Jack R. Greene and Stephen D. Mastrofski, eds., *Community Policing Rhetoric or Reality.* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1988), 279 pp., $45.95.

Patching the world as best we can

Riddle: How many psychiatrists does it take to change a lightbulb?
Answer: Only one, but the lightbulb has to really want to change.

According to many of the authors in this volume American police can increasingly be counted among those who really want to change. In the "community policing model" dries have found an answer to ineffectiveness against crime, low police morale, and community disintegration and conflict. Advocates suggest that the community policing model allows both having and consuming the cake. With the right programs communities can have it all: police discretion and minimal police abuse, citizen support and effective policing. Today's better educated police are said to be increasingly receptive to change, as they learn from the research literature and past failures. A great reform is beginning which may fundamentally alter the nature of public law enforcement. No mere technical shift, this is viewed as a "paradigmatic change in the way police operate".

The argument is simple. Kelling and Moore, expressing themes found in many of the articles, argue that the bureaucratic, legalistic, crime control model of policing (which itself was a reaction to the failures of the early more political local community order maintenance model) has reached its limit.

Police need to become more democratic and less formalistic and legalistic; more responsive to the needs and concerns of local groups and more sensitive to variation across neighborhoods. Police must anticipate needs and become problem-focused. They must be multi-purpose actors whose goal is to promote the community's welfare. By seeking to reduce disorder and fear of crime it is hoped that crime will also be reduced. The answer is an evolving "community police model".

There is no single program, but among frequently occurring elements are foot patrols, neighborhood police stations, victim assistance, crime prevention, increased responsibility for local supervisors and increased discretion for those on patrol, community organization, civilianization, greater public involvement in policy development and oversight and improved police-citizen communication. There is a paradoxical effort to recreate through formal means the informal social controls whose breakdown is believed to cause current problems.

This three-part book is based primarily on papers given at the "International Conference on Community Policing" held at Temple University in May 1987.

Part I deals with the context of community policing. Part II consists of case studies and program evaluations by Farrell, Weisburd and McElroy, Wycoff, Oettmeier and Brown, and Cordner that deal with New York City, Newark, and Houston. Weatheritt and Murphy offer data from Britain and Canada.

Part III considers the prospects of community policing. The editors' brief introductions to each section highlight central themes and issues. The book contains big ideas and descriptions of a variety of programs. The case study material, which makes up a majority of the book, must be read

by anyone wanting to understand the various activities going on within the broad umbrella of the community policing movement. The programs documented also have implications for understanding broader social currents involving decentralization, de-bureaucratization and de-professionalization and more wholistic approaches.

This volume will be of interest to students of police, social control and urban reform, criminal justice planners, police administrators and educators, and community organizers. Given its $45.95 price, many will read it via the library.

It is the most comprehensive view of the community policing movement currently available. The book is a welcome addition to the emerging literature on the topic.[1] It frames the issues, raises provocative questions and reports some interesting observations. The papers are thoughtful and clearly written, if in some cases highly predictable and repetitive of each other.

Those of an atheoretical bent who live by the largesse of available grants and whose radar scopes are constantly in motion to spot new opportunities are welcoming of this reform. While those whose *metier* is theoretically directed and whose style is one of intellectual detachment and debunking find much to question. In that regard, this volume is as interesting as a case study in the sociology of knowledge as in the sociology of police reform.

There is surprising consensus among the critics and skeptics (Manning, Greene and Taylor; Klockars, and in a more qualified fashion Mastrowoksi and Bayley). They argue that the goals are vague and the conceptual terms are imprecisely defined (which community, what type of order maintenance?); that the philosophical and empirical foundations on which the reform rests are shaky (do citizens really want to be *that* close to the police? aren't privacy and liberty protected by some distancing from authorities?); that some evidence even contradicts the model's basic assumptions (e.g., the effectiveness of foot patrol); that its methods are imprecise (we don't know how to "coproduce order" or lessen the fear of crime); that the reform may well have undesirable unintended consequences such as enhanced political power for police and less respect for minority rights; and that the model has been oversold, with rhetorical and symbolic posturing (and some outright obfuscation) more in evidence than substantive change.

