

AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF POLICE-COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PARTNERSHIPS IN TEXAS

to engage in partnerships that fulfill the needs of local jurisdictions. For instance, if a community has a problem with drug use, local law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and correctional officials are relatively free to work out local solutions. They have the option de-emphasize criminal justice solutions and instead pursue a public health approach for users, while maintaining a law and order approach for dealers. Similarly, in systems that decentralize decision-making, local officials can choose to deal with the problem of prostitution in ways that account for local opportunities and pressures (e.g., in a community with social workers that reach out to street prostitutes, police and probation officers have resources available to them that police in other communities may not have).

Conversely, most Asian societies have very centralized criminal justice systems. Whereas America has literally thousands of relatively independent police agencies, most Asian societies have one national police agency. This would lead one to believe that partnerships between different agencies of the criminal justice could not likely develop at the local level. Centralization is not part of what Clear and Cadora (2003) had in mind when they defined community justice. However, the reality is, as is often the case, more complex. Whereas the centralization of Asian societies has the effect of inhibiting partnerships, it is of course Asian societies such as Japan and China that have given rise to community-oriented policing. In fact, in a review of policing practices in China, Zhong (2009) simply called community oriented policing “old wine in new bottles.” Societies where there is a tradition of having the police officers being an integral part of the community in which they serve, can best respond to local pressures and opportunities. It is this very tradition that can make possible partnerships between law enforcement and community corrections agencies not only in America, but also throughout Asia, and indeed the world (Wisler & Onwudiwe, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to conduct an empirical assessment of police-community corrections partnerships in Texas and to speculate of how they could serve as a model for Asian societies. While we were successful in doing so, there are two major problems with our analysis. First, trying to draw conclusions about an entire continent based on an analysis of partnerships in one state of one country is probably inadequate. In a future project researchers should conduct a survey of partnerships in a representative sample of states in the US. Second, researchers should then also do a survey of nations in Asia to see if there are similar partnerships in these nations. For instance, it will be interesting to see if the patterns of partnerships, if any, are similar or different in Asia. Most importantly, although many Asian nations have a strong Confucian influences, it is the differences between these nations that may have important ramifications for the implementation of partnerships (Wisler & Onwudiwe, 2011; Zhong, 2009).

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Bitna Kim is the Assistant Professor, Criminology Department, at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). She received her Ph.D. from the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. Specific areas of interest include meta-analysis, corrections, gender issues in CJ system, intimate partner homicide, and comparative criminology. Recent publications have appeared in *Crime and Delinquency*, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Violence and Victims*, *Women and Criminal Justice*, and *Prison Journal*.

Jurg Gerber is professor of criminal justice and Director of International Initiatives in the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. For the last seven years he has also served as *Professeur Invité* at the University of Lausanne (Lausanne, Switzerland) and he spent academic year 2000/01 as a Fulbright Scholar at Kaliningrad State University, in Kaliningrad, Russia. Research interests include white-collar crime, criminology, drug control policy, and international criminal justice issues. He has co-edited two books on drug policy, one on white-collar crime, and has published extensively in all of the above areas.

Dan Richard Beto, M.A., Chair of the Governing Board of the Texas Regional Center for Policing Innovation at Sam Houston State University, has devoted four decades of service to the criminal justice system. He is widely published in journals peculiar to the corrections profession and has served as editor of *Texas Probation*, *Texas Journal of Corrections*, and *Perspectives*. Mr. Beto is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Federal Probation* and serves as editor of *Executive Exchange*.