

Partnership policing and road policing: Is there value?

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Abstract

Traditionally road policing has relied on deterrence theory to guide its interventions. However, more recently, there has been interest in exploring alternative frameworks. One possible framework that may be worth exploring within a road safety context is partnership policing. This poster will explore the validity of this approach for young drivers. In this area police could partner with parents. Although further research is required, it does appear that road policing policy and practice could be improved by exploring alternative frameworks such as partnership policing.

Background

Road policing is frequently an important part of programs that are used to change driver behaviour and improve road safety (Bates, Soole, & Watson, 2012). Increasingly, theoretical frameworks are being used to underpin traffic enforcement programs with the traditional theory used in this area being deterrence theory (Watling & Leal, 2012). However, other frameworks such as procedural justice are increasingly being explored in this context (Mazerolle et al., 2015) suggesting that there may be value in using alternative frameworks to improve road policing approaches. One alternative framework that has received little attention in the area of road policing is community and partnership policing. Partnership policing would enable policing organisations to leverage off the resources of others to improve enforcement activities.

Community and partnership policing

A key element of community policing are the partnerships that are formed with members of the community (Ray, 2014). A partnership between police and communities enables both to bring their relative strengths and capabilities to solve problems (Makin & Marenin, 2017). Benefits of this type of policing include increased input from citizens, improving police-citizen interactions and a better understanding of the tasks undertaken by police (Dantzker, 2002). It differs from third party policing which requires a legal lever where police can 'force' other agencies and individuals to undertake the enforcement actions (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2005).

Partnership policing and novice drivers

An example of where partnership policing may be an appropriate and effective strategy to improve road safety is young drivers. Jurisdictions in Australia, the United States, Canada and New Zealand use graduated driver licensing systems to introduce new drivers, particularly those that are young, to the driver licensing system (Bates, Filtner, & Watson, 2018). Frequently a key element of these systems is the implied assumption that parents will be involved in teaching their child to drive and then to enforce restrictions once they commence driving by themselves (Simons-Morton, 2007). There appears to be strong potential for parents to more actively partner with police, for instance by actively monitoring their access to the family vehicle, given that young drivers appear more concerned about their parents finding out about their traffic infringements when compared with police officers (Allen, Murphy, & Bates, 2017).

Conclusions

Although further research is required, it appears there is value in identifying which road safety areas would benefit from a partnership policing approach and its implementation. One area that may benefit from this type of approach is novice driver safety.

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