

Melanie asked me to talk a bit about community policing, which I'm glad to do, since it is a reform for which there is solid evidence. The evidence also shows that community policing is a heavy lift for a police department AND for a city.

I'll also touch on other reform ideas, which relate to community policing. I'll draw on a national evidence base but Albany will be a point of reference.

Community Policing

- A strategic innovation, not a program
 - Mission reorientation
 - Administrative reorganization
 - Changes in recruitment, training, supervision, performance evaluation
- Decentralization
 - To better fix the level of organizational decision-making to the level of neighborhood problems
- Community engagement
 - To better ensure that police address community priorities
- Problem-oriented policing
 - To address community problems more creatively and effectively

Community policing is not a program, to be appended to a department alongside its other operations, but rather a strategic innovation that calls for a reorientation of the police mission and associated changes throughout the agency – the distribution of authority through the chain of command, and practices of recruitment, training, and supervision. It includes three major elements: decentralization, community engagement, and problem-solving. It is labor-intensive, and so it is not inexpensive.

Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)

- Mayoral initiative in 1993
- Training for police and community
 - Community engagement and problem-solving
 - Beat meetings
- Changes in administrative organization
 - Internally
 - Across city agencies
- Labor-intensive and consequently costly
- Successes
 - Reduced disorder (e.g., graffiti, trash & junk, groups loitering)
 - Reduced fear of crime and improved quality of life
 - Improved attitudes toward police, especially in African-American neighborhoods

Source: Wesley G. Skogan, *Police and Community in Chicago* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

CAPS, 1993-2006

Initiated by the mayor, not the PD, and the mayor “owned” the initiative, in that he took steps to ensure that other agencies coordinated with the PD to address community concerns

Ensured interagency cooperation that is not normal in many places

PD engaged with community in monthly “beat meetings” in the 250 or so police beats
Provided information and also heard community issues

In Chicago as elsewhere, community concerns are not confined to serious crime

Research in the 1970s and 1980s showed that fear of crime was tied more closely to physical and social disorders: abandoned buildings, vacant lots, graffiti, street drug dealing, “corner gangs” – groups loitering on street corners, public drinking
These were conditions that residents experienced day in and day out, and they interpreted them as signs of crime

PD also effected – over a period of time – many other changes to support community policing

A long-term, comprehensive study of CAPS showed that it was largely successful

Disorder down, quality of life up, attitudes toward the police more positive
Failed mainly in Hispanic beats, where cultural and language barriers formed obstacles that were not overcome by 2006

CAPS was never formally discontinued, but it shriveled due to changing executive priorities and diminished investment

Albany

As a city that is less than 1/25th the size of Chicago, decentralization is less challenging to effect

Specialized unit (NEU) to perform community policing

Teams of NEU officers and patrol officers to do problem-solving

One former chief acknowledged that POP was the weakest element of APD's community policing

(Evolving) Role of Police

- Impose provisional solutions upon emergent problems (Bittner, 1970)
 - Provisional: immediate, short-term
 - Emergent problems: situations whose resolution MAY require the use of coercive authority
 - Often such problems are resolved without coercion of any type
 - The presence of the officer, however, may be instrumental
- Role defined more by order maintenance than law enforcement (Wilson, 1968)
 - Interpersonal disputes; breaches of public peace
- Order maintenance role embraced more fully in community policing

It bears emphasis that community policing involves not an expanded role – for the police role has always been broad – but one in which police efforts to address conditions of disorder are given greater recognition and priority

Police have long been called upon to respond to individual incidents of crime AND disorder, as well as other problems that could be handled by other agencies if they were available

