

Roadblocks to the Implementation of Problem-Oriented Policing in Montevideo

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PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING IN MONTEVIDEO

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## PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING IN MONTEVIDEO

### **Abstract**

In the broad context of Uruguay's police reform, the Ministry of Interior is implementing a pilot Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) program in Montevideo since late 2012. This research examined the obstacles confronted by the program throughout its implementation. Using a grounded theory approach, qualitative data was collected through 20 semi-structured interviews with members of the Uruguay National Police (UNP) of different ranks. Findings were analyzed based on the following categories: a) contextual factors; b) theoretical and practical inaccuracies; c) characteristics, skills and actions of project managers; d) resistance and motivational issues; e) resources; f) external support and cooperation. Consistent with research conducted on POP in other settings, findings suggest the program confronted a diverse set of obstacles over its implementation corresponding to all but one of the proposed categories. The study concludes with a series of recommendations to inform future POP endeavors by the UNP.

*Keywords:* policing; problem-oriented policing; police reform; organizational change

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**Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Objectives, Research Questions, and Policy Implications .....	2
<b>Literature Review</b> .....	3
The Development of POP .....	4
Effects of POP on Crime and Disorder .....	9
Factors Affecting the Implementation of POP .....	12
The Police Reform in Latin America .....	14
<b>Methods</b> .....	17
Site Selection.....	17
Sampling and Data Analysis .....	20
Limitations of the Study.....	23
<b>Findings</b> .....	24
Contextual Factors .....	30
Theoretical and Practical Inaccuracies.....	36
Characteristics, Skills and Actions of Project Managers .....	44
Resistance and Motivational Issues .....	49
Resources .....	58
External Support and Cooperation .....	61
<b>Discussion and Conclusion</b> .....	63
Recommendations .....	68
<b>References</b> .....	72

## Introduction

Violence has grown in nearly all Latin American countries in the last decades, in contrast to most European countries and the United States, where crime has been decreasing significantly since the 1990s. Lethal violence grew in Latin America between 2000 and 2010, a decade in which more than one million people died because of criminal violence (Arias et al., 2013). Moreover, seven out of eight countries in Central America (i.e., Honduras, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Guatemala) and five out of ten in South America (i.e., Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Bolivia), display homicide rates higher than 10 per 100,000 people, a figure considered “epidemic” by the World Health Organization (Arias et al. 2013; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013). In contrast, latest figures show a homicide rate of 5 per 100,000 people for the United States (FBI, 2015), and lower than 1 per 100,000 people for most European countries (Eurostat, 2014). In addition to homicide, the escalation of serious crimes such as kidnapping and extortion has increased the negative perception of insecurity by Latin American citizens, turning insecurity into the main concern for most of the countries in the continent (Lagos & Dammert, 2012).

The failure of law enforcement agencies to protect Latin American citizens greatly aggravates the situation. Most Latin American countries (with the exceptions of Uruguay and Chile) show low levels of trust in law enforcement agencies, which impacts their effectiveness and legitimacy (Galiani & Jaitman, 2016). In addition, Latin American criminal justice systems exhibit serious institutional weaknesses. The politicization of courts has limited the impartiality of justice and the Rule of Law, which also contributes to corruption in all spheres of Latin American criminal justice systems (Arias et al., 2013). The latter has also indirectly contributed to increasing the number of citizens seeking extralegal justice, which has very negative implications for democracy, human rights, and security.

In this context, the reform of law enforcement agencies is essential to achieve desirable levels of security and trust. Many Latin American governments have implemented reforms to increase police efficiency and improve relations with their citizens (Frühling, 2009). The police reform in this continent is a response to the general criticism to the abuse of force and authority exercised by police agencies (Tudela, 2007), the growth of corruption inside them, and its militarization (Frühling, 2009). Although reforms differ substantially from one country to the other, Latin American governments have attempted to increase citizen's trust towards law enforcement by bringing the police closer to them. To that end, one of the strategies pursued by governments has been to strengthen and extend community policing (Frühling, 2003). One of the countries that followed these steps is Uruguay through the implementation of a Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) program started in 2012 (del Castillo, Fraiman, & Rogers, 2014). This initiative was framed in a broader context of an ambitious police reform undertaken by the Ministry of Interior (MI), the governmental institution responsible for the supervision of the Uruguayan National Police (UNP). This study will examine in depth the experience of the UNP implementing POP.

### **Objectives, Research Questions, and Policy Implications**

The present research will focus on a POP pilot program implemented by the MI starting in 2012, based at the 25<sup>th</sup> police precinct of Montevideo, the Uruguayan capital city. The characteristics of the program will be presented and the obstacles it confronted during its implementation analyzed. The research process will be guided by two questions:

**RQ1:** How was the POP program implemented by the police personnel of the 25<sup>th</sup> precinct of Montevideo?

**RQ2:** Which were the main obstacles confronted by the POP program during its implementation?

Data for this research will be analyzed using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), an inductive approach by which theory is built upon data through a process of rigorous analysis and applying a comparative perspective. Grounded theory allows the researcher to gain the necessary flexibility needed to conduct exploratory studies such as this one. It is hoped that this work will help the authorities of the MI and police administrators to understand how the Uruguayan Police responded to organizational change, as well as to design future POP policies and programs suited to minimize potential obstacles during its implementation.

The present study will be organized as follows. A review of the literature related to the development of POP in police agencies and some of the most relevant research findings associated with this model is presented below. Next, a framework to assess the obstacles frequently faced by POP initiatives will be proposed, followed by a brief outline of the police reform in Latin America. The following section will discuss the methodology of the study, including site selection, sampling, and data analysis. Then, findings of this study will be presented. Finally, the last section will present its conclusions and recommendations aligned with the study's findings.

### **Literature Review**

POP has a rich history in policing. Originally proposed by Herman Goldstein (1979), the POP movement began as an alternative to the focus on organization and management that characterized police departments of the time. Police agencies, Goldstein argued, suffered from a "means over ends" syndrome characterized by an emphasis on compliance through command and control. According to the author, POP implied a change in the logic of police agencies, from law enforcement only towards a problem-solving logic that eventually would prevent crimes from happening. Since then, POP has been used by police agencies to address a wide range of crime problems such as violent crime (Braga et al., 1999), thefts and burglary

(Eck & Spelman, 1987), street-level drug crimes (Hope, 1994) and disorder (Weisburd & Green, 1995), to name a few. As of 2000, police agencies in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, South Africa and Scandinavian countries had engaged in a wide range of problem-solving efforts (Scott, 2000). In contrast, POP has been rarely used to reduce crime in Latin America. This is not surprising since the efforts to reform and modernize police forces are still very recent in the continent. By the same token, the researcher-practitioner collaboration where academics and police departments implement and evaluate evidence-based practices is rare for Latin America as well (Sain, 2009). As for Uruguay is concerned, criminal justice researchers have mostly focused their efforts on studying crime focusing on “macro”, statistical approaches (e.g. Paternain, 2008; Paternain & Sanseviero, 2008), juvenile violence and juvenile offenders (e.g. Abal, Cheroni, & Leopold, 2005; Fraiman & Rossal, 2009; Trajtenberg, 2004; Vigna, 2011) and corrections (e.g. Rojido, Vigna, & Trajtenberg, 2014), to name a few. Surprisingly, despite the role of the police as one of the key agents of the criminal justice system, it has remained unexplored by Uruguayan scholars.

This review will first frame the development of POP in the history of American policing, delving into its early applications. Second, it will examine some of the most relevant research findings associated with its effects on disorder and crime. Third, a framework to analyze the obstacles confronted on the implementation of POP by police agencies will be provided. Finally, the fourth section will present some of the major police reforms that have taken place in Latin America over the last decades.

### **The Development of POP**

For the most part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the principles embedded in the POP philosophy were strange to American police agencies. During the 1920's and early 1930's, law enforcement was characterized by reactive methods to address crime, organizational

centralization and remote relationships with communities (Kelling & Moore, 1998). Given the extent of police corruption that had characterized police agencies over the preceding decades, an independency of law enforcement agencies from politics was sought, being the law and police professionalism considered the basis for police legitimacy. As a result, police agencies became law enforcement agencies mainly concerned with crime control and criminal apprehension. The extensive use of patrol cars and the installation of 911 systems to ensure a rapid response to crime, reflected these principles. A centralized organization helped to extend this philosophy through supervision mechanisms and bureaucratic control. In consequence, the police moved to relate in a professional and distant manner with citizens, as police officers were required to be neutral and impartial. In addition, the professional the citizen role in crime control was redefined, with citizens understood as "passive recipients of professional crime control services" (Kelling & Moore, 1988, p. 6).

