course, about how bad illicit drugs are for individuals and communities. But most people continue to believe (on good evidence) that heroin and cocaine are, in fact, dangerous drugs that can have bad consequences for the health, independence, and well-being of individuals and communities. They are particularly dangerous in poor communities where they can quickly wipe out both the financial and social resources of a family if one member becomes addicted. Thus, in trying to reduce drug trafficking, the police are motivated by the desire to reduce the availability of drugs as well as to reduce youth violence. (As noted above, this fact tends to limit

one of the options available to them in trying to reduce youth violence: namely, allowing the drug dealing in exchange for a reduction in violence.)

A second reason to make the distinction is that the behavior that becomes the focus of police action is much different in the case of drug dealing than gang behavior. In enforcing against street level drug dealing, the police focus on that behavior -- not gang behavior. They can identify it through complaints of drug trafficking (which are more common than complaints against gangs), and through simple undercover buy operations. They can attack it by mobilizing citizens, by taking civil action against landlords who allow their buildings to be used for drug trafficking, etc. All the apparatus that has developed for dealing with street level drug trafficking is available to the police in attacking this problem.

A third reason to think about this problem as different than the gang problem is that youth, and youth violence, may have a much different relationship to drug trafficking than to gangs. In the case of gangs, the youth are involved directly in the violence; it is often their violence. In the case of drug trafficking, youth are often under the direction and control of adults. Indeed, even very young children are brought into drug dealing in ways that they are not involved in gangs. All this makes drug trafficking, and the youth violence involved in it, at least somewhat different from the problem of gangs.

To my knowledge, no specific programs have been developed to deal with the youth violence that emerges from drug trafficking. One could easily imagine, however, developing a program that was designed to focus enforcement effort particularly on those older drug dealers who involved younger offenders in drug dealing, and particularly in the violence it spawned. One could also imagine a program focusing on youth either in gangs or not who dealt drugs and used violence as part of their drug dealing activities.

VI. Police Programs Focusing on "Criminogenic Commodities"

A second line of attack the police could take in seeking to prevent youth violence by focusing on "epidemic factors" would be to reduce the availability of what I have elsewhere described as "criminogenic commodities" (e.g. guns, drugs, and alcohol). (Moore, ____) The description seems apt, for these particular products are at least "risk factors" and arguably "causal factors" in producing crime and violence, though the mechanisms through which these commodities act to produce criminal violence are quite different. Alcohol produces its effects primarily by making people reckless, and at some stages of use, more than usually irritable. Heroin produces its effects primarily by causing people to become addicted, and

motivating them to commit crimes to earn money. Cocaine combines the effects of alcohol and heroin by simultaneously making people reckless and causing them to become dependent. These effects all work with adolescents as well as with adults, though we seem to know less about these effects in adolescents, since fewer adolescents than adults end up using these drugs in dangerous use patterns.

The specific "criminogenic commodity" that seems most important in youth violence is guns. Indeed, virtually all the observed increase in youth homicides involve guns. The relationship is so stark and obvious that one is tempted to conclude that the increase must be caused by the availability of guns, and that reducing their availability to youth would be an effective way of reducing youth violence. There are two difficulties with this simple syllogism, however.

The first is the NRA's constant reminder to gun researchers: correlation is not causation. It is possible that the increased youth violence, and the increased role of guns in that violence, are both caused by changes in the determination of young people to engage in violence, and that they acquire and use guns to accomplish that end. In this conception, guns are no more a cause of violence than the denim jackets gang members wear or the automobiles they drive. They are simply commodities and tools that are being deployed by individuals with purposes.

To this claim, of course, many gun researchers make several counter-arguments. They claim, for example, that the presence of a gun in a crime situation increases the likelihood that someone will be killed. This is the so called "instrumental effect." (Zimring, ____; Cook, ____). A somewhat different claim is that the availability of weapons increases the likelihood that an attack will be made, because it brings a wider range of targets within reach. This is the "availability effect." (Cook, ____). Note that both the "instrumental effect" and the "availability effect" act on levels of homicide, since they both contribute to the likelihood that people will be killed. But it is the "availability effect" that increases the likelihood that people will be attacked in robberies or aggravated assaults.

The evidence showing "instrumentality effects" is generally stronger than the evidence showing "availability effects." But that, plus the common sense notion that it seems wrong for young people to carry guns on the street and in school, is enough to motivate keen interest in finding ways to reduce the availability of weapons to young people, and to reduce their possession and carrying of the weapons. It is here that the second problem arises: there are so many weapons already in the population that it is difficult to figure out exactly how their availability to juveniles might be reduced.

