

waiting to start the cycle all over again. For these communities, many people are "missing" on any given day, behind bars somewhere, but because they cycle through the justice system, the actual list of problems for such places. There are almost 2 million minority children (2.7 million in the United States overall) whose fathers are in prison or jail.⁴ Those who go to prison become return to the community.⁵ Having a father go to prison contributes to a range of developmental problems, including poor school performance, emotional problems, homelessness, and even delinquency.⁶ Places where many men cycle through prison are places where sexually transmitted diseases and teen births,⁸ as well as serious juvenile delinquency.⁹ Some evidence even suggests that high rates of crimes and cannot be ignored. But more of the same kind of action seems to be counterproductive. In the face of this conundrum, a growing group of reformers has argued that in these communities, community justice is a better approach. Community justice seeks not just to apprehend lawbreakers and punish them; it also seeks to improve and strengthen the communities from which they come.

In this chapter we explore the developing idea of community justice. We discuss it as a philosophy of justice and a strategy of corrections. We ultimately investigate its strengths and weaknesses as an emerging strategy for troubled communities that are hit hard not just by crime but also by criminal justice.

Definition of Community Justice

Community justice is a new idea that has gathered considerable support among practitioners and policy makers across the country. A large number of municipalities have recently undertaken community justice initiatives of one sort or another. The particulars of these initiatives vary because different places tailor strategies to the particulars of their own crime problems. However, all pursue similar goals.

The rapid growth in new and innovative community justice projects is remarkable for two reasons. First, these projects have arisen as a result of local desires to develop more-proactive responses to crime. Second, they receive funding not from large federal grants but rather from local resources that are redirected from traditional approaches to community justice strategies. As you may have gathered, community justice is not a simple idea that can be explained in a single sentence. It can be thought of as a *philosophy of justice*, a *strategy of justice*, and a series of justice programs.

A Philosophy of Justice

As a philosophy, community justice is based on a pursuit of justice that goes beyond the traditional three tasks of criminal justice—the apprehension, conviction, and punishment of offenders. Community justice recognizes that crime and the problems that result from it greatly impede the quality of community life. Thus, the community justice approach not only seeks to respond to criminal events through traditional means—it also sets as a goal the improvement of quality of community life, especially for communities afflicted by high levels of crime. Robert Sampson and his colleagues have coined the term *collective efficacy* to denote the type of life that communities need to reduce crime.¹²

A Strategy of Justice

The strategy of the community justice approach combines three contemporary justice innovations: community policing, environmental crime prevention, and restorative justice. Each of these innovations holds promise as a way of preventing crime and reviving community safety.

Mutual collective efficacy Trust among neighbors, combined with willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, especially to supervise children and maintain public order.