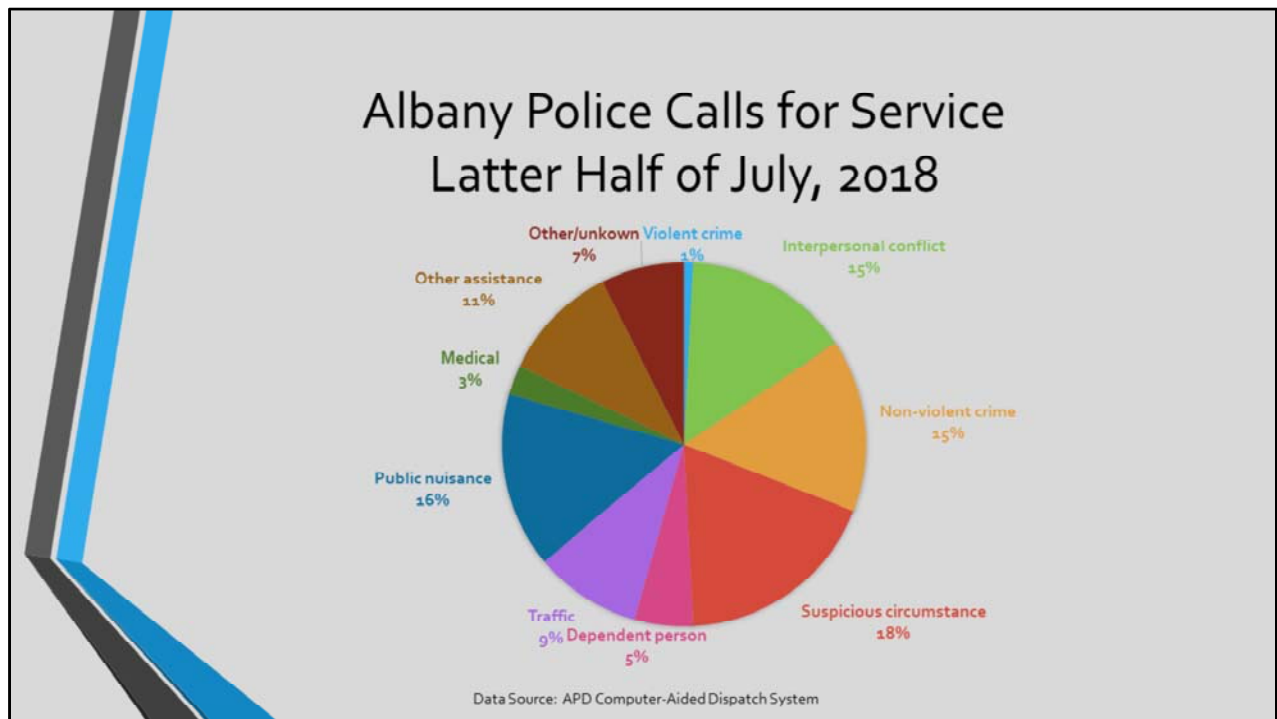
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50+ years ago, social science debunked the idea that policing was all about crime-fighting

Media portrayals – fictional and nonfictional – promote the view because it sells, but it was and remains factually inaccurate and dangerously misleading

The problems that call for the unique competence of police – their coercive authority – are not limited to serious crime

Disputes of various kinds, public disturbances, persons acting erratically all may require the presence of police, even if the involvement of other parties – mental health specialists, social workers – would also be useful



We can see the expansive nature of community requests for police assistance in Albany calls for service

These are calls received from the community, not police-initiated incidents

One-half of one month (2,351 calls)

