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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Interest Convergence Theory and Holistic Policing:
A Case Study of Three Police Shootings

A Master Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

Roberto Antonio Rivera

March 2017

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The Thesis of Roberto Antonio Rivera is approved:

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Acknowledgments

I retired from law enforcement in 2011, after a long career of over 18 years of service. During my career, I served in Detentions, Patrol, Traffic, Investigations, Special Enforcement Units, Court Services, and the Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Unit (COPPS). During this time, I was able to not only observe standard policing procedures and philosophies, but to develop and implement new policing procedures, policies, and ideas. After retirement, I dedicated myself to the pursuit of academic knowledge and to utilize my law enforcement experiences, both positive and negative. I could reflect on the expertise I gained that was effective, and those philosophies and programs that were in fact failures. As I pushed that patrol car from service call to service call day after day, never did I dare to dream or think that I would be pursuing a PhD and contributing academic research towards improving the human condition for marginalized communities. The discipline of Sociology has inspired me to pursue restorative justice and peace.

I wish to personally thank everyone who has traveled with me on my academic journey. I thank my parents, Jesse, and Victoria Rivera for their gift of service to their community and family. To all my professors, colleagues, and friends from California State University San Marcos, and the University of California, Riverside, I am in gratitude for their patience, mentorship, and support. Their guidance and wisdom have inspired me to teach. Finally, Dr. Richard Serpe, who predicted my path in 1996 before I even knew what it would be, saying, “Bobby, you’re a Sociologist and you don’t even know it.”

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Interest Convergence Theory and Holistic Policing: A Case Study of Three Police Shootings

by

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University of California Riverside, March of 2017
Dr. Alfredo Mirande, Chairperson

Despite increasing concerns nationally about police shootings of African Americans, the victimization of Latinos by police has been largely ignored. This paper explores the Move Forward Project, a police initiative that began in 2006 in Southern California. The initiative was aimed at improving trust following three unrelated fatal shootings involving White police officers and Latino residents that occurred within a span of five days in the summer of 2005. These shootings led to public outrage and were followed by two years of community protests. The police responded to the protests with a 10-point plan designed to develop a positive relationship between police and the Latino community.

The data for the study, collected between 2005 and 2008, is based on participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork, and archival materials. In the first year of the Move Forward Project, the FBI violent national crime index declined from 2006 to 2007,

community trust in police officers increased, and the community protests dissipated. Despite the success of the Move Forward project, police administrators and leadership abruptly ended the program. The author proposes that the project was disbanded precisely because of its success in reducing crime in the area, which led to a reduction in funding for the police. For reasons related to strategic funding, departments receive increased funding when crime rates are high. This research highlights the police practices used and the lessons learned from the Move Forward Project as an attempt to increase awareness of the current racial (Latino-European American) disparity in police responses to police violence in Latino communities.

Keywords: Interest Convergence Theory, Latino, Trust, Police, Holistic, Initiative, Retrospective Research

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Background and Significance

In the past 25 years, police violence against the African American community has been highly publicized. This began with the 1991 police beating of Rodney King, followed more recently by the shooting of Michael Brown and the subsequent riots in Ferguson, MO in 2014, as well as by other instances of aggressive police tactics. These events have resulted in increased concern among the public about officer-involved shootings and the victimization of people of color by police officers. While there has been an overwhelming focus on African Americans, little attention has been paid to the victimization of Latinos (hereinafter the masculine Latino/s will be used) by police officers or to the police response to violent events within their communities.

Policing in the United States is burdened by a host of problems, including the use of unethical practices, questionable police training, underdeveloped community-police relationships, and outdated methodologies (Sadler 2012). This paper will examine the racially biased ways that officers police in Latino communities as well as a police initiative, the Move Forward Project. More importantly, this research will identify the driving motivations behind the actions in these police policies, motivations that have been largely ignored. The paper will shed light on why police-funded initiatives to improve trust are often either short-term or completely nonexistent in Latino communities. To address these shortcomings in policing, this qualitative study presents a retroactive analysis of participant observation and ethnographic field data to examine lessons learned from an initiative designed to improve community-police relations.

This paper focuses on a medium-sized city in Southern California with a population of about 100,000 residents, of which about 46% are Latino (hereafter called Panoramic City). More specifically, this research is centered on a square-mile barrio of the city (hereafter called Mar Vista Park). This barrio is about 85% Latino with most of its residents being primarily Spanish speakers. Events relating to this paper were related to the author by two police officers that were assigned to the Panoramic City Police Department (PCPD).

Latino discrimination and victimization by police dates as far back as the 19th century with the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. As a result of this police practice, generations of Latinos across the United States have lived in fear of violence at the hands of police. Despite the guarantees contained in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, many Latinos had their lands stolen through illegal business transactions by White settlers overseen by a new White police force and the Texas Rangers (Gonzales 2003). The justification for the tactics of the Texas Rangers was to control the large newly incorporated into the U.S. Latino population. Many Mexicans were lynched that had lived along the Rio Grande River by the Rangers who served as military, police, judge, and jury (Mirande 1987). Racial divisions were created to separate newly privileged Whites in those areas that were formerly a part of Mexico from Mexican people. A racial and legal history that connects the Texas Rangers to oppression of Mexicans in the United States might explain the hostile relations between White officers and Latino residents in Panoramic City, who are primarily of Mexican descent. While contemporary police violence against Latinos has these historical roots, the focus of this

paper is on the contemporary situation and specifically, the lessons learned from the Move Forward Project and why was it cancelled.