It was not until the 1960s, amidst civil unrest and rioting, when American policing started to change its standards. As noted by Walker (cited in Kenney, n.d), the increasing tensions between police and communities, together with the unprecedented increase in crime rates during that time, court decisions and civil litigation, produced significant changes to American policing. At the same time, three influential studies revealed the ineffectiveness of the police strategies used at the time to reduce crime. First, the findings of the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment showed that random, routine preventive patrol – which dominated police agencies at the time – was ineffective in reducing crime and citizen fear to crime (Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, & Brown, 1974). Second, the Wilmington Split-Force Experiment found that responding to calls for service as traditionally carried out, neither had a successful effect in crime fighting, pointing instead to the effectiveness of directed police patrol activities (Tien, Simon, & Larson, 1978). Unfortunately, the study also exhibited a lack of knowledge on crime prevention on the side of police agencies. Finally, the Rand Study of

Detectives concluded that the success of police investigations was seldom linked to police investigative skills alone, but instead a result of police-citizen collaboration (Greenwood, 1979). These studies questioned the effectiveness of policing as conducted at the time, moving police agencies to seek collaboration with citizens to solve community crime problems (Kenney, n.d.).

In a context of increased scrutiny and criticism towards police agencies, an influential article set the basis of POP. It was Goldstein's *Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach* (1979), at the core of which laid the idea that successful crime prevention was linked to a focus on problems rather than on incidents. Police departments, Goldstein argued, suffered from a "means over ends" syndrome, being overly concerned with their organization and management, instead of focusing on the underlying problems that produced crime. By problems, he meant "the incredibly broad range of troublesome situations that prompt citizens to turn to the police" (Goldstein, 1979, p. 242), such as residential burglaries, street robbery, domestic violence, speeding, vandalism, runaway children and even fear to crime. His proposition involved a shift from a reactive, incident-oriented approach in policing, to a proactive, preventive approach that suggested that the key to crime reduction was often found beyond the limits of the criminal justice system. Once problems were identified, crime could be reduced through partnerships between the police with other public agencies, communities and the private sector, which would work together to conduct thorough analyses of problems and implement tailored responses to address them (Goldstein, 1979). Goldstein's proposal, which defied the foundations over which policing had been conducted over the previous decades, rapidly gained popularity among police departments, revealing the magnitude of the crisis in American policing by the time.

The first experiments with POP took place in Madison, Wisconsin (1981), followed by the London and Surrey police departments in England (1982), Baltimore (1983) and

Newport News, Virginia (1984) (Scott, 2000). A major contribution to POP was introduced in a report to the National Institute of Justice by Eck and Spelman (1987). The authors described what will become known as the SARA method, an acronym that stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment. SARA was a straightforward, easy-to-understand, step-by-step method to conduct POP, that directed police departments to identify and define problems in precise and useful terms (Scanning), collect information to conduct a thorough analysis (Analysis), work with citizens, local businesses and agencies (public and private) to identify and implement adequate solutions (Response) and evaluate the impact of such efforts (Assessment). Eck and Spelman (1987) documented how the Newport News Police Department (NNPD) reduced crime through SARA. For example, the NNPD identified burglaries in an apartment complex as a problem to be solved (scanning). One of NNPD's detectives decided to interview residents, who expressed discontent not only with burglaries but also with the physical deterioration of the complex, which was found to be related to each other (analysis). The NNPD worked then with the apartment manager and other city agencies to clean up the area, removing abandoned cars, filling potholes and sweeping streets (response). Later on, the police department encouraged residents to take better care of the neighborhood, resulting in a 35% drop in robbery in less than one year (assessment) (Eck & Spelman, 1987). SARA quickly became the most popular method to carry out POP, but not the only one. In the UK, for example, where legislation demands police departments to engage in partnerships with citizens to prevent crime, several POP methods were developed to highlight the role of partnerships, all of them with different degrees of popularity and success (Sidebottom & Tilley, 2011).

Since its introduction in 1979, POP has been adopted by police departments all over the world, though in different ways. As a result of this differential application, POP is often confused with community policing or other policing models. As one scholar puts it, it is

frequent to hear in police training sessions claims such as “Oh, we’ve doing community policing [or problem-oriented policing] for years; we just didn’t call it that” (Scott, 2000, p. 36). While it is true that POP and community policing share many characteristics, one does not equal the other. Goldstein made a distinction between POP and community policing. While the first emphasizes societal problems that the police are responsible for addressing, the second is focused on engaging communities in the policing process. In the POP framework, the collaboration between citizens and the police depends on the characteristics of the addressed problem, whereas in community policing such collaboration is defined in a broader sense (Scott, 2000). This and other general comparisons between the two types of policing are summarized in Table 1.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Problem-Oriented Policing</b>	<b>Community Policing</b>
Primary emphasis	Substantive social problems within police mandate	Engaging the community in the policing process
When police and community collaborate	Determined on a problem by problem basis	Always or nearly always
Emphasis on problem analysis	Highest priority given to thorough analysis	Encouraged, but less important than community collaboration
Preference for responses	Strong preference that alternatives to criminal law enforcement be explored	Preference for collaborative responses with community
Role for police in organizing and mobilizing community	Advocated only if warranted within the context of the specific problem being addressed	Emphasizes strong role for police
Importance of geographic decentralization of police and continuity of officer assignment to community	Preferred, but not essential	Essential
Degree to which police share decision-making authority with community	Strongly encouraged input from community while preserving ultimate decision-making authority to police	Emphasizes sharing decision-making authority with community
Emphasis on officers’ skills	Emphasizes intellectual and analytical skills	Emphasizes interpersonal skills
View of the role or mandate of police	Encourages broad, but not unlimited role for police, stresses limited capacities of police and guards against creating unrealistic expectations of police	Encourages expansive role for police to achieve ambitious social objectives

*Note.* From “Problem-oriented policing: Reflections on the first 20 years” by M. Scott, 2000, Washington, DC:

US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, p. 99.

In spite of its differential applications, the widespread adoption of POP –mostly by US and UK police departments– is backed by research evidence about its effectiveness. The following section will examine some of the most influential research on the impact of POP on crime and disorder.

### **Effects of POP on Crime and Disorder**

After its inception by Goldstein in 1979, POP expanded across police agencies in the U.S. and the UK (for a synthesis of the development of POP in the UK see Tilley and Read, 2000) and, to a lesser extent, to other parts of the world. Linked to such expansion, a growing body of research conducted over the last decades has reported positive effects of POP on crime and disorder. Nevertheless, many of these studies do not meet the criteria of randomized experimental designs, considered today the most reliable design to assess policy effectiveness. This is not surprising, mostly for two reasons. First, most of the early research on POP was conducted before the standardization of the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods (MSSM) in criminology and criminal justice research, which guides researchers on assessing the strength of scientific studies (Sherman et al., 1998). The MSSM ranks research designs according to their internal validity, placing randomized experimental designs at the top of the scale, and weaker research designs on lower levels. Since the introduction of the MSSM, randomized experimental designs have become the standard to assess policy effectiveness. Second, because, as Skogan and Frydl observe (2004), POP is virtually untestable. Since the basic proposition of POP – that police should pay attention to problems rather than to incidents – is normative, there is no evidence to test such assertion. In other words, it is very hard for the researcher to know whether if the police are actually focusing on problems or incidents.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, support to the hypothesis that POP is a useful policing strategy to reduce different types of crime and disorder has come from several quasi-

experimental studies. First, Eck and Spelman's (1987) quasi-experiment in Newport News, Virginia, concluded that POP can reduce robbery, burglary, and car theft. Consistent with these findings, POP has been associated to violent, property and vehicle-related crime reductions in Jersey City (Mazerolle, Ready, Terrill, & Waring, 2000). Second, POP has also proved successful to reduce disorder in informal drug markets in St. Louis, Missouri by Hope (1994). Drug-related activity was also reported to have decreased after a POP intervention in Rockford, Illinois (Corsaro, Brunson, & McGarrell, 2013). Furthermore, POP was linked to reductions in homicides in Richmond, California (White, Fyfe, Campbell, & Goldkamp, 2003), as well as to decreases in vandalism, alcohol and drug use in public spaces first in Pennsylvania, (Baker & Wolfe, 2003) and later in Surrey, England (Tuffin, Morris, & Poole, 2006). Finally, a randomized quasi-experiment conducted by Braga, Hureau, and Papachristos (2014) in Boston reported reduced criminal activity in violent crime hot spots subject to a POP intervention. The study compared POP hot spots with an equivalent control group of non-treated hot spots. The authors report statistically significant reductions in violent crimes at the treatment hot spots when contrasted to comparison hot spots (Braga et al., 2014).

While quasi-experimental results are relevant, they were not obtained from randomized experimental designs, considered the golden rule of criminal justice research (Gideon, 2012). However, a number of experimental studies have supported these findings. For instance, Weisburd & Green (1995) randomly assigned officers of the Jersey City Police Department Narcotics Squad to work in control and treatment drug dealing hot spots. Detectives performed unsystematic, arrest-oriented enforcement at control hot spots, and POP at hot spots. The latter collected information about the physical, social and criminal characteristics of hot spots, meeting with business owners and residents to enhance their analysis. Then, implemented responses consisting on different intensive crackdowns

strategies that depended on the analysis' results. These were later monitored over a period of five months. Lower levels of disorder were reported in treatment hot spots at the end of the study (Weisburd & Green, 1995).