Not much violent crime at the time

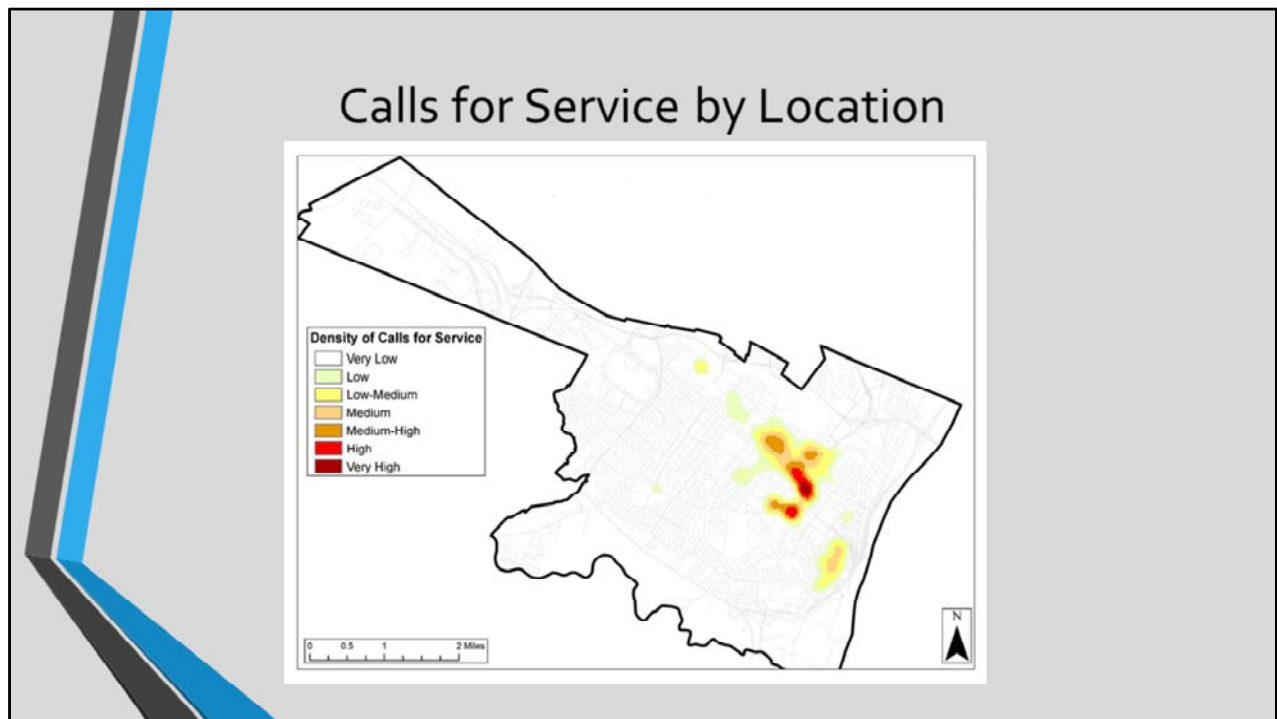
15% disputes: fights; boyfriend/girlfriend; domestic; neighbors; landlord/tenant; merchant/customer

18% suspicious circumstances: alarms; persons with a weapon; other suspicious people or conditions (e.g., open door or window)

5% dependent persons: a person down; persons attempting suicide and other emotionally disturbed persons; welfare checks

16% nuisances: animal complaints; unruly groups, individuals or cars; loud parties

11% other assistance: downed trees or power lines; fire calls



Calls for police assistance are concentrated in less advantaged parts of the city

Underfunded Services, Overburdened Police

- We are the agency of first resort for the poor for virtually everything, as well as the agency of first resort for every social problem that no one wants to spend money on anymore. I see the amount of mental health work that we do, but there are no facilities for [persons with mental illness]. I see the amount of work we do with the homeless, but there are insufficient facilities for the homeless. And I see the amount of work we do with people with substance abuse problems, but there are insufficient treatment centers for substance abuse. I'm beginning to come to the conclusion that society has decided there is no social problem so complicated that it can't be fixed by more training for the police. Because every time there is a terrible social problem, they don't say, 'Shouldn't we be investing in mental health facilities at the community level for low-income people who are off their meds?' No. They say, 'Give the police more training in mental health.' People freeze to death in the dark outside, do they say, 'Let's provide more homeless shelters or more transitional housing?' No. They say, 'Train the police better to deal with the homeless population!'

Edward Flynn, 2015 (then Chief of Police in Milwaukee)

To some extent this diversity of demands on police resources has always been true, but in many places some of the demand stems from society's failure to properly fund health and social services. These are incidents that police are asked to address, not incidents for which police sought responsibility. Consider the remarks of Chief Flynn.