The profiling of Latinos by police officers was apparent during a five-day period in 2005 in which three unrelated fatal shootings took place in Panoramic City. In each case, all police officers involved in the shootings were White and all victims were Latino. The occurrence of three shootings within such a short period by officers from the same department suggested that a broader pattern of problems existed. Prior to the shootings, there was little communication or collaboration between the community and the police. The tension between the community and the police became palpable, as distrust of the police brewed among the Latino residents. In the days following these shootings in 2005, hundreds of Latinos came out in protest of these police shootings, worsening an already strained relationship between the police and the community. The lack of communication may have increased the racial divide, promoting an “Us versus Them” mentality among the police and residents.

The Move Forward Project was initiated to promote a more positive engagement between the police department and Latino community, one with mutual trust and respect. In critically evaluating the Move Forward Project, this paper draws on contemporary Critical Race Theory, including more specifically Derrick Bell’s Interest Convergence Theory (ICT). An analysis of propositions as markers and angles is used to examine whether the Move Forward Project was successful or not.

Literature Review

In assessing attitudes of Latinos towards law enforcement (McClusky 2008), previous studies have found that the racial division that exists between Latinos and White officers is impacted by Latinos' fear of deportation and procedural unfairness (Messing 2015). Latinos perceptions of police performance have been generally poor since the *Garner v. Tennessee* (1975) decision, which, under the Fourth Amendment, allowed police officers to use lethal force when there is a threat to their own lives (Carter 1985) (Blume 1984). This precedent-setting case favors police officers and has led to an increase in officer-involved shootings (Katz 2015). Moreover, social identity cooperation, where Latino residents share similar values and concerns (Bradford 2014), has influence on the community characteristics of an officer's approaches to patrolling (Reck 2015). These characteristics include residents avoiding police officers, being fearful, not sharing information when contacted by police, and not reporting crimes to police as they occur (Martinez 2010).

In response to civil and racial unrest in the 1960s, police departments across the United States began developing ways to improve race relations through community-oriented policing. In the 1980's Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) philosophies were being implemented. In the 1990's, approximately 100,000 police officers were federally funded to support such projects. This federal funding of police departments, which began in the 1960s during a period of racial unrest in urban areas, was continued by President Bill Clinton' 1994 Crime Bill. This bill expanded the funding with the goal of improving policing in urban areas by adding or redeploying police officers. The initial intent of community policing was to make the streets of America safer, as some studies suggest that police departments that are transparent and work to improve trust are better able to collaborate with community interests (Glaser

2010). Policing efforts were based on a Black/White binary, as was Critical Race Theory (Delgado 2015). This literature contains a gap that does not address those that benefitted due to race over those they marginalized.

Interest-Convergence Theory

Critical Race Theorist Derrick Bell used the *Brown v. The Board of Education* (1954) decision to illustrate his Interest-Convergence Theory (ICT). In critically assessing the impact of this landmark decision, Bell concluded that the decision was issued because it advanced the interests of White Americans, particularly industrialists who saw segregation as detrimental (Bell 1980). He argued that the interests of those that are White converged with increased divergence of interests for those of color made integration less feasible, unless Whites benefitted by the exchange. Racial equality was accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites (Bell 1980). More generally, ICT states that change that benefits communities of color generally occurs when those changes also benefit the interests of White Americans (Aleman, Aleman 2010).

Intersectionality theory focuses on the intersection of race, class, and gender but it fails to address other interactional dimensions like language, culture, and citizenship status, which are often overlooked within police practices (Mirande 2012). ICT, could provide understanding as to why police departments go further than racially profiling and targeting minority neighborhoods, particularly the Latino communities. Rather, brutal police tactics routinely victimize Latino neighborhoods, leading to use of excessive force and the breakdown of trust by its Latino residents

The Move Forward Project was promoted by the leadership of the Panoramic City Police Department because it served the interests of the police., which sought to project a more positive view of themselves to the community. For example, the

captain of the PCPD was a White male and his ten superiors were all White. Furthermore, the White power structure was maintained by continuing a divisive “Us versus Them” framework that lacked Latino input on its policing. However, once the Move Forward Project was successful in reducing crime, it was disbanded because it led to a reduction in funding of the police. Consistent with Interest Convergence Theory, the Move Forward Project was discontinued because its success was counter to the advancement of White interests.

Due to a lack of police departmental initiatives to improve trust in police by Latinos, police agencies are now trying to catch up, as national discussions have brought attention to the issues of immigration and increased deportations of undocumented immigrants that have led to increased fear in Latino communities (Becerra 2016). The literature on police initiatives that promote community trust is limited and predates the current wave of attention to police violence (Desmond 2016). It also predates demographic shifts in the US, and as such, focuses little on Latinos and immigrants. However, it does infer that the police structure is racialized, contributing to the continuation of racism not just in African American communities, but areas that have concentrations of Latinos.