Similar findings were reported by another experiment conducted by Braga et al. (1999). The authors undertook a similar approach to Weisburd and Green, examining the effect of POP on violent crime hot spots in Jersey City. The authors identified 24 hot spots of high violent crime activity and matched them into twelve pairs. Then, officers from the Jersey City Police Department were randomly assigned to work on treatment and control hot spots. Treatment hot spots received a POP treatment, whereas arbitrary patrol and routine follow-up investigations were conducted at control hot spots. Offices working at treatment hot spots analyzed official data sources and discussed problems with community members, implementing then 28 types of responses across treatment places, which were then assessed individually. The researchers examined citizen calls for service and reported criminal incidents for a six-month pre-intervention and post-intervention periods, finding reductions in different crimes across the treatment hot spots, in contrast with control hot spots (Braga et al., 1999).

Meanwhile, crime reductions in hot spots of violent crime were reported in Jacksonville, Florida by an experimental study conducted by Taylor, Koper, and Woods (2011). The authors randomly assigned hot spots to receive either a POP strategy, directed-saturation patrol or a control condition. Ninety days after the intervention, POP hot spots presented a 33% reduction in street violence, unlike the directed-saturation patrol hot spots, which was not associated with a reduction in violent crime (Taylor, Koper, & Woods, 2011).

Finally, a meta-analysis that examined experimental and quasi-experimental POP studies involving control groups was consistent with the findings outlined above (Weisburd, Telep, Hinkle, & Eck, 2010). Relying on 10 studies that covered problems ranging from

parolee recidivism to violent crimes and disorder in informal drug markets, this study concluded that POP is an effective model to ameliorate broadly defined crime and disorder problems. However, researchers lament that, despite the widespread popularity of POP and the strong investment by government and police agencies in it, there is a relatively low number of high-quality studies that have linked POP to desirable outcomes on crime.

### **Factors Affecting the Implementation of POP**

As the research questions of this study deal with the actual implementation of POP in Montevideo, it is relevant to examine the available literature on factors that determine the effective implementation of these types of programs. Scott (2006) provides a useful framework to assess the failure or success of POP initiatives. The author identifies five factors that can affect POP interventions:

1. Characteristics, skills, and actions of project managers. This has to do with leadership, personal support and engagement from police executives and administrators, continuity of the program, ownership of the initiative by the personnel, effective communication of project objectives and directives, and managerial and technical competence.
2. Availability and sufficiency of the resources necessary for implementation (i.e. finances, authority, and staffing).
3. Support and cooperation external to the police agency. This is related to the degree to which the initiative is supported from outside the police agency. Community support, media support, the existence of organizations capable of helping the implementation of responses, fortuitous timing and congruence of perspectives and objectives inform this factor.
4. Supporting evidence. This has to do with the existence of hard data to justify the response.

5. Complexity of the implementation. Ease of execution and absence of delays in the implementation of responses are factors that determine this complexity.

This is a simple and straightforward framework for identifying factors that could affect the success or failure of POP programs. Moreover, studies have found how some of these factors have actually affected the implementation of these programs in different settings such as the UK (Sidebottom & Tilley, 2011) Norway (Sollund, 2007) and Australia (Mazerolle, Darroch, & White, 2013). Despite its utility, Scott's framework is subject to be complemented by additional factors. For example, in a report that examined problem-solving programs in England, Read and Tilley (2000) found that weaknesses in the application of SARA (or PROCTOR, a similar POP method applied by some UK police agencies) are plausible to hinder the success of POP responses. The authors identify the following types of weaknesses to affect POP interventions: a) weak problem identification (Scanning); b) weak problem analysis (Analysis); c) failure to find out what to do (Response); d) inadequate work with partners (Analysis and Response); e) weaknesses in implementation (Response); f) weaknesses in lessons drawn from previous experience (Analysis and Response).

Complementing Read and Tilley's findings, in an assessment of the implementation of a POP program in Colorado, Maguire, Uchida, and Hassell (2015) point to inconsistencies related to the application of the SARA method and the day-to-day work of police officers, which can also influence the implementation of POP programs. The authors found that inaccuracy on problem identification, inadequate selection of partners, inconsistent record keeping of responses, and lack of assessment of responses can also affect the success or failure of POP initiatives.

The analysis of the obstacles confronted by the Uruguayan Police implementing POP in Montevideo will be partially informed by Scott (2006), Read and Tilley (2000) and Maguire, Uchida, and Hassell (2015) frameworks. Nonetheless, given the unique nature of

the Uruguay experience, the analysis of findings will go beyond the scope of these frameworks. Accordingly, six categories for analysis will be explored in depth in the Findings section in order to assess the POP intervention at hand.

### **The Police Reform in Latin America**

Before turning to the analysis of the Uruguay experience with POP, a quick look at the recent police reforms that took place in some Latin American countries is pertinent to frame the Uruguayan case into context. Moved by institutional change and deteriorating social conditions (Tudela, 2007), several Latin American countries engaged in police reforms over the last decades, aimed to consolidate democratic police forces, increase accountability and professionalization (Frühling, 2003). At least three factors have influenced these reforms. First, the democratic processes that took place in most countries of the region during the 1980s and 1990s exhibited widespread police corruption and abuse of authority. Second, violent crime increased in Latin America in the 1990s increased fear of crime and victimization. Finally, Neoliberal reforms stimulated by Latin American governments since the 1980s induced organizational change in public agencies by limiting its size, promoting privatization and decentralization, and increasing public accountability (Frühling, 2003). Following Ungar (2012), a set of common factors to police reforms in the region can be identified. First, the importance given to decentralization, simplified hierarchies, the professionalization of human resources and implementation of oversight and disciplinary mechanisms aimed to improve efficiency and accountability. Second, a reform of criminal justice systems as a whole aimed to speed up sentencing procedures and increase transparency. Finally, the introduction of community policing to empower citizens and promote the collaboration of law enforcement with the public and other agencies. Yet, despite the widespread embracement of community policing principles by Latin American governments, few POP initiatives have been undertaken by police agencies in this continent.

A brief synthesis of some the initiatives undertaken by Latin American governments is presented below, with a focus on those subjected to rigorous evaluations.

Some of the earliest reforms took place in Central America, in a context of civil wars, human rights violations by the police, and widespread corruption. In the 1990s, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras engaged in ambitious police reforms characterized by a) civilianization; b) decentralization; c) increased internal controls and transparency; e) community engagement. As a result, police legitimacy increased, while corruption and human rights violations by the police decreased (Neild, 2002). Nonetheless, while displaying elements of community policing –such as decentralization and community engagement–, these reforms did not involve POP. More recently, Guatemala launched a community policing project in the municipality of Villa Nueva (Chinchilla, 2004). Yet, neither this involved POP.

In South American, one of the first countries to engage in community policing was Colombia with a program launched in Bogotá in 1998. This program emphasized proximity policing, foot and bicycle patrol, interagency collaboration, mediation and conflict resolution. Interestingly, this initiative involved some elements of SARA, such as problem identification, analysis and implementation of collaboratively responses (Frühling, 2003). Nevertheless, reported deficiencies in police records, the responses implemented and their outcomes, hindered the assessment of responses, constituting alone a shortcoming in terms of problem-solving (Llorente, 2004).

A well-documented experience of police reform is that of Chile. The *Plan Cuadrante* (Quadrant Plan), a proximity policing strategy introduced in 1999, consisted on assigning officers to quadrants (or beats) in which they patrolled on foot and engaged with relationships with communities (Frühling, 2003). The *Plan Cuadrante* was reported to have improved the

public image of the police (Frühling, 2009). Still, while incorporating elements of community policing in a broad sense, the *Plan Cuadrante* does not involve POP.

Finally, another South American country whose police reform is well-documented is Brazil. Two major programs have been evaluated; one in São Paulo and the other in Belo Horizonte. The first, introduced in 1997, increased foot patrol, set up community police precincts in neighborhoods, launched drug-reduction initiatives and promoted school-based crime prevention. While the program fostered the interaction of the police with the public, in practice officers seldom engaged in it (de Mesquita Neto, 2004). The second, launched in the year 2000, deployed police patrol in hot spots and created community-based councils to promote citizen participation in security policies (Beato, 2001). While the impact of these councils on crime rates is very hard to measure, an evaluation concluded that neighborhoods with active citizen participation registered reduced violent crime rates (Beato, 2004). However, as most of its Latin American counterparts, Brazil's efforts did not involve POP.