In seeking to reduce the availability to juveniles, we begin with some important advantages. Federal law makes the sale of weapons to juveniles by federally licensed dealers illegal. Local laws make possession and carrying of weapons by juveniles mostly illegal. Most ordinary citizens think it is wrong and dangerous for young people to carry weapons on city streets and to and from school. Schools in troubled urban areas have stepped up their efforts to keep weapons (including guns) out of school yards and school corridors.

All this helps, but it does not apparently work to eliminate weapons carrying among children. Joseph Sheley and his colleagues summarized what is known about current patterns of gun possession and use among adolescents that persist despite current policy efforts to limit availability and use:

"Weapon carrying by youths apparently is neither rare nor isolated. Surveys of inner-city teenage gang members in 3 cities in 1984 and 1985 found that, in a 1 year period, 6 in 10 respondents had carried a weapon with the intention of using it in a fight, or had threatened an adult with a weapon (Fagan, 1989). Out of a 1988 sample of Washington, D.C. Minority inner-city 9th and 10th graders, 11% had used a weapon to threaten someone. (Altschuler and Brounstein, 1991). Out of a 1990 nationally representative sample of 11,631 students in grades 9-12, 4% (21% of the black males) reported carrying a gun at least once within the 30 days prior to the survey. Out of a 1991 sample of incarcerated, serious juvenile offenders, 55% carried guns all or most of the time prior to incarceration; another 28% did so at least occasionally (Sheley and Wright, 1993)." (Sheley, McGee, and Wright, 1994)

In a recent article, David Kennedy developed a long list of other particular approaches to reducing availability of weapons to children. That list includes the following:

"To block access to gun supplies, police could work with parents and kids to identify owners of gun stockpiles. (Parental authorization would be sufficient to allow police searches of houses and apartments..) Private and nonprofit partners could offer residents in high burglary areas trigger locks and advice on storing firearms securely. Federal authorities could trace illegal weapons to licensed vendors, and put them under scrutiny or arrange for their licenses to be revoked. Prosecutors and courts could work to ensure swift and stiff punishments for adult 'straws' selling to kids.

To attack the security of sellers, we need state laws making straws who sell guns to kids jointly liable for crimes committed with those guns. Police could work undercover and cultivate confidential informants to buy guns illegally. They could also offer juvenile offenders caught with guns plea bargains based on naming their suppliers.

To attack the security of buyers, police could mount stings, offer black market dealers plea bargains based on fingering clients, work with parole and probation officers to intensify supervision of kids who are court-involved for gun offenses, and negotiate protocols for street searches with representatives of troubled communities...

To deter black marketers from selling to kids, authorities could mount comprehensive enforcement effort against drug and fencing organizations known to be selling guns to kids...States could legislate asset forfeiture for dealing guns to minors...To the extent that stores, bars, and other businesses were fronting for youth dealers, civil abatement proceedings could shut them down." (Kennedy, 1994)

And there is some reason to hope that police efforts focusing on the illegal possession and carrying of guns by adolescents might work. A recent experiment designed to reduce homicides, gun violence, and drive-by shootings through increased police efforts to confiscate guns in selected areas of Kansas City found the following:

"Gun seizures in the targeted areas increased by 65% while gun crimes fell by 49%

Drive-by shooting dropped from 7 to 1 in the target area, doubled from 6-12 in the comparison area, and showed no displacement to adjoining beats

Homicides showed a statistically significant reduction in the target area but not in the comparison area

Before and after surveys of citizens showed that respondents in the target area became less fearful of crime and more positive about their neighborhood than respondents in the comparison area." (Sherman, Shaw, and Rogan, 1995)

A program that obtains parental consent to search the homes of juveniles suspected of possessing a gun is now being evaluated in St. Louis, and its initial findings are promising. (Rosenfeld and Decker, 1995)

VII. Police Programs Focusing on "Youth Violence Hot Spots"

A last idea that focuses police attention on "epidemic factors" shaping levels of youth violence is to encourage the police to identify and respond to "hot spots" of youth violence. This idea is an application of Goldstein's idea of "problem-solving" policing, and Sherman's idea that the police should identify and respond to "hot spots" to the specific domain of youth violence. The basic idea is that police could review their operations to determine the places and times where they got the most calls for "rowdy youth", or where they seemed to make the most arrests of youth on charges of violence or disorderliness. These "youth hot spots" would then be analyzed through problem-solving methods to determine how the circumstances there contributed to the unruliness, and what could be done to reduce the level of disorder and violence.

To my knowledge, this approach has not yet been tried, but I suggested it to the City Manager in Dayton, Ohio who faced a problem of how to respond to concerns in a minority community that the police had improperly attacked a minority youth. There was a video tape of a police officer beating the youth while he was down, and apparently submitting to being handcuffed. The situation in which the attack occurred had been a chronic problem. Each day at about 4:00, several buses from different high schools converged on the same small area and disgorged their students. Scuffles often broke out; the police were often summoned. The police sometimes tried to make arrests, that were often resisted either by fight or flight. On this particular day, the conflicts escalated more than usual, and ignited a community wide protest.