Scholars working in this area have examined the racial and ethnic perceptions of officers and Latinos (Wu 2011), the conflict between the police and minority communities (Carter 2002), and incarceration and sentencing outcomes through procedural justice and police legitimacy (Mazerolle 2013). Scholars have also studied police shootings more generally of Latinos (Martinez 2010), finding that overall homicide rates by police to be higher for Latinos than Whites (Duran 2008). This body of literature illustrates those structural characteristics and pressures to the homicide

differential for Latinos when compared to other ethnic groups (Phillips 2002, Kposowa, Breault 2012).

The above issues of sentencing and incarceration disparities fuels the distrust of police that has been documented. Much scholarly work exists on efforts by the structure of policing to improve trust, from the patrol officer working the streets to the administration making departmental command decisions (Hawdon 2008; Wooden 2014; Messing 2015; Destler 2016). Immigrants have been shown to be less trusting of the structure of policing than non-immigrants due to discriminatory service from officers (Murphy 2016). As can be seen today, entire communities question traditional policing methods (Goldstein 1987). Moreover, officers are being second guessed in their decision making as they attempt to overcome the barriers they face to implement the philosophies of community policing methods.

The events of Panoramic City went beyond the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory in that the Latino residents of Panoramic City had a disadvantage, given their lack of culture capital with local city officials, city managers, and police officers. Interest-Convergence Theory is applied to address the in group/out group racial division that existed between the police and the Latino residents of Panoramic City. The findings also suggest that police promote violent historical narratives about Latinos, rather than an implementation for change. The theory suggests that police departments will promote a status quo policy for White officers, who seek to keep Latino residents of Panoramic City in a subordinate position.

The differences and similarities within the explanations of ethnic minority groups' trust in the police calls for new evaluation frameworks for place-based police interventions (Craen 2014, Braga 2012). Differences include the high level of media attention focusing on officer-involved shootings of African Americans. Similarities

include Latinos being shot due to an officer's fear of seeing a weapon when no weapon was found on the deceased, as often occurs in cases involving African American victims. Though the determinants of attitudes toward police of Latino immigrants and non-immigrants vary (Correia 2010), further research on Latino police relations and interventions to promote trust is also missing from the literature. Attempts by scholars have been made using community police officers, yet the impact of training and occupational socialization on police recruits needs to be further evaluated (Haarr 2001). While the focus of this paper is not on improving police training, it aims to address interventions designed to promote trust and confidence in police officers, improve community-police relations, and reduce excessive use of deadly force.

Methods

The data were collected between 2005 and 2008, based on participant observation, recollection of personal experience, and ethnographic fieldwork. Additionally, archived newspaper articles, television news reports, district attorney reports and a U.S. Department of Justice report on the three shootings are included among the data. Attempts at contacting the local district attorney's office to gain permission to review files on the three officer-involved shootings were unsuccessful. However, Officer Cobian and Sgt. Carrillo personally knew the officers involved in the three shootings, was consulted for his experience during his career as a police officer. His reflection on how his position as an officer shaped people's behavior around him, as well as his access to settings, resulted from his assignment in Panoramic City. Pseudonyms were used in the naming of Panoramic City, Mar Vista Park, Officer Jesse Cobian, and Sergeant Leo Carrillo.

To implement a Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) project in 2006, Officer Cobian, then an officer with Panoramic City Police Department (PCPD), wrote a grant in cooperation with the local university. The project brought in M.A. graduate students from the local university to examine the relationship between the PCPD officers and Latino residents. Five university students from various disciplines, including sociology, business, and marketing, participated in police ride-alongs with officers over a 4-month period. The students ranged in age from 22 to 28 and rode with the police officers for a minimum of 8 hours a week. The students kept monthly progress reports and wrote a final paper in response to what they saw and heard regarding the attitudes of officers towards Latino residents. They shared a research question, “which is more of a barrier to improve police relations in Panoramic City, the Mexican culture or Spanish language?” During the time of the student research, the department had begun a Spanish language immersion program where 12 officers from the PCPD station were chosen to learn Spanish over a 10-week period.

In addition, Officer Cobian maintained departmental emails from high-ranking police officials that highly praised the Move Forward Project. Each month, PCPD leaders and city government officials evaluated the project. Officer Cobian also gave COPPS monthly reports on the Move Forward Project to his immediate sergeant, Leo Carrillo. The Move Forward Project had ten goals outlined below. Eight of the 10 goals were met. Of the two items not met, one—to develop a boxing team—was in process and nearly completed when the project was canceled. The project was canceled due to the Mar Vista Park COPPS unit being transformed to a gang unit led by a new sergeant and Sgt.

Carrillo was subsequently reassigned to another patrol station. Furthermore, plans to develop a high school mariachi troupe among two rival high schools never materialized. As the project was implemented, media reports of improved police/Latino community relations measured trust, as well as by a decrease in the number of protests and an increase in Latino involvement with the PCPD.