Uruguay is one of the few Latin American countries that engaged in a systematic problem-solving effort. The country is not alien to the crime increase in Latin America. Crime has been growing in this country since the late 80s, registering records over the last decade for different crimes (Ministerio del Interior, n.d.). Yet, Uruguay remains one of the safest countries in the continent. Latest victimization data place Uruguay in a safe 14<sup>th</sup> place among 18 Latin American countries, with a victimization rate of 30% for the year 2012, contrasting with a 5<sup>th</sup> place when the perception of crime is considered. Fear of crime in Uruguay is high, with 41% of Uruguayans believing that crime is the most important problem that the country faces (Lagos & Dammert, 2012). Such increase in crime and related citizen's concern about it has worried the Government. Moved by these trends, Uruguay has undertaken an ambitious police reform started in 2010 that covered several areas of improvement. One of the strategies involved in this reform was a pilot POP program aimed to

operate in three precincts of Montevideo. Details of this program are presented in the following section.

### **Methods**

This study consists of a process evaluation of the PGISC. As defined by Fratello, Kapur, and Chasan (2013), "[a] process evaluation is an assessment to ensure that a program is operating the way it was intended to". Process evaluations often look at questions like: what and how is implemented? how does the intervention produce change? how does context affect implementation and outcomes? how did the program vary from the original plan? (Moore et al., 2015). This work will examine this type of questions, but will not focus on the whole program (PGISC), but only on its implementation in one precinct (25th) and on the implementation of one of its actions: the POP intervention. The methodology of this research is outlined below.

### **Site Selection**

Uruguay's police reform was aimed to improve police effectiveness, increase transparency and accountability, professionalize the police and bring it closer to communities. One of the components of this reform has been the implementation of a POP pilot program to be implemented in Montevideo with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The PGISC (which in Spanish stands for Local Public Safety Integrated Management Program) was a five million dollars IDB loan approved in 2012 to operate in the 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> police precincts of Montevideo throughout five consecutive years (2012-2016). The Program consisted of two components. The first involved the deployment of POP in the mentioned police precincts. The second, the creation of a network for social prevention of violence for adolescents and juveniles, integrated by different social protection agencies. Although the Program was designed to operate in three precincts, the first and most comprehensive deployment was achieved in precinct 25<sup>th</sup>, spanning since late

2012 to the present date. This study is aimed to examine how was POP implemented in precinct 25<sup>th</sup>, as well as exploring the obstacles confronted by the program throughout its operative years in this Precinct. Before elaborating further on these matters, some context on the creation of precinct 25<sup>th</sup> and on the POP deployment strategy fueled by the MI into this Precinct will be useful.

Precinct 25<sup>th</sup> was inaugurated on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the official Day of the Police in Uruguay, after the partition of former precinct 16<sup>th</sup> in two police stations: the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>, which was left with half its previous jurisdiction. In 2011, a year before PGISC was launched, the 16<sup>th</sup> was one of the worst precincts in terms of crime and violence in Montevideo. Crime reports data for 2011 show it was the second worst precinct in terms of homicide counts in the city (14 homicides), the first in robbery (1390 robberies), the third in theft (3850 thefts) and the second in domestic violence (148 domestic violence incidents) (Ministerio del Interior, 2012). After the partition of the 16<sup>th</sup>, the 25<sup>th</sup> still included two of the Montevideo neighborhoods with historically highest victimization rates in Montevideo: *Bella Italia* and *Punta de Rieles* (Riella and Viscardi, 2002). In this context, the 25<sup>th</sup> was launched with high expectations, and with the goal of reducing crime rates and fear to crime in the area. With that aim, the MI outlined a strategy that involved the use of the 25<sup>th</sup> as a “lab precinct” where to test different initiatives.

First, the 25<sup>th</sup> would operate as a “school precinct” in which cadets of the Police Academy would acquire field experience before graduation through mentoring by experienced officers and carrying out real police work. Second, this Precinct would host the PGISC. The general goal of this program was to reduce violent crime in Montevideo by targeting prevention and control actions in precincts 15, 19 and 25. Specifically, the program aimed to increase the effectiveness of the police in crime prevention and clearance in these three precincts, and to rehabilitate high-risk juvenile offenders between the ages of 12 and 17.

The program brought with it two novelties for the Uruguayan police. First, the implementation of POP, which had no precedents in the Uruguay Police. Second, a new role for the Police, which implied having it working with juvenile offenders not to lock them up behind bars, but to help them rehabilitate by diversion to social programs. These two initiatives –the “school precinct” and the PGISC–, together with the political pressure and high expectations of success, supposed a serious challenge for a recently created police station. While examining these initiatives in detail would be interesting, this study comprises only the first component of the PGISC (the “POP component”), leaving aside the second component of juvenile prevention as well as the “school precinct” initiative.

In order to achieve its goals, the PGISC was intended to operate as follows. The program would depend on the Office of the Undersecretary of Interior, to be supervised by a team of technicians with background in the social sciences (myself included). This team would oversee the whole implementation process, working together with the 25<sup>th</sup> precinct’s command team to ensure that actions were carried forward as intended. This organizational structure entailed a singular structural position of the 25<sup>th</sup> within the UNP, as the Precinct would depend at the same time on Montevideo Police Department (MPD)<sup>1</sup> and the MI, which would have direct influence over the Precinct’s administration. As it will be explained in the following sections, this unique structural position would become problematic.

A set of actions was outlined by the program to complement POP’s implementation. First, training in problem-solving, crime analysis and criminal investigations was to be delivered by internationally renowned centers of academic excellence (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, University of Cambridge and Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science) to a total of 850 cops from the Montevideo Police Department (MPD). Training would be

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<sup>1</sup> While having national jurisdiction, the UNP is divided into 19 police departments. The MPD is one of these, and its jurisdiction is Montevideo city.

accompanied by a series of actions at the program's precincts: a) the creation of precinct-based crime analysis units; b) the design of a code of ethics for police personnel to foster accountability; and c) the modernization of the precinct's outlook and overall architectural design.

The 25<sup>th</sup> precinct started with a total of 78 cops of different ranks, including five middle managers (*oficiales*) plus the Precinct's commander (*comisario*)<sup>2</sup>. Considering the average number of cops per precinct in Montevideo was between 40 and 60, resources seemed enough to carry out the implementation. What is more, a promise of the MI of providing additional resources and prevent the Precinct's cops from being assigned to other units, served as a guarantee for the adequate implementation of the activities.

### **Sampling and Data Analysis**

This is a qualitative, exploratory study that relies on a grounded theory approach to analyze data. Exploratory studies are suitable to objects that are not well-known or documented in the specialized literature since they are not guided by rigid hypotheses that restrain the research (Gideon, 2012). This type of studies enables the researcher to familiarize with the field, as well as identify future research questions and techniques to be examined in the future. In this case, an exploratory design is adequate given the lack of studies about the police reform in Latin America, specifically in Uruguay.

The sample for this study consisted of police officers involved in the PGISC implementation between 2012 and 2017. Interviews were conducted with individuals with different police ranks (i.e., front line, middle managers and commanders), as well as with police executives and administrators who had influence over the program's implementation. The sample population of this study was obtained through purposeful sampling. This

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<sup>2</sup> Uruguay's police-rank model does not differ too much from the U.S. model. However, it was decided to keep the original Spanish terms in order to respect local terminology. As for the terms used in this research, it is enough to say that a *comisario* is equivalent to a captain or commander, an *oficial* equals a lieutenant, a *cabo* is equal to a corporal, and an *agente* equals a trooper or police officer.

nonprobability-based sampling technique is adequate for studies that do not aim to generalize to a larger population, but to ensure a diverse simple group that ensures variation on responses and individual characteristics (Gideon, 2012). Variation in terms of age, gender, educational level, work roles, length of service, rank, and other individual characteristics was sought in order to get differing perspectives about the POP intervention.

Initially, the MI provided the researcher with a sampling frame with names, ranks and contact information for the 140 officers who worked in the 25<sup>th</sup> precinct between 2012 and 2017. Purposive sampling was used to identify officers with different degrees of involvement with the program, as well as some who, although not directly involved in the program, exhibited strong resistance to it and whose testimonies could shed light on some of the obstacles that emerged across the implementation of the program. The resulting sample consisted of ten *agentes*, three *oficiales*, three *comisarios*, and four police administrators and MI officials involved in the program's implementation. The sample of 20 individuals is consistent with sample size recommendations for grounded theory methodology (Cresswell, 2012).

Data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews carried out during the months of June and September 2017. Interviews are a useful source of information when it comes to collecting information on topics that cannot be easily observed, such as police attitudes or police activity (Gideon & Moskos, 2012). A protocol comprised of 17 open-ended questions was used as a tool to guide the interviews for this study (see Appendix A). The sample protocol was adapted to each interview, depending on the interviewee police rank and his/her degree of involvement in the program. No questionnaires used in previous research of this kind could be identified, and therefore the questionnaire was developed by the researcher on his own. To assure validity and reliability, the questionnaire was pilot tested with three *agentes* before being administered to the rest of the sample. Pilot testing is

important as enables refining and developing research instruments (in this case the questionnaire), assess the degree of research bias, framing questions, collecting background information and adapting research procedures (Cresswell, 2012).