One response the City Manager and the Police Chief could make to this situation would be to go over records of police arrests of youths over the last several years, and determine the particular places that produced a large number of these arrests. The aim would be to find ways to reduce the need for the police responding to these repeat circumstances, and thereby reduce the likelihood of both police violence and community hostility.

VIII. Police Programs Focusing on Youth Development

The programs discussed above are programs focusing on the "epidemic factors" causing youth violence; not on the "social, structural factors." It is worth

noting, however, that the police are often importantly involved in programs that have important effects on these factors as well. The police now do many things that have important effects on the development of children, for example.

At the most trivial level, perhaps, the police have joined other agencies in providing recreational opportunities and drug education programs. Both the Police Athletic League, and the Drug Awareness Program are popular and common police activities designed to promote the healthy development of children. These activities do not loom particularly large in the overall landscape of recreational and drug education programs. There is no reason to believe that they are particularly effective in accomplishing their goals. And they often do seem pretty far from the basic mission of policing. But if one is trying to be comprehensive in thinking through the ways in which police contribute to the prevention of youth violence, these programs belong on the list of potential contributors.

The police are also increasingly interested in making sure that children go to school, and that the violence within schools stops. Working with schools, they have developed modern forms of truancy enforcement. They did so primarily because they discovered that such programs could reduce day time burglaries which tended to be committed by children. But such programs may also increase the likelihood that children will finish school. Increasingly, the police are also involved in working with school officials to support the schools' efforts to reduce violence and extortion in the schools. While no one wants so heavy a police presence in schools as to interfere with educational efforts, enough presence to ensure that teachers and students feel safe enough to concentrate on learning is an important goal to achieve.

More significant, is the contribution that the police make to the prevention of domestic violence and to child abuse and neglect. It has taken some time for the police to direct their attention to the violence that happens in the context of families. Two of the reasons they now do, however, is their belief that this violence is often an important contributor to the subsequent violence of kids raised in such households, and that police interventions in these situations are sometimes useful in "breaking the cycle of violence." There remains a great deal of uncertainty about the importance of preventing family violence and abuse and neglect in discouraging future violence of kids, and the best ways of using the police in making these important interventions in family life, but this remains an important frontier for the police (with others) to explore.

IX. Police Programs Focusing on Social and Economic Development of Communities

The police are also importantly involved in programs to affect the social and economic development of local communities. Indeed, one might say that much of the philosophy of community policing is animated by the view that the police should see themselves as important agents of government helping communities develop rather than as the first step in the criminal justice system. The view that it is crime that causes poverty has made the police think of themselves as important to the economic development of cities, and caused them to measure their performance at least partly in terms of increases in property values and commercial activities in the areas for which they are responsible. The view that it is ultimately the mechanisms of informal social control that must work to reduce crime and fear is what has motivated the police to strengthen community groups by responding to problems that they think are important, and to help establish such groups where none now exist. Thus, to the extent that police departments embrace the philosophy of community policing, they are explicitly committing themselves to the goal of strengthening local communities both economically and socially.

Again, there is reason to think that such programs might work. My colleague, David Kennedy, has looked at what might be called "comprehensive urban development programs" built around particular neighborhoods, and relying heavily on improved partnerships between the police and community to get the ball rolling in Sandtown (a poor neighborhood in Baltimore, Maryland), and in Savannah Georgia. Although these efforts have not yet been subjected to rigorous evaluation, the early results seemed promising. It is these kinds of programs that most fully realize the potential of police/community partnerships focused not only on crime reduction, order maintenance, and fear reduction, but also on community economic and social development.

X. Conclusion: A New Conception of the Police Role in Preventing Youth Violence

What emerges from this quick tour of the problem of youth violence and police efforts to prevent it is not only some promising ideas about programs, but also a new way of thinking about the role of the police in dealing with this problem. In that new conception, youth violence is seen not only as a problem for the victims of youth violence, and not only for the offenders, but also as a problem for the city as a whole that affects its future well being. The police, committed to principles of "community problem-solving" then focus on the youth violence as a problem to be worked on through the accumulation of individually tailored, well designed programs. Some of those programs are focused on the epidemic factors influencing youth violence such as the "routine activities of youth", the availability

of guns, drugs and alcohol, and the youth violence hot spots that exist in the city. But others are focused on supporting the institutions that must do the work of developing children and strengthening the communities in which they live. In this activity, law enforcement and arrests may make an important contribution. But the point is that they are only one of the ways in which the police may make a contribution, and their particular contribution needs to be assessed not only in terms of whether the law enforcement was legally justified, but also in terms of whether these efforts helped, in the words of the Attorney General, "re-weave the fabric of community." That must be the touchstone of police contributions to the prevention of youth violence.

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