Officer Cobian, examined governmental reports that reviewed the trio of shootings in Panoramic City. For instance, in 2008, the County District Attorney's office which oversaw Panoramic City and adjacent cities issued a report that evaluated the use of force from 1998 to 2010. The U.S. Department of Justice issued a report in 2008 justifying the use of lethal force in the trio of shootings that took place in 2005. Additionally, archived newspaper reports on the Panoramic City shootings and their aftermath were collected from the period of 2005 until Officer Cobian's transfer out of the PCPD station in February of 2008. Finally, PCPD reports of the shootings in Panoramic City, which gave detailed accounts of the three residents who were killed as well as the officers' actions who shot them, were examined.

A few methodological limitations must be noted. For one, determination of the nationalities of the three Latino residents killed in the incidents with police was based on media accounts from the internet, archived newspaper sources, and past TV news segments. Additionally, Officer Cobian can be considered an insider from a former assignment to PCPD, at the time of the three officer-involved shootings, he was assigned to another station rather than PCPD.

Context for the Study: The Panoramic City, CA Police Shootings

This case was chosen as a multi-method, retroactive case study due to its unique quality. Prior to these events, there is no archived history of multiple officer-involved shootings within such a short period. By focusing on such a unique case, this study addresses such research questions as why police initiatives are implemented and why they cease.

In 2005, over a span of 5 days, three unrelated officer-involved shootings resulted in the killing of three Latino males by five White police officers. Media and residents of Panoramic City believed this concentration of shootings to be the first of its kind for its police department. The city has a barrio, Mar Vista Park, where residents primarily speak Spanish and where many are undocumented mass protests by predominately Latino residents erupted and continued for two years, as the community decried the shootings and the agency's failure to recruit Spanish-speaking officers who they thought could prevent such future shootings. At the time of the shootings, none of the 49 PCPD officers on the force were fluent in Spanish. A cultural division emerged because of the department's failure to address the Latino community's distrust of the police department.

Shooting #1:

On the Thursday that began the streak of shootings, officers responded for the third time in 24 hours to the home of a co-residents' 9-1-1 domestic disturbance call in a primarily Latinos neighborhood. The officers reported that they faced a Latino man who had threatened other people and attacked a officer with dumbbells. The man was unfazed by pepper spray. Two officers fired and the man died at the scene. The shooting was

deemed justified under the state's penal code, which defines shootings as justified if necessary to overcome resistance to the discharge of a lawful duty or if in defense of others. There were no records of community outreach between the police department and the residents of the area to understand what took place. The department issued no report to the family about the man's death.

Shooting #2:

On Friday, a officer spotted a Jeep that was suspected to have been used in an armed robbery. The officer stopped the vehicle and chased the unarmed Latino man who ran from it. The officer fired three shots at the man. The final volley of shots penetrated the man's body when he was on his back, lying down. The District Attorney's audit report stated that the officer shot the man when he reached into his clothing. The family was not given any explanation as to why the suspect had to be killed. This event added to the community's safety concerns about the police-involved shootings. Furthermore, there was a lack of communication between the department and the community and family members of the deceased. Information was received through the media rather than from a mental health liaison from the police department. No one from the police department made themselves available to explain what took place or to help community members process the emotions they experienced as a result of the incident. Latino leaders were vocal but felt ignored, increasing the level of distrust.

Shooting #3:

On Monday, officers tried to stop a Latino man who fit the description of a suspect in a reported car theft. The man ran. Officers chased him, and one officer shot

him as he reportedly reached for a "Leatherman-like tool" in a pouch on his hip. At this point, the community became even more fearful of their jurisdiction's police officers. Within a short span of time, three fatal shootings had occurred. They were followed by no community outreach or explanation from the department given to the family about the man's death. All three unrelated shootings were subsequently ruled justified by the local District Attorney's Office overseeing PCPD.

The three Latinos who were shot by police were all found to have been unarmed. Also, the language barrier of the three deceased was not examined to assess whether they may have not responded to officer's demands because of their lack of English fluency. All the officers involved in the shootings were White males that spoke no Spanish. The national political climate during the period of these shootings featured immigration policy at the forefront of discussion.

As these conversations were taking place, a new vigilante group was gaining momentum in the U.S. Southwest and at the border of Mexico. These vigilantes were called the Minutemen and their members were primarily White males. While the protests by local Latinos over the three shootings were taking place, the Minutemen were aligning themselves with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol in the round-up of illegal Latino immigrants. For the Minutemen, they had their own protests that were centered on illegal immigration, yet the issue of local day laborers looking for work was gaining momentum. For the Latinos protestors, the main issues were about the trio of shootings and the defense of Latino immigrant day labor, which came into question after the shootings. Unfortunately, the Latino protestors were overshadowed by

the Minutemen's activities, which minimized the community's outcry in the media and other potential social supports from other areas.

Officer Cobian was reassigned back to Panoramic City in early 2006 as tensions mounted between the Minutemen and those in protest of the trio of shootings and Latino immigrant day labor. At his first assigned protest, he witnessed hundreds of those supporting the Minutemen and their beliefs, as well as thousands of protestors on the opposing side, who were supporting Latino immigrant day laborers. While the protests were taking place, leaders of the Minutemen were meeting with the captain of the police department. The same Minutemen leaders would within a few years be indicted and criminally sentenced for assaults on day workers camped in the area. As Latinos were protesting the series of officer-involved shootings, the Minutemen were promoting anti-immigrant propaganda that was distracting for the city yet supportive by its police command. This diminished the trustworthiness of the mixed message that was being sent to Latino residents and the officers involved in the Move Forward Project.