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were informed that they would not receive direct benefits from their participation, aside from contributing to the effective implementation of security policies in the future by the MI. All participants willing to take part in the study were asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B) immediately after their recruitment. Interviews were conducted in different settings, according to the preference of the interviewed subject, and were audio-recorded by the researcher. Steps were taken to ensure confidentiality of data and protect the subjects' identities.

As previously noted, data were collected and analyzed using grounded theory, an inductive process by which theory emerges from rigorous data analysis and collection. Grounded theory, originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), provides the researcher with a flexible method to approach topics not enough explored and for which a theory has not yet developed. The relevance of the grounded theory methodology for this study is linked to its suitability for conducting exploratory studies, in particular for organizational research (Glaser, 1992). The first stage of fieldwork for this study consisted of identifying the broad categories of information linked to the study phenomenon during interviews, then breaking them into subcategories. Next, connections were drawn between these subcategories relying on data taken from interviews. Six categories of analysis were defined according to Scott's (2006), Read and Tilley's (2000), and Maguire, Uchida and Hassell's (2015) frameworks, as well as from interview data: 1) Contextual factors; 2) Theoretical and practical inaccuracies; 3) Characteristics, skills and actions of project managers; 4) Resistance and motivational issues; 5) Resources; 6) External support and cooperation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are some limitations to the present study. The first is related to the used sampling technique. Purposeful sampling presents some deficiencies. As Atkinson and Flint (2001) note, purposive technique presents representativeness issues linked to the absence of randomization when selecting the elements of the sample, and may result in biased samples as the further selection of elements will rely on the initial sample. As a consequence, purposive sampling will over-emphasize cohesive social networks and the sample will be biased towards the more cooperative participants of the study. At the same time, a process of "masking" may take place, by which subjects protect friends and colleagues by not referring them for fear of negative consequences (Erickson, 1979). On the other hand, purposeful sampling allows the researcher accessing hidden populations which may not be accessed through other sampling methods (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). The hidden population of this study would be officers reluctant to share their opinions about the POP program for fear to negative consequences such as punishment or retaliation by their superiors, or stigmatization coming from their peer officers.

A second limitation has to do with the researcher's bias. Prior to conducting this study, I was involved in the PGISC's oversight, which led me to engage in frequent contacts with officers working on it. Therefore, my own personal opinions about the actors involved in the execution of the program, the problems that emerged during its implementation and its outcomes, could threaten the objectivity of this study. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that research design, interviews, and data analysis were developed with a serious commitment to the necessary reflexivity to achieve the greatest possible degree of rigor and objectivity. What is more, if not being for my previous contacts at the MI, my own previous experience overseeing the POP program, and thorough knowledge of the program's characteristics, this study is unlikely to have achieved desired levels of detail and accuracy of findings.

### **Findings**

The POP intervention in precinct 25 can be divided into three stages. The first (Stage I) starts with the creation of the Precinct on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012, spanning until early 2014. This phase can be characterized by an attempt to reduce crime rates within the jurisdiction and the use of the 25<sup>th</sup> as a “praxis school” for cadets. There was an urge to organize the Precinct’s administration to make sure the programs implemented (“praxis school” and PGISC) worked according to what was planned. Despite these efforts, POP was never fully implemented at this stage. Two factors seem to have delayed the implementation. First, the initial urge to organize a newly created police station to successfully reduce criminality in a high-crime area, linked to the unreasonable amount of administrative work that a police station is required to carry out in Montevideo, seem to have delayed POP from being actually carried forward and embraced by the Precinct’s staff. Second, officers from the 25<sup>th</sup> did not receive training in POP theory and methods until almost a year after its inauguration. The lack of knowledge of POP by the Precinct’s personnel constituted a major obstacle to its full implementation. Thus, two achievements can be identified related to POP during this stage: the training that the staff received in POP’s theory and methods, and the consolidation of a structure within the Precinct towards the future implementation of POP.

A second phase (Stage II) can be demarcated between early 2014 and early 2016, a time when POP was one of the priority programs (if not the most important) of the 25<sup>th</sup>. This period was characterized by a strong drive to set POP in motion and a series of organizational changes towards its full implementation. Simultaneously, this phase was also marked by significant resistance and interpersonal conflicts both internal and external to the Precinct, which rapidly became obstacles to implementing POP. Essentially, the intervention consisted in dividing the territory into 10 beats and assigning two officers to foot patrol at each of these beats, where they were instructed to apply SARA into these beats. However, POP was often

confused by most officers with other types of policing, namely foot patrol or traditional community policing. In addition, frequent interpersonal conflicts among the Precinct's staff interfered with POP's implementation, resulting in a significant number of officers from different ranks to end being transferred to other units, and causing demotivation and disinterest within personnel. At the same time, conflicts between the Precinct's leaders with the unit responsible for its supervision, resulted in the "isolation" of the Precinct in relation to other precincts, limiting external support and cooperation with other police units.

It is worth mentioning that Stage II took place in the middle of an ambitious restructuring of the MPD starting in late 2013. Essentially, the restructure consisted on dismantling the former Direction of Investigations (*Dirección de Investigaciones*), which conducted police criminal investigations in Montevideo, and the former Department of Radio Patrol (*Cuerpo de Radio Patrulla*), which deployed patrol units citywide and responded to emergency calls. These units were re-organized into four "zones" with territorial jurisdiction, plus a fifth Zone that nucleated support units and minor programs. These five zones acted as small police departments within the MPD, overseeing investigations, patrol and the work of the police precincts inside their jurisdictions. Whereas the restructure helped the implementation of programs and improved general police performance, it weakened police stations in two ways. First, the concentration of organizational command and responsibilities into zones left precincts without a clear role in the new organizational structure. With patrol, investigations and precinct's oversight concentrated into zones, police stations were almost concerned only with registering crime reports and doing administrative paperwork. Second – and linked to the former –, most human and material resources needed to strengthen the zones were largely taken from police precincts, leaving them with few resources to do their work.

In the middle of this process, precinct 25 did not operate as any other precinct. It had different responsibilities than other precincts and was intentionally "blinded" by the MI,

which prevented resources from being taken from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the zones. As a consequence, the MPD's restructure had unexpected negative consequences for the implementation of POP, since it left the 25<sup>th</sup> "isolated" from the remaining 24 precincts of the city. Since the PGISC was precinct-based, POP struggled to keep up its implementation. While the 25<sup>th</sup> succeeded in keeping its resources for the most part of the intervention, as an interviewed *oficial* put it, "MPD was going one way, while the 25<sup>th</sup> was going the other way around" (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 22, 2017).

In spite of the complexity of this context, three POP projects could be successfully completed by 25<sup>th</sup>'s personnel. The first had to do with thefts and threats to local residents, disorder, public drinking, and vandalism by a group of 10 individuals gathered in an abandoned building next to a public park, which was also occupied by some of them. Officers from the 25<sup>th</sup>, in collaboration with community members, the Montevideo City Hall, the Ministry of Social Development and private NGOs, implemented a response that consisted in: a) removing an abandoned vehicle exhibited as a trophy by offenders; b) relocating offenders into public housing; c) rehabilitating offender's individually by NGOs and other organizations. As a result, theft and robberies decreased 14% and 27% respectively in the area. A second problem addressed occurred in an area garbage-covered area, used by offenders to commit robberies and thefts to individuals, many of which gathered at a close bus stop. Working in collaboration with local residents, the Montevideo City Hall and some private companies in the area, the area was cleaned, public lightning improved, and the bus stop removed. This intervention resulted in a 61% decrease of robberies and 27% of thefts. Finally, the third problem consisted of a group of individuals who threatened passersby in an area with garbage and abandoned vehicles, to which police cars did not have access to. The response involved the police working with local residents, the Montevideo City Hall, the Ministry of Social Development and the Public Lightning Company to clean the area,

improve public lighting and remove abandoned cars. As a result, reports of threats in the area were significantly reduced.

Although these responses are good examples of how SARA can reduce crime and disorder, a large number of problems greatly obstructed POP during Stage II. These will be examined in detail in the following sections. In the meantime, it can be said that, overall, Stage II was a period of key changes that consolidated a strategy with no precedents in Uruguay, and contributed to familiarize the UNP with the notion of POP.

In 2016, after months of tension between the 25<sup>th</sup> and other MPD units, conflicts with personnel, and with the MPD's restructure fully operational, precinct 25 started Stage III in March 2016, which extends until the present. Before turning to the specifics of this stage, it is useful to examine the MPD policing strategy to reduce crime in Montevideo in order to understand the context in which this stage takes place. Since early 2015, the MI had been testing the effects of different place-based policing strategies in Montevideo. The outcome of these measures was the creation of PADO (which in Spanish stands for High Operative Dedication Program), a citywide standard hot spot saturation program that quickly became a priority for the MI. PADO deploys teams of three cops to carry out foot patrol in hot street segments. In order to attract new recruits, PADO offers an attractive system of economic incentives that represents approximately a 30% rise in a regular officer's salary, to compensate for rotating shifts and a job that invariably consists on foot patrol, which is not always appealing for Uruguayan officers. Early impact measures soon enough linked PADO to a reduction in robberies and other street crimes for the first time in 40 years, which moved the MI to consolidate it as a priority program. An interviewed individual illustrates the current status of PADO in the UNP: "You better don't touch the PADO or they'll kill you" (Interviewee, personal communication, August 3, 2017). While PADO officers are assigned to patrol the hottest segments of crime in Montevideo, MPD deploys other officers, POP

cops, to places that, although registering crime incidents, are no longer among the hottest. These POP teams are instructed to engage in problem-solving efforts into these “warm” areas, with the goal of complementing the work that PADO officers do in the hottest hot spots.