The book would be stronger if there was more direct dialogue between critics and advocates. As it stands now critics criticize and advocates advocate, but the battle is never joined. The book would also have profited from a concluding commentary on the symposium and an overall assessment of the field. The book is strongest as a multi-faceted policy consideration of police reform. It offers little explanation and systematic data and many articles are based entirely on secondary literature. The descriptive case studies are informative, but it is not clear what they can be generalized to and they vary in format. While we are told that community policing is widespread, this is not documented. How widespread is the movement? Where is it located? Are such reforms more likely to be found in the most or least professionalized departments? If it is in fact so prevalent and spreading what accounts for this? There is inadequate attention to broader structural factors which constrain reform and lead to it being defined in this fashion. Nor are we offered any analysis of organizations such as the Police and Mott foundations which subsidized many of the reforms.

I wish there had been greater consideration given to factors such as the role of new communications technologies, the expansion of private and federal and state level policing in recent decades, the new issues raised by crack and other drugs, and greater attention to the systemic aspects of criminal justice -whether the blockages and overflows elsewhere in the system or broad political and economic factors. To take one point, with modern communications aren't we seeing some new combination of centralization and decentralization, rather than simply the cyclical move from one

to the other? It is always easy to point out what a book didn't do. What this book does very well is raise issues.

I generally found the skeptics more persuasive than the cheerleaders, although the latter are refreshingly sophisticated and moderate in their advocacy. But I must admit to a certain unease about some of the former's points.

Offering iron laws about how police can never stop crime, or popularly use coercion ignores the variation found within, and among, urban police departments. They will fail when judged by some absolute standard, but they are trying and their actions may make some difference.

While it would be disingenuous and naive to see this reform as the second coming. It is too easy to dismiss it all as the cant of bureaucrats on the make.

The mean streets remain after the demystifying social analyst has revealed hidden meanings and gone off to another conference in Europe. Public policy is about second, third and fourth bests. Given the realistic choices, community policing is not a bad alternative and you have to have a dream. Of course unrealistically high expectations can kill a program and contemporary students must be mindful of the ascendance of manipulation and the velvet glove as control strategies. Yet it is surely better to have this police rhetoric and related actions, than the simplistic authoritarian slogans and insular orientation of recent decades.

Certainly practitioners and reformers are in a different game than their academic critics. This book nicely illustrates the large gap between them. The former more directly feel the pain, see the need and try to do something about it. Linke dancing bears with limited vision, the point is not that they dance badly, but that they dance at all. It is satisfying, if a bit surreal to hear police leaders using the reform language of their critics of two decades before. The book contains some heart-warming examples of how reflective police imbued with the ideals of community service can make a modest difference. This may never show up in aggregate patterns of what we conventionally measure, but for those who lives are affected it matters.

In putting together this volume the author's intended "... neither to sell nor sink the reform, but to submit it to careful scrutiny, broaden perspectives, provoke debate, and ultimately stimulate theory, research, and administration." They have certainly succeeded at this. They further note, "if skepticism emerges in the early stages of a reform movement—as it has here—it strikes us a healthy sign that processes are at work that may help avoid the errors and excesses of earlier eras of reform." Only the ill-informed who, from positions of privilege, hold that in the short run worse is better because it will shape a critical consciousness could disagree. In assessing this reform in light of the enormity of the task, the enduring restraints in culture and social structure and the limits of our resources, Wallace Stevens' observation that "I cannot bring the world quite around, although I patch it as best I can" is appropriate.

Note

1. See for example H. Goldstein, "Toward a Community-Oriented Policing: Potential, Basic Requirements and Threshold Questions", *Crime and Delinquency* 1987 (33: 1), 6-30; J. Skolnick and D. Bayley,1988, *Community Policing: Issues and Practices Around the World,* (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice; J. Skolnick and D. Bayley, *The Thin Blue Line: Police Innovation in Six American Cities* (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

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