The relationship between law enforcement and White residents paralleled what was also seen along the southwestern part of the United States in states such as Texas and Arizona. Furthermore, this relationship often included use of the U.S. Border Patrol. Historically, it is common for Border Patrol officers to have military or police backgrounds. The similarity between the Border Patrol and Texas Rangers in its early years was not coincidental. They were aligned in their policing of those of Mexican descent in the name of protection of property (Mirande 1987). This is similar to how the

Minutemen were claiming that “illegal aliens” were negatively affecting their property values and committing crime.

The Minutemen had a voice in the local police practices involving illegal immigrants. Doing so allowed an ICE agent to be made available for officers from Panoramic City. For officers describing Latino ethnicity, it was troubling to hear the term “non-citizen” used interchangeably with Hispanic between federal agents and police officers. It was even more startling to hear “NHI” (no human involved) as a descriptor for those suspected of being undocumented. This fueled the flames of mistrust by the Latino community towards police officers. It was later determined by the Poverty Law Center that the Minutemen were a White supremacist movement (Sandoval 2010).

The Move Forward Project: A Pilot Program in the Community-Police Engagement

The three shootings by the five White police officers and what appear by the community as a lack of a department response added to the mistrust of police by many Latinos in the community. Therefore, the PCPD implemented the Move Forward Project to promote positive community-police relations. The loss of trust was highlighted by residents’ comments at community forums, Spanish speaking PTA meetings, local school English immersion classes, media interviews, and Officer Cobian’s conversations with residents. The shootings illustrated a discrepancy between good intentions and justice. Many residents feared the police officers that patrolled the area, resulting in a low number of calls for assistance and emergency services from the Latino community. Additionally, the Latino community wanted police accountability for the trio of shootings. Given the community’s loss of trust, the PCPD leaders sought a middle ground

between the desires of protestors for restorative justice of the shootings and Panoramic City officials. They searched for a solution that would mitigate the social and racial disparities they encountered.

In 2006, Officer Cobian and Sgt. Carrillo were recruited to lead police efforts to formally address community-police conflicts. A Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Unit (COPPS) storefront office was set up at Mar Vista Park to increase police officer contact with residents. While assigned to the COPPS unit, Officer Cobian created the Move Forward Project. The opening of the police storefront office led to an initiative that addressed the cultural division between the Latinos community and the police department. Officer Cobian was assigned to the storefront station due to his Hispanic heritage, proficiency in Spanish, prior experience with civic engagement, and first-hand knowledge of the Latinos community acquired by having patrolled in the area from 2002 to 2004. Sgt. Carrillo was selected due to his Hispanic heritage, and his understanding of his Latino culture.

The Move Forward Project aimed to develop community trust through collaboration and team building. The 10-point program involved leadership recognition with a local newspaper, and collaboration where local Latinos residents were the focus. The leadership recognition focused on the Latinos community. Through town hall meetings and face-to-face interactions, the lack of trust in police officers was consistently expressed, becoming especially intense when it involved conflicts between police and youth in the barrio.

One solution was to address the language barrier with the Spanish-speaking residents. Officer Cobian opted to walk door-to-door to listen to the community's concerns. Bilingual staff and community leaders also reached out to barrio residents to encourage further discussion with Officer Cobian. As trust among Latinos in the community grew, residents in the local neighborhood gave officers information on criminal activities. For example, a canine handler was involved in a foot pursuit in an alley. A teenage resident of Mar Vista Park pointed to the officer where the person had fled. The officer later shared with fellow officers how he had "never witnessed" that before. Officer Cobian was later able to share the information he learned with city officials, detectives, and street level officers. By including all community partners, Officer Cobian found a "holistic means of policing" that made it more inviting for residents to come forward with ideas for solutions. Residents would come to the Mar Vista station to offer suggestions on police-community relations. This allowed some residents to be a part of a new collective policing structure. Furthermore, it may have set the parameters for what some authorities would categorize as a new culture that emerged with this new partnership.

Implementation of the Move Forward Project

A holistic method of policing began with the Move Forward Project. The Move Forward Project started with the recognition of good citizenship and leadership achievements with The Champion in the Community program. Each month a member of the Latino community would have lunch with the captain of the PCPD station and receive a certificate from the police department. They were also profiled in the local newspaper

with a picture of the captain from the PCPD station. Additionally, the Move Forward Project identified Latino leaders to participate in the Latino Round Table to collaborate with police officials. This group worked together to address the community's mistrust of and excessive use of police force. It organized a simulator shooting training and facilitated agreements to continue future collaborations between the community and the police department. The Latino Roundtable members were pioneers in displaying unity between the community and the police officers by working as a team.