As will be explained later, this context has supposed two main problems for POP. First, several officers who worked at precincts joined PADO seduced by a better payment. The consequence of this for precinct 25 was the loss of 43% of its workforce. Additionally, a number of vehicles and motorcycles were transferred from the 25<sup>th</sup> to reinforce PADO. Even though the implementation of POP continued at the Precinct, such loss of resources logically impacted the capacity of the 25<sup>th</sup> to carry out POP. Second, this strategy hinders the impact that POP could have over crime in hot spots, as it is being relegated to “warm” places. Research shows that place-based policing strategies that incorporate POP principles in hot spots produce longer-term crime control gains when compared to standard saturation patrol responses (Braga, Papachristos, & Hureau, 2012). What has been concluded by criminal justice research in other parts of the world should not, *a priori*, be different in Montevideo. Nonetheless, by deploying standard foot patrol (PADO) in hot spots and placing POP teams in “warm” hot spots, MPD is not only going against evidence-based practices, but also choosing against POP to reduce crime, and consequently increasing the prestige associated to PADO, which ends up associated with crime reduction.

In this context, precinct 25<sup>th</sup> is currently implementing POP with a workforce of 69 officers, which in practice translates into only three cops actually doing POP. Additionally, following directives of the MPD, these officers are instructed to work in “warm” hot spots, significantly reducing the impact that their responses could have. Despite these obstacles, and although the number of projects implemented has been relatively small, SARA is being adequately implemented, supported by the horizontality and flexibility at the organizational

level that POP requires. Since March 2016 until September 2017, five projects were addressed at the 25<sup>th</sup>, three of which were successfully completed. The first problem involved robbery in motorcycles to individuals by a group of offenders at a commercial area. The response consisted on a standard police operation which, while did not involve the intervention of non-police agencies, allowing the apprehension of the three authors of robberies, resulting in a 75% decrease of incidents in that zone. The second was a problem of armed robbery to individuals in an area. The response involved working with local residents, the Public Lightning Company and the Montevideo City Hall to improve public lightning and closing an abandoned factory that was used as a hiding spot by offenders. The third problem consisted of a series of robbery to taxi drivers in an area. The response consisted in engaging the Taxi Union to collaborate with the 25<sup>th</sup> to identify the authors of these crimes, resulting in the mitigation of criminal incidents in this area. Two additional projects have been identified, though not yet addressed. One involves car accidents at a corner, and the other snatching in a dark passageway next to a supermarket.

The 25<sup>th</sup> precinct is not implementing POP alone. The MI has expressed its interest in extending POP to the whole city of Montevideo over the next two years. In the meantime, other precincts at the MPD were instructed to implement POP at their jurisdiction, though with limited resources, lack of training and a prevalent confusion over what is actually POP about. These problems will be further explored over the next pages.

The interpretation of findings will take a look at Stages I, II and III altogether. As previously noted, six categories of analysis are proposed to examine interviews data: 1) Contextual factors, which will analyze the implementation of POP under the light of organizational changes experienced by the MPD by the time of the implementation; 2) Theoretical and practical inaccuracies, which will examine whether if POP was correctly understood and actually translated into practice as supposed or not ; 3) Characteristics, skills

and actions of project managers, which will take a look at the performance and leadership strategies of the Precinct's commanders and middle managers, and its effects over their subordinates; 4) Resistance and motivational issues, that will deal with the degree and characteristics of resistance –both internal and external to the Precinct– displayed against the POP intervention; 5) Resources, which will examine the availability and sufficiency of resources necessary for implementation; and 6) External support and cooperation, that will observe the degree to which the POP initiative was supported from outside the police agency.

### **Contextual Factors**

Many of the obstacles confronted by the PGISC across its implementation laid beyond the program's own scope. Contextual and organizational factors indirectly affected the implementation of POP in precinct 25. Most of these took place during Stage II while POP was being developed at the Precinct.

The first set of factors is linked to the political context in which the program took place. Initially meant to be a pilot program to work in three police stations, the PGISC – which included POP, but also social prevention of violence, restorative justice, crime analysis, hot spot policing, and professional criminal investigations– found echo among the political authorities of the MI, who embraced it and publicly acknowledged it as an auspicious initiative. Accordingly, these innovations quickly permeated into the UNP, whose authorities embraced most of them as well. Such public support translated into the adoption of some of the PGISC innovations by the UNP, which replicated many of them in different units of the MPD. However, comprehensive and ambitious efforts like these tend sometimes to fail because of the very strong drive to produce change promoted by the organization itself. The experience of the Dallas Police Department with the “Dallas Five Year Plan” (Wycoff & Kelling, 1978), or the failed outcomes of the Team Policing movement in the 1970's are examples of such failures (Kenney, n.d).

At the same time, the MPD was undergoing the restructure early described. The restructure divided the MPD it into four zones with territorial jurisdiction, plus a fifth support zone. As explained before, the creation and strengthening of the zones debilitated the police stations. Not only the restructure took human and material resources from precincts but also left them without clear roles and responsibilities other than registering crime reports and doing administrative paperwork. Even many high-ranked MPD leaders had second thoughts about the utility of precincts once the restructuring process was completed. As one police administrator expressed, “There were even some chiefs who wondered what would be the future of precincts. Maybe we won’t need them anymore, they said” (interviewee, personal communication, September 2, 2017).

But precinct 25 was not an ordinary police station. The public support of the MI towards PGISC meant that nobody could “touch” what was going on at the 25<sup>th</sup>. Although the MPD’s restructure was promoted by the MI authorities, the programs based at the 25<sup>th</sup> were endorsed as well. This moved the MI to keep resources from the 25<sup>th</sup> from being used to strengthen the zones. What is more, the workforce of the Precinct was increased by 56%, from 78 officers in January 2013 to 122 in January 2014. This increase contrasted with what was going on at other precincts. These were losing not only cops to the zone but also material resources, including cars and motorcycles. But the loss of resources was not the only factor that differentiated the 25<sup>th</sup> from its counterparts in Montevideo. First, there was the participation in operations external to the Precinct during soccer and basketball matches. Precincts are usually instructed to send cops to participate in this type of operations, which take place every week during weekdays (basketball) and weekends (soccer). The same goes during the celebrations of Carnival (February) and other massive festivities. The 25<sup>th</sup> was exempt from participate in these, and that was not well received both by high and low ranked cops in other precincts and zones, who struggled to keep up with their usual duties with fewer

resources during these events. A second factor involved the command team of the Precinct. Weekends are particularly active days for *comisarios* in Montevideo, who are often requested to cover the leave that their colleagues from other precincts take on Saturdays and Sundays. This means an extra workload not only for *comisarios*, but also for their deputies and *oficiales*, who take a commanding role when a *comisario* is covering a colleague at other police station. However, since the 25<sup>th</sup> was not to be left unattended by orders from the MI, its *comisario* was exempt from covering other precincts during weekends. As predictable, *comisarios* from the MPD were reluctant to accept these conditions. A third factor involved the *oficiales* of the 25<sup>th</sup>, who worked in a different schedule at the 25<sup>th</sup> compared with other precincts. *Oficiales* at the 25<sup>th</sup> worked in 8-hour shifts, whereas in the rest of precincts and zones they worked in a peculiar regime called “24x48”, which had them working 24 hours in a row and resting the next 48. While this system ensured that an *oficial* was always available full-time at the Precinct, in practice, it translated into having *oficiales* taking naps and performing poorly and irregularly across their shift. Precinct 25 instated the 8-hour shift for *oficiales*, which despite making more sense than the 24x48 system, as it is aligned to standard work practices –which incidentally apply to everybody but *oficiales* in the UNP–, it was not well received by MPD officers, those of the 25<sup>th</sup> included. Finally, a fourth factor that caused tension, this time between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the zones, was of an administrative order. *Comisarios* of the MPD are requested to deal with a high amount of paperwork to submit to the zones, most of which consists of a registry of the Precinct’s activities. Pushed by the urge to move POP forward, the *comisario* usually left unattended a great part of this paperwork, which subjected him to numerous monetary sanctions and fines from his zone superiors.