Other Police Reforms

- Defunding police
- Procedurally just policing

Funding & Service Delivery in a Federal System

- Federal, state, county, city governments play various parts
 - Much of the service delivery is performed by county and city governments
 - Funding may originate with the government that delivers the service, OR
 - Funding may come through intergovernmental transfers: federal or state aid
- Governments at different levels are not equally capable of raising funds
 - City governments are structurally disadvantaged in raising revenue for programs whose benefits are not widely distributed across city population
 - Tend to emphasize economic development and services that are accessible to all of their residents (street repair, refuse collection, recreation, police & fire protection)

I would count myself among those who believe that much more should be invested in mental health services, services for the homeless, vocational training and employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, etc.

In my view, it is a long-overdue investment

50+ years ago, the Kerner Commission was formed by President Lyndon Johnson to inquire into the whys and wherefores of riots that rocked American cities; citing numerous dimensions of inequality, it recommended “massive and sustained” investments to reduce poverty and inequality

Proposals to defund police are not all the same, but I take the basic idea to be to reallocate some funding from police departments to programs that would address the needs of disadvantaged communities – health (including mental health) and social services

I think that we need to take a step back and consider not only the city budgets that fund police, but county and especially state and federal budgets, for different levels of government share responsibility for funding and service delivery

Local (city and county) governments may deliver services that are partially or substantially funded by higher-level governments

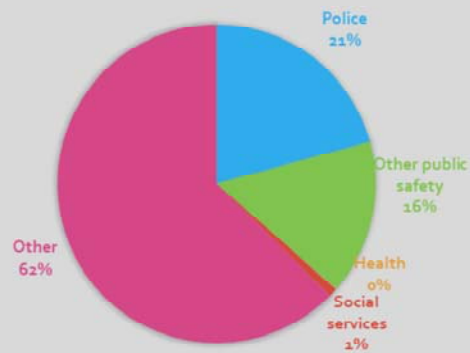
Compared with the state and federal governments, cities are structurally disadvantaged in supporting programs whose benefits are not widely shared – i.e., that are redistributive in character

Cities tend to support with their own funds programs that are accessible to all residents, because such programs do not detract from their attractiveness to residents and businesses

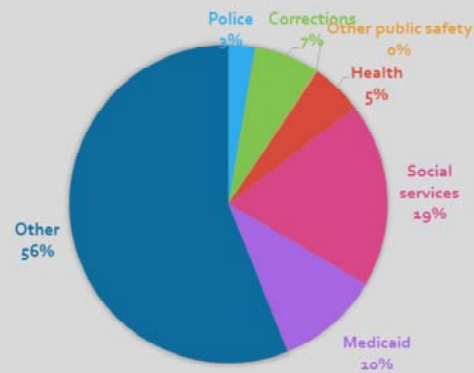
That doesn't mean that social services aren't provided, nor does it mean that support for social services cannot be augmented
It does imply that we should look to higher-level governments for the funding