The efforts of Officer Cobian and Sgt. Carrillo with the Move Forward Project proved successful in building rapport between residents and police officials. For example, they staffed a team building event in 2006 called Soccer Fest, which was attended by 2,000 people. The event included a soccer match between local officers and rival high schools. The self-esteem of the student players was bolstered, as evidenced by their jubilant celebration on the field in reaction to their 11 to 1 triumph. Additionally, 25 community social service agencies attended along with residents who would enjoy the games. The residents learned about the services offered by the agencies and sought both volunteer positions and employment opportunities within the community. The Move Forward Project also reached out to a local elementary school, where officers and detectives read to primarily Spanish-speaking first graders to enhance their reading skills and to promote literacy. The outreach was well received by school administrators, teachers, individual family members, and the community at large.

In December of 2007, a Christmas dinner was organized to serve about 800 people from the barrio, with 200 turkeys given out as well. The donated dinners were

served by officers and command staffs from the Panoramic City patrol station. Officer Cobian dressed as Santa Claus and gave out candy and gifts, donated from partnered local merchants, to children. In addition, the visual arts department from a local university produced an anti-gang video. The video targeted single Latina mothers and provided information on community resources. Specifically, the video educated the young moms on behaviors in children that could be indicative of potential gang activity. Additionally, a former member of the Mara Salvatrucha (MS 13) gang was invited to the event. He spoke to Latino children at a few middle schools and appeared in the anti-gang video.

A second video targeted children between the ages of 8 and 12 and was distributed within the community. A preventative anti-gang game was also developed to target children between the ages of 6 and 8. In the game, children had opportunities to make good life choices that demonstrated good citizenship. Every month, a good citizen was recognized for his/her leadership skills as a “Champion in the Community” within the predominantly barrio area. The awarded recipient received an exemplary citizenship certificate, lunch at a local eatery, and recognition as a leader in the local newspaper. After opening the storefront office in the spring of 2006, the community had a significant reduction in violent crimes. The national FBI violent crime index in 2007 showed a decrease of violent crime in Panoramic City by 20.9% from 2006. The following are the summary of activities within the Move Forward Project as outlined in the narrative:

Summary of the Move Forward Project Activities

1. Champion in the Community, a monthly Latino resident good citizenship recognition
2. Mar Vista Park Resource Fair, comprised of vendors, state, county, and city resources
3. Anti-gang video, a deterrent that educated mothers on gang behaviors
4. Local university grant that funded research to review the Move Forward Project
5. Latino resident Christmas dinner, in the Mar Vista area with free turkeys given away
6. Latino roundtable group
7. Officers reading to elementary school children
8. Annual Soccer Fest, with the two-local rival high schools
9. Boxing club
10. Officer storefront office at the library in the Mar Vista Park area

Barriers to the Move Forward Project

The funding police departments receive from the Department of Homeland Security is based on increased or high percentage crime rates. When a city has a large drop in crime, it becomes difficult to receive additional funding for officers, equipment, or training. This approach becomes counterproductive when trying to reduce disparity by deploying a higher saturation policing method with police officers in the community. It is more advantageous for the department's funding situation to have a high crime rate than a low one. Yet in the PCPD, the drop-in crime resulted in a reduction of the department's

funding, funding that is needed to continue increasing policing efforts within the community. Thus, the Move Forward Project was eliminated in November of 2008 by the captain of the PCPD station, even though he and other high ranking administrators called it successful. Instead, the PCPD turned to the current traditional model of community policing, which utilizes the broken window theory (Sampson, Raudenbush 2004), to promote crime increases to obtain funding.

The Move Forward Project employed an alternative holistic means of addressing the problem of lack of trust in law enforcement by people of color in the United States. Such holistic strategies that were implemented during Officer Cobian's tenure raised Latino awareness and trust in policing in the barrio section of the city. This resulted in the largest reduction in the crime rate ever for the city. Given the accomplishments of the Move Forward Project, which focused on improving community relations to reduce the crime rate, a funding structure based on high crime statistics is a misguided and ineffective approach.

Results:

The Move Forward Project was implemented to promote positive community-police relations in wake of the trio of officer involved shootings. The results of the study to promote positive police and community relations in the Latinos community were perceived to be effective for the PCPD. This included changes observed at events in the interaction of the Panoramic City police officers with its Latino residents. For example, Soccer Fest measured participation, not trust. Yet the Panoramic City leadership benefits in its description of the event as being successful in increasing trust between police

officers and Latino residents. The Latino residents of Panoramic City benefitted in seeing officers in a more engaging less violent manner, while the city benefitted from fewer complaints from the community against the officers.

There was no formal external evaluation of the project, either by any outside agency or academic institution. The department simply wanted the protests to end, and because the protests did end during the tenure of the project, the department considered the project to be effective. The department saw the initiative as a crime reduction program. In truth, they did not want to reduce crime, as they feared they would lose officers as a result from a drop in federal funding.

During the period of implementation, there were no officer-involved shooting incidents. The initiative resulted in the community going out and participating in the individual tenets of the project. Additionally, Latino residents were walking into the COPPS field office, addressing community concerns, and reporting local crimes. The Spanish immersion program had only one officer that passed the final exam. The same officer had some prior Spanish proficiency. Of the five university students, their results all came back to find that “culture” was more of a barrier than language. The most common theme was the racial divide between officers and Latinos in the Mar Vista area. Recommendations from the students included that the department hire Spanish speaking officers and that they institute cultural sensitive training. Per department administrators and the station captain, Officer Cobian received a recommendation letter, and numerous departmental emails from high ranking superiors praised both officers involved in the Move Forward Project.