All of these elements increased tensions between the *comisario* of the 25<sup>th</sup> and the zone administrators. In practice, this translated into a number of problems that impacted

police services delivered both by the Precinct and the zone. An *oficial* of the 25<sup>th</sup> describes the situation:

Interviewee: The 25<sup>th</sup> was the ‘protégé’ of the MI, which created antipathy and dislikes at MPD. The 25<sup>th</sup> had everything to work by itself alone, and resistance manifested with all sorts of clashes and disputes between the Precinct and the zone.

Researcher: How was that?

Interviewee: For example, the URPM [patrol unit that reports to the zone] didn’t come to our jurisdiction. Neither investigations [from the zone]. There was no external support at all... Cops [from the zone] said ‘I won’t go into there [the jurisdiction of the 25<sup>th</sup>]. You’re the little children of the MI, so deal with your stuff on your own.’ (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 22, 2017)

The idea that the 25<sup>th</sup> was the “little children of the MI” created problems to cops of the 25<sup>th</sup>, who were often stigmatized by other colleagues. For example, a *comisario* who had acted as *oficial* at the 25<sup>th</sup> and later commanded another precinct where POP was going to be implemented, expressed how he felt his previous experience at the 25<sup>th</sup> conditioned the support he received from the zone at his new precinct:

Interviewee: Personally, I always felt more support at the 25<sup>th</sup> [than in his new precinct], like more contained. There, we were able to execute the project from A to Z. But when I left the 25<sup>th</sup> it was whole other story. I faced the project practically on my own... It was a huge challenge to me, and I also run into resistance from my own commanders [at the zone level]. I felt that they looked down on the [POP] project. They told me ‘ok, the project is there, but you’ll have to wait to do it’. They usually expressed their disbelief about the viability

of the project. The first barrier I encountered was the very MPD, my own supervisors. It was like swimming against the current. (*Comisario*, personal communication, August 3, 2017)

In early 2016, at the start of Stage III, a new period in the administration of the 25<sup>th</sup> began. Changes in the Precinct's command team eased both internal and external tensions. However, the emergence of PADO, also in early 2016, constituted a new contextual factor that greatly impacted the POP program in two different ways. First, as previously described, many cops of the 25<sup>th</sup> quickly moved to join PADO motivated by the financial benefits that this program promised. With resources strengthening the zones (ultimately PADO reported to the support zone), similarly to what happened during the 2013 MPD's restructure, precincts were once again put in the background. PADO was being strengthened at the cost of precincts. After boosting a large workforce during Stage II, in early 2016, the 25<sup>th</sup> had just half of that workforce, fewer vehicles, and only three cops doing POP. Such shortage of resources leaves too much work in the hands of a few. When an *agente* who was involved in POP at the 25<sup>th</sup> but is no longer working on it was asked what would he ask in exchange if requested to work in POP again, he replied:

Interviewee: I would just ask to be 100% designated to it. In our organization, there are too many things that don't allow us to work 100% in the POP projects. For example, doing detainees' custodies, paperwork, traffic control, there are just too many things. That was a huge problem before [during Stage II] and it's still a problem now. If we don't have more people here we won't be ever able to do POP right. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 11, 2017)

A second way in which the new strategy of the MPD affected POP was the decision of assigning the hottest hot spots to PADO, while leaving the "warmer" ones to POP. This decision left POP with a narrow range of action, and with limited chances of making good

progress on crime reduction and showcasing positive results. A UNP police executive interviewed explains the logic behind this decision:

Interviewee: Violent crime has been on the rise over the last 40 years, and 94% of it occurs in the Metropolitan Area [where most people live]. That's what causes the feeling of insecurity in the public. We are demanded by that situation, and we must respond accordingly. We believe that POP is not suited to address that situation, but to be applied after this situation has ended.

Researcher: But doesn't POP work better when dealing with large, recurrent problems?

Interviewee: We have different problems than those that occur in other parts of the world, like England, for example, where POP was successful. We face a very critical situation of crime and violence in some Montevideo neighborhoods. At the same level of other very compromised Latin American countries! POP wouldn't work the same way in these areas, with this type of problems. So we say, ok, we applied PADO to tackle and reduce violent crime, and we were successful. Now, what we understand is that we are now in conditions to develop POP. To do what? To go to those areas no longer affected by violent crime, and complement what PADO is doing. (Police executive, personal communication, September 2, 2017)

Therefore, POP officers at the 25<sup>th</sup> were left working with few resources to do their work and support their actions and also instructed to do POP in places where POP would probably not have a major impact. This situation could be problematic since both the MI and UNP are planning to extend POP to all Montevideo in the near future. If such commitment is real, the organization will need to adjust their priorities and practices to make this goal possible.

### Theoretical and Practical Inaccuracies

As shown by studies conducted in other settings, the notion of POP is sometimes misunderstood and therefore incorrectly implemented (Maguire, Uchida; & Hassell, 2015; Read & Tilley, 2000; Cordner & Biebel, 2005). Uruguay was not an exception to this. One of the questions asked during interviews for this research was: “How would you define POP in your own words?”, or “What does POP mean to you?”. This question was asked not only to low ranked officers who were the ones actually *doing* POP in the streets but also to *oficiales*, *comisarios* and high ranked police administrators. Only three of the 20 cops interviewed could provide articulate definitions reflecting the principles of POP. The rest confused POP with other policing strategies, mainly standard police patrol and traditional community policing. While some loosely included some –although not all– of the problem-solving principles into their definition, others were not able to articulate a definition at all. Below are some examples of the definitions collected:

Researcher: How would you define POP in your own words?

Interviewee: I believe it is a system of police patrol that was implemented to reduce robbery, and, to my view, it was successful.

Researcher: All right, so, how this new patrol system is different from PADO?

Interviewee: Because we were more active in those areas [hot spots]. We could get people to trust us and provide information that could later be used to solve crimes or catch an offender. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 11, 2017)

Researcher: How would you define POP?

Interviewee: Well, you mean in the way it *should* be done? It is about having two cops standing in the same beat, at the same time. These cops have to know their beat pretty well to understand what's going on there. (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 10, 2017)

Researcher: How would you define POP in your own words?

Interviewee: I believe that POP is something that every cop should do. It is about being in touch with local residents, with the community, listen to the problems that concern people and do something about it. (*Agente*, July 28, 2017)

Researcher: How would you define POP in your own words?

Interviewee: [Thinks] I believe POP helps you to get closer to neighbors.

Researcher: And what type of policing would involve?

Interviewee: I don't know what to tell you. I believe that with this system you get in touch with people more often than with just doing foot patrol. It's more like community policing. Similar to that. (*Agente*, August 4, 2017)

Researcher: What would POP be about to you?

Interviewee: Well, the acronym explains it. I would say it's something similar to the traditional community policing officer, who goes and speak with people about their own problems, and finds a solution with them to have a safer life. (*Cabo*, August 29, 2017).

The confusion that prevails across cops from different ranks called my attention at first. Most –if not all– of these cops had received training in POP, and many of them had been directly involved in the program. If so, why only a handful of them was able to provide a correct definition? My first logical guess was that it was a problem with training. However, renowned scholars from two very prestigious academic centers –John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science– were responsible for training these cops in POP. The proven expertise of these professors should have been a guarantee of instructional quality. Furthermore, in my former capacity working at the MI, I personally was in charge of the course delivery oversight, having attended to many training sessions myself.

Probably a lack of follow-up supervision after training could have made some difference when it comes to internalization of concepts. Still, the very fieldwork experience in POP of the students –if properly done – should have compensated the absence of a follow-up training supervision on the hands of instructors.

Early in my fieldwork I discussed this idea with a MI official who was also involved in the POP training and had a direct involvement in the program. When asked about this degree of confusion in POP concepts on the part of students, he suggested it might have something to do with the way in which POP is being implemented right now. The way in which MPD supervises the work of POP officers consists just of making sure that they remain at the segments assigned to them. Surprisingly, there are no qualitative controls on the work being done. Therefore, given the shortage of resources faced by precinct's commanders and being these pushed to comply with the directive of "doing POP", POP is recklessly done, and in practice consists just of sending two cops to saturate an area. This way, precinct commanders comply with the order from their superiors to leave them happy, and cops engage in routine duties that differ from what POP is meant to be. Consequently, POP is confused with routine patrol among those who do it, cops lose motivation to work, and, most important, communities do not benefit from the positive results on crime control gains that research has linked to POP.

What the MI official suggested reinforced my suspicions that, perhaps, POP had not been ever properly done at precinct 25 at all, and what was always called POP had little to do with what Goldstein proposed in the 80's and the techniques that helped reduce violent crime and disorder in other countries. Moved by this thought, I chose to dig deeper during my interviews into questions related to the implementation itself. Namely, what were POP cops asked to do by their supervisors? And, more importantly, what did they actually do in the field? The responses I received were troubling.