City and County Expenditures, 2018

City of Albany

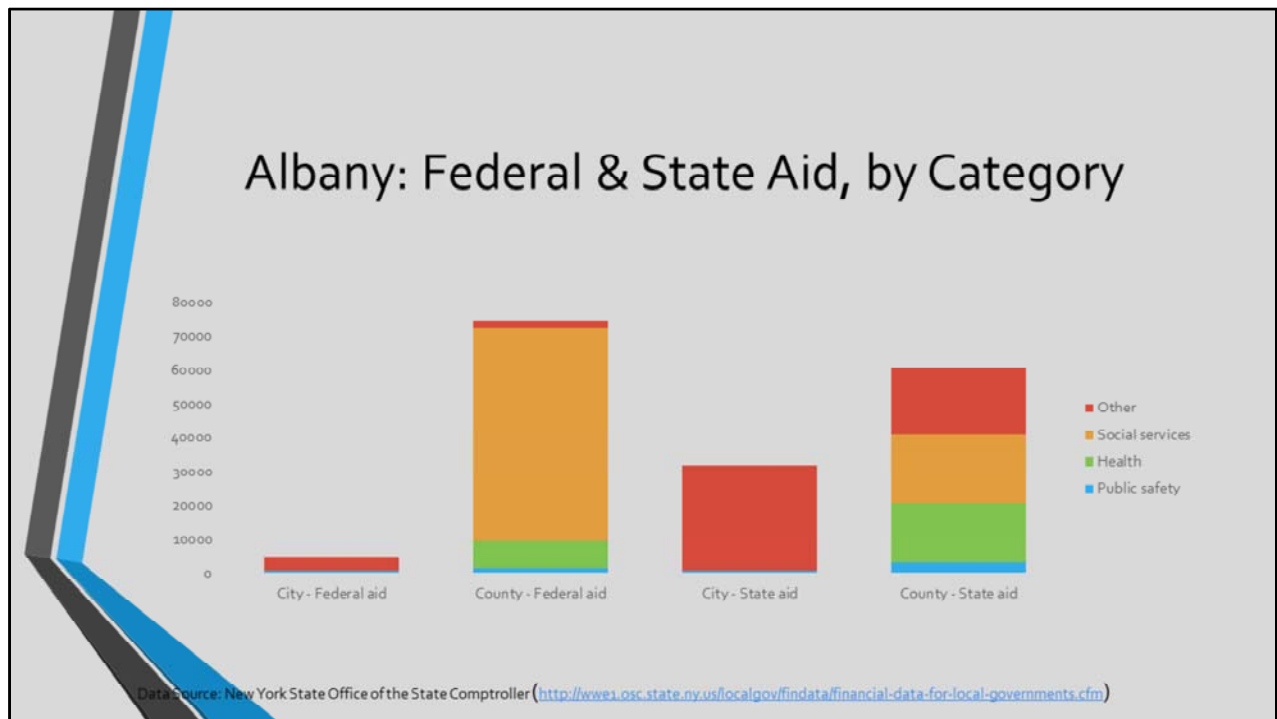


Albany County



Data Source: New York State Office of the State Comptroller (<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/findata/financial-data-for-local-governments.cfm>)

Let's look at Albany, though I believe that what I'll say about Albany holds in other cities in New York State. To a large degree, social services, including mental and public health programs and services, are provided by county governments. The city spends very little on health and social service programs.



Though counties deliver the programs, a substantial fraction of the funding for those programs comes from state and federal governments. E.g., in Albany:

- The city provides police and fire protection, and does so largely using its own funds, for it does not receive much federal or state aid for public safety, broadly defined
- The county delivers health and social service programs, and does so with substantial funding from state and federal governments

Defund Police?

- County government delivers health and social services
 - Funding for health and social services is shared with state and federal government
 - 77% of county health spending, and 44% of county social services spending, comes from federal and state aid
- City government delivers and funds policing to the city
 - 2% of the city's public safety spending comes from federal and state aid
- Additional spending on health and social service programming should come from state and federal governments
 - Police budgets already provide for too little training and professional development
 - Community policing is labor-intensive

In fact, in 2018:

77% of county health spending, and 44% of county social services spending, comes from federal and state aid

2% of the city's public safety spending comes from federal and state aid

In my view, we should look for additional funding for health and social services, but we should look in state and federal budgets, which are structurally better able to support them

Defunding police would represent in at least the short- and medium-terms a burden for the very neighborhoods that the proposals are intended to benefit – the neighborhoods in which requests for police assistance tend to be concentrated. Some programs pair police with other service providers, such as mental health specialists or social workers.

But police play a part in these joint roles due to the uncertain nature and dynamics of the situations.

Community policing reorients the police to more properly prioritize the public safety problems that concern communities.

In Albany like other cities, that is typically social and physical disorders, which are taken as signs of crime and evoke fear of crime, and which more generally detract from quality of life.