The Move Forward Project addressed these concerns by giving community members a sense that they had an equal footing with the police officers. From the perspective of the community, trust is not granted automatically to law enforcement, but must be earned through the actions of police officers and public officials. As the program progressed within the Latino community, there were observed changes in the attitude of the command staff at the police station. Despite the positive efforts that were uniting community residents together and rebuilding trust, there was an obvious increase in border patrol agents at the station. Additionally, an ICE agent was assigned to assist officers in the field. Double talk by the station captain that ICE was not present or working in Panoramic City was given at the Latino Roundtable meetings during this period. Once again, a racial division was becoming more evident in the White race versus those who were primarily Spanish speakers

Despite the efforts of the Move Forward Project personnel, many officers nonetheless continued to demonstrate an adversarial attitude toward Latinos. This phenomenon was witnessed in the interaction of the ICE agents assigned to patrol stations with the police officers in the area. Once again, a color line was emerging where those who did not appear to be U.S. citizens were seen as “them.” There was evidence of biased behavior, as White officers were more prone to call for ICE agents to determine deportation status of those who may fit the description of illegal immigrants.

The primary achievement of the Move Forward Project is the development of a holistic model of policing that included the voice of the citizens of Panoramic City. By doing so, the project improved community-police relations and reduced police violence.

The following are recommendations, developed from the Move Forward Project, on how future law enforcement agencies can improve upon this initiative:

Recommendations

1. Create a self-sustaining program (s) where private, nonprofit, and other government grants are utilized to continue the program. Budgeting and fundraising is needed to support the continued manpower and work of the program.
2. Create sister networks and programs to support one another.
3. Utilize social media as a tool to conduct outreach and promote the programs to attract more volunteers and qualified leaders.
4. Collaborate with other existing ethnic groups, advocacy groups, social services programs, and agencies.
5. Explore the deeper friction between Latinos and governmental global structures across the nation and compare to local levels.
6. Change from reactive to proactive by placing outreach and communication platforms before incidents arise to defuse emotions instead of igniting blame.
7. Impose stricter guidelines and protocols for officers who use unnecessary or excessive force.

General Lessons and Recommendations for Law Enforcement Agencies:

1. Explore the deeper friction between Latinos and governmental global structures across the nation.
2. Explore methodological communication platforms before incidents arise.
3. Impose stricter guidelines for officers who use unnecessary excessive force
4. Conduct early baseline studies and surveys of all parties involved: community leaders, officers, residents, and government officials.
5. Conduct monthly meetings with local community leaders, religious leaders, and global governmental officials' representatives.

6. Construct newsletter and public websites for updates and community involvement.
7. Identify strategies to develop self-sustaining programs
8. Include community leaders within structure of police department
9. Educate departmental employees in historical narrative of those being served
10. Mirror demographics of those being served by race and gender.

Conclusion

Interest Convergence Theory can help explain distrust between disadvantaged Latino residents of Panoramic City and advantaged White officers who hold a position of power reluctant to non-advantageous change. This relates to police violence in White officers with power and who will not trust their minority charges, while citizens of Latino neighborhoods will not trust the White officers who they believe to have power over them. This causes intense racial conflict, which often manifests as higher rates of excessive force by White police officers from PCPD when compared to their other patrol stations. This paper contributes to Critical Race Theory literature by moving beyond the White/Black binary and incorporating language, culture, and citizenship status.

ICT can be utilized to assess the relationship between the PCPD and Latino residents of the city by examining how a primarily White police force benefits by maintaining stratified police practices. Consistent with ICT, an in-group/out-group racial division existed between the White power structure, including the police, and the Latino residents of Panoramic City. The theory can be applied to the events in Panorama City by examining whether the interests of the police and Whites aligned with those of the Latino community. The theory also suggests that the events in Panoramic City resulted in the

continuation of the violent historical subjugation of Latinos by non-Latinos rather than the creation of change that Bell spoke of within ICT frameworks. The theory indicates a privileged position for White officers and a lower hierarchal rank for Latino residents of Panoramic City. The theory also has strength within the legal academy (Driver 2011) and can apply to this paper in the discussion of “Latino interests” and “White interests.” This brings into question the role of non-White police officers and the race of the officers on the police force. ICT can be applied to describe events in Panoramic City in 2005 to understand the police response to the three officer involved shootings.

A police department aiming to end the protests and tensions toward Panoramic City and its police department initiated the Move Forward Project. The history of the high ratio of Latinos shot and killed from officers assigned to PCPD puts into question attitudes and behaviors that have been institutionalized. Additionally, the relationship between police officers and community residents did not have a resolution of peace and harmony. Furthermore, cities with a high proportion of Latinos are correlated with increased poverty and with different social class status.