I decided to ask cops what did they do during their shifts when instructed to do POP. Most of them worked at the Precinct during Stage II. Although in my previous capacity working at the MI I had observed POP projects decently done, most of the work conducted by POP cops during Stage II seems to have not differed from standard foot patrol. The jurisdiction of the 25<sup>th</sup> was divided into ten beats, each of which was patrolled by two cops. A crime prediction software was used to predict where were crimes (primarily theft and robbery) more likely to happen, and cops were asked to focus their work in these areas. While this could be a good way to do traditional foot patrol, it has little to do with POP. An officer who worked by then at the 25<sup>th</sup> describes his daily routine “doing POP”:

Interviewee: When we started we delineated these 10 beats, and early in the morning we were given maps with hot spots in our beat ... I used to patrol with one partner, and we covered our whole beat. We spent some minutes in the hot spot, and then we moved to another place inside the beat. Sometimes we also spoke with neighbors. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 11, 2017)

Another officer who was too involved in POP during Stage II reinforces the idea that too often POP was about just doing foot patrol:

Officer: During that administration [Stage II] I was more or less a patrol officer. I was just walking in my beat. But I'm an ambitious person, I like to do more than what I'm asked, that motivates me. Because when we were walking in a fixed beat of 16 blocks, let me tell you, we were driving ourselves crazy. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 8, 2017)

Seven of the ten *agentes* interviewed declared that POP in Stage II consisted of walking in a fixed beat and occasionally speaking to neighbors. I aimed to contrast these perceptions with those of *oficiales* responsible of instructing POP teams to carry out their

tasks. One of them explained how he managed to control and supervise officers, as well as how they reacted to these controls:

Interviewee: I used a software that tracks the officer's GPS radio ... If an officer was spending too much time at a single spot, I had to make him move to another spot in his beat. Some of them even told me 'you chasing me; this is harassment'. And I had to tell him 'No it isn't. If you're standing one hour in a corner, I need you to move to another spot to make sure that the neighbors see you and police presence increases in the street. And while you're walking try to speak to somebody'. I had to call them all the time: 'you spent the last 30 minutes in a corner. Why? Please move to another corner'... I also felt uncomfortable doing this, but it was what had to be done. (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 10, 2017).

This interview fragment is insightful, since not only reinforces the officer's viewpoint that POP was about doing foot patrol and engaging in conversations with neighbors, but also depicts a tortuous scheme of permanent controls and supervision, suffered not only by officers, but also by *oficiales*. Such system of controls, and the institutional obsession with having cops standing in a corner for a determinate number of minutes, and in the meantime *making* them speak to neighbors, is critically different from what actually POP consists of. POP requires discretion and flexibility in the hands of those responsible for doing it, as well as trust and positive leadership in the hands of those supervising it. Quite the opposite appears to have happened during Stage II at precinct 25, where controls and supervision seem to have overridden officer's flexibility and discretion.

Notwithstanding this general assumption, it is fair to say that there were several exceptions to this working scheme. On the one hand, commanders often asked cops to engage in problem-solving, and some cops were successful in their attempts to do it. I had the chance

to speak with officers who did an outstanding work at their beats, solving problems that led to crime reductions in these areas and public satisfaction with the responses. Some of these, detailed early in this section, are textbook applications of SARA, involving accurate identification of the problem, thoughtful analysis, a targeted response and a follow-up of its impact. What is more, one of these POP officers was awarded by the community in appreciation for his service, something that does not happen frequently in Montevideo. Interestingly, however, some of these projects were carried forward without the consent of superiors. One officer who impeccably applied POP and a broken windows framework (Wilson & Kelling, 1982) to reduce crime at a small public park, explains how he managed to do it without his superiors' consent:

Interviewee: The project of the park was really successful. We managed to reduce crime there. We improved public lightning and pruned trees by working with the City Hall and several other collaborating partners. That was an amazing experience, because it was one of the first POP projects to work smoothly. Neighbors were really happy about it, and the City Hall as well. All of us worked together. And that project significantly reduced crime in the park. But when we started drafting the problem, he [the current *comisario*] didn't care much about it, because there were more important things to deal with. He wanted us to work on another problem, but we continued working on it, keeping part of our work in secret from our superiors... We worked simultaneously in the two cases, but the one that had a major impact was the one of the park...

Researcher: So you shared your plan to work in the park with the *comisario* and he told you to postpone it but you did it anyway?

Interviewee: We took care of both projects at the same time. We did what he told us to do, just to leave him happy, but we wouldn't let down the first project [the one of the park], because it was well-thought. And we were right! (*Agente*, personal communication, July 8, 2017).

In sum, regarding the implementation of the program during Stage II it could be said that POP was mostly about deploying police to patrol on foot and engage in conversations and interviews with the public. Permanent controls from supervisors ensured that cops were standing on the right spot, or moving to another area when instructed. In practice, the result was a different type of policing other than POP. However, this is not generalizable to the whole two years that Stage II lasted. Overall, leaders of the 25<sup>th</sup> had a real interest and noble intentions to do POP—although not all *oficiales* quite understood what was it about—, and some cops managed to apply the SARA method with success. Still, the way in which the strategy was organized, the need to enforce permanent controls over the officer's job, and confusion among leaders and officers of what was POP actually about, conspired against its proper implementation.

Turning to Stage III, the context of implementation was quite different. A mixture of ingenuity and creativity in the hands of leaders, positive leadership, and a strong commitment from officers, resulted in some successful crime and disorder problems adequately solved. At the beginning of Stage III, the division of the Precinct into 10 beats was dismantled. Alternatively, the POP strategy was organized as follows. Two *agentes* with previous knowledge and experience working in POP were made responsible for the implementation. These cops respond directly to the *comisario* of the 25<sup>th</sup>, who works next to them overseeing the whole process of SARA. Every week, this team conducts analyses of problems in the whole Precinct and defines hot spots and critical problems to be addressed. At the same time, the POP team receives support from other cops of the 25<sup>th</sup> when required. Under this working

scheme, five problems have been addressed so far, three of which solved, and two undergoing the monitoring stage of SARA.

Overall, this scheme succeeded in leaving behind some of the problems that characterized previous stages. For example, leadership issues and interpersonal conflicts between the Precinct's staff, as well as external with the zone commanders were not reported in the interviews conducted with the current Precinct's staff. However, the program still faces significant obstacles. At least two important problems must be accounted for.

First, as previously noted, in contrast to the sufficiency of resources that characterized Stage II, a massive reduction in both personnel and material resources severely compromised POP. At present, precinct 25 has 80 employees, 69 of which are cops and 11 civilians responsible for receiving the public and other administrative work. From these 69 cops, only two are dedicated full-time to POP, plus the oversight and help they receive from the Precinct's commander. These numbers contrast with the 122 officers that, at one point of Stage II, integrated the workforce of the Precinct. In addition to this, there is a shortage of vehicles as well. While during Stage II the 25<sup>th</sup> counted with five cars and eight motorcycles, now it has only one car and two motorcycles.

A second obstacle is linked to the crime reduction strategy of the MPD earlier described in the *Contextual factors* section. The assignation of "warm" hot spots to POP has caused some confusion among the Precinct's staff. In repeated occasions, officers expressed their skepticism about the appropriateness of this criteria to reduce crime through POP. Such skepticism is well-founded: if POP is meant to deal with the most prevalent problems, why then send them to work in areas where crime is decreasing or non-existent at all? An individual involved in the POP program digs further into this feeling of confusion and skepticism that some cops express:

Interviewee: Let's suppose a precinct doesn't have PADO hot spots because there isn't much crime on it. It only has one POP hot spot. What would the POP hot spot be? The hottest of the precinct, right? Well, in practice it isn't. They assign a warm hot spot to POP, by definition. So if you have an officer who was trained in POP and understood its foundation, who is told to go there, he'll not understand this criterion at all! Because POP has a statistic foundation: the more frequently a problem manifests, the easier to solve it is, because what prompts crime here will be easier to spot. If this hypothetical POP hot spot that we were discussing has only one robbery per month, instead of one every week, how is the cop supposed to know what's going on there? (Interviewee, personal communication, August 3, 2017)

While the implementation of POP at the 25<sup>th</sup> seems closer to its theoretical and methodological foundations than its preceding stages, MPD is sending mixed institutional signals to those who are responsible for carrying it out. On the one hand, POP is regarded as an important program for crime reduction by MPD top leaders. On the other, cops are being instructed to do POP under conditions that conspire against it. The eventual success of POP in reducing crime at the 25<sup>th</sup> and other precincts will largely depend on not as much of assigning enough resources to it, as of adjusting the assignment criteria of hot spots at the MPD level.

### **Characteristics, Skills and Actions of Project Managers**

This category analyzes the success or failure of POP programs under the light of the characteristics, skills, and actions of key individuals who oversee program's implementation. Particularly important features linked to this category are: strong leadership attributes at the principal project agents; personal engagement/support of high-ranking police executives; continuity of project leadership and management, ownership of the initiative by supervisors;

effective communication of the project objectives to those responsible for implementation; and professional competence and skills of key individuals (Scott, 2006). POP initiatives require a singular set of leadership skills. POP leaders need to have the ability to work in teams and promote teamwork among their subordinates, acknowledge their subordinate leadership in the projects they move forward, as well as