Procedurally Just Policing

- Even successful community policing will not eliminate requests for police assistance in individual incidents
- Proposals for more procedurally just policing focus on how police authority is exercised in police-citizen encounters
 - Four elements of procedural justice
 - Voice
 - Quality of interpersonal treatment
 - Neutrality
 - Trustworthy motives

Community policing, properly implemented, can be expected to ameliorate quality-of-life issues, but will not eliminate role of police in responding to calls for service

Police service can be assessed in terms of individual police-citizen encounters

procedural justice is a commonly applied criterion

in fact, procedural justice has been hailed as its own reform

Citizen assessments of police service in direct contacts



Albany Police Contact Survey 2018-2019

- 1,320 respondents
 - Contacts between June 1, 2018, and February 28, 2019
 - 1,182 calls for service
 - 45 arrests
 - 91 stops

We had occasion to administer a contact survey in Albany, interviewing a sample of people who had a contact with Albany police by way of a call for service, a stop, or an arrest. We asked respondents about elements of the procedural justice that they experienced in those contacts.

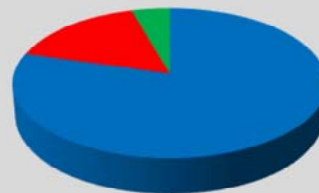
Procedural Justice: Voice

Considered My Views



- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

Paid attention



- Yes
- No
- NA

Data source: The John Finn Institute Albany Police Contact Survey, 2018-2019

People are more satisfied when they have an opportunity to “tell their side of the story” — to explain their situation or behavior to authorities

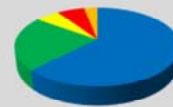
Procedural Justice: Quality of Interpersonal Treatment

Treated with Dignity



- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

Polite

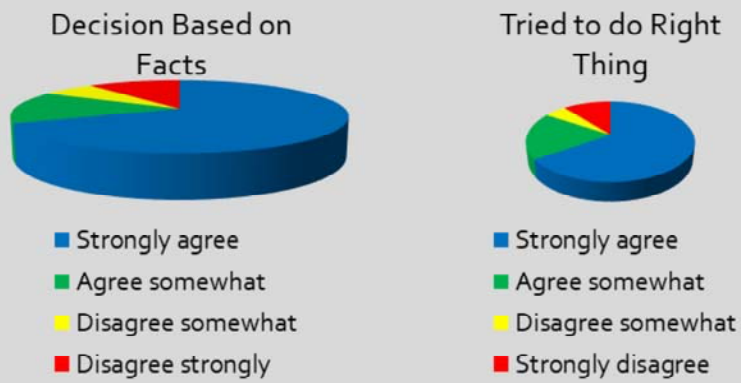


- Yes, very
- Yes, somewhat
- No, somewhat
- No, very
- Some were

Data source: The John Finn Institute Albany Police Contact Survey, 2018-2019

People are more satisfied when they feel that they have been treated with dignity and respect

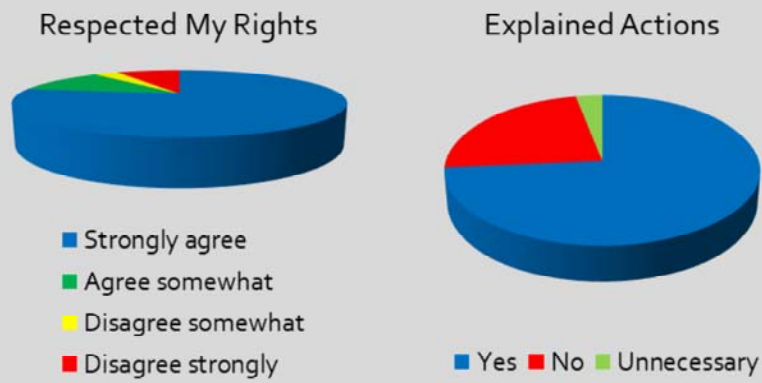
Procedural Justice: Neutrality



Data source: The John Finn Institute Albany Police Contact Survey, 2018-2019

People are more satisfied when they believe that authorities' decisions are based on facts and reached impartially, which is more likely when authorities explain what courses of action they are taking and the rationale for their actions.

Procedural Justice: Trustworthy Motives



Data source: The John Finn Institute Albany Police Contact Survey, 2018-2019

People are more satisfied when they trust authorities' motives, which is more likely when authorities explain their actions in terms that demonstrate that they have taken account of citizens' concerns and needs

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