Through analytical study, an examination of the Move Forward Project, which revolved around a series of officer involved shootings, was retroactively applied. The mutual perceptions of mistrust and threat held by law enforcement agents and people of color in barrio neighborhoods created group dynamics that reinforced the in-group solidarity and intergroup conflicts that would not occur in more affluent areas (Holmes 2012). This perception took place not only in the city of the three officer-involved

shootings, but in the discussions behind closed doors by the officers and community members who aligned themselves in solidarity for a more humane solution.

Examination of the period before the trio of shootings, and the aftermath that followed for Latino residents, reveals that White officers appeared to want to maintain a free reign to the option of force for Latino residents as a means of social control. The officers that were assigned to the Panoramic City station were reluctant to change and many challenged the tenets of the Move Forward Project. Shortly after the trio of shootings, the police chief that oversaw Panoramic City publicly stated, “The residents of Panoramic City can feel more comfortable that the incidents which occurred over those five days in 2005 were an extraordinary aberration and not a trend.” Interest Convergence Theory has examined the economic and political power differences and advantages, between those that are White and those that are Latino in society with a power struggle that is based on control of economic resources.

Institutional inertia is a powerful force preventing change within police agencies, as police departments are resistant to changing discriminatory practices. Much of the powerful changes that Officer Cobian and Sgt. Carillo witnessed were undermined by officers who were reluctant to change and department heads who wished to maintain past practices despite the harm these outdated methods caused. These police practices were designed in an era when minorities constituted a small percentage of the population. As demographics change and the Latino population rises, these biased police practices become more evident, as in the case in Panoramic City.

While this paper focused on the success/not successful initiative in the Move Forward Project, the issue of police accountability was constantly in question by the Latino community. It was quite common to hear at Spanish-speaking PTA meetings that there was no reason the police were there for them. It appears that attitudes reflect reality; the Move Forward Project never changed the reality of police brutality. The questionable behavior of the officers involved in these shootings tears down the fabric of trust. It was challenging for social activists from Panoramic City and neighboring areas to have leaders within the community navigate through the deep-rooted structures of policing culture.

Furthermore, the language and culture barriers created divisions between relationships that were crucial in devising a system that met the needs of the community and of the officers to maintain law and order. Even more so, those that see this racialized group as the “other” or an enemy had to learn a more humanistic and integrated approach when working with people of different cultures and languages. The examination of an alternative policing method that studies hiring practices, academy instruction, police attitudes, the intersection of the military into policing with behaviors and attitudes, could be better examined through identity theory.

A humanistic and integrated approach could be designed as a method of policing to solve conflicts with Latinos and other minority groups. An approach that focused on human potential and achievement and not of social disorder. This methodology would embrace face-to-face interactions, develop a community forum of leaders to solve problems, conduct education outreach, and reward positive behaviors that contribute

toward community collaboration and harmony. This approach would promote trust, peace, unity, and compassion within communities with larger proportions of people of color. It would promote police authorities working with these communities as one team with a common goal—to create trust by incorporating all the components listed above. Additionally, a holistic model of policing could be further examined to improve trust of police by Latinos and lower the use of excessive and lethal force by police.

The Move Forward Project holistically addressed the needs of the Latino community by recognizing that they were part of the solution in their policing and not part of the problem. The holistic model could include residents of good standing being included within the structure of its police departments. The model could also be reflective of the demographics of the city and would move away from aggressive police tactics.

The author, learned through retrospective research that analysis of data from the past can shed light on current events. The advantage of this type of research is the ability to revisit past events and recreate them through analysis by those who had a connection. This type of research cannot be duplicated unless an actor from that period existed to direct and connect the dots with access to the information. By creating timelines and managing the supporting data, it was easier to reconstruct the events and climate surrounding the trio of shootings in 2005 and the subsequent implementation of the Move Forward Project. The pitfall is that, due to the nature of the events, the author had no access to the actual police reports in the trio of shootings, nor was he able to spoke to the officers involved. It was also difficult to obtain interviews that could have expedited this study.

It was recognized as a site for federal funding, the Weed and Seed Program, based on Panoramic City having a higher crime rate when compared to neighboring cities. Funding to police agencies could be further examined to look for cities that do not receive federal monies that are tied to crime rates. By maintaining stratified police practices in ethnic communities, funding is constant and maintained. This is a tragic status quo with a cost of racial division. Further evaluation is needed on the criteria that determines how police departments are funded.

In review of the aftermath of the Move Forward Project, the Mar Vista Park COPPS Unit become more of a gang apprehension unit. Officer Cobian and Sgt. Carrillo never returned to the area as assigned officers. No other trio of officer-involved shootings occurred after the project ceased in Panoramic City, nor in any other law enforcement agencies in the area. No future direction of community-police relations was ever discussed for the area examined. The Move Forward Project can thus be concluded to have been a short-term fix bent on improving community-police relations, but not a long-term solution.

In conclusion, more literature and scholarship is needed on the examination of trust-building community-police initiatives within Latino communities. While this paper has a narrower focus of Latinos, the broader national discussion of police violence has focused on African Americans. An understanding of police initiatives that target trust within Latino communities can contribute to national conversations on police violence in the United States. Interest Convergence Theory can be used to attain a broader goal of

understanding police violence that benefits Whites and changes that continue to marginalize ethnic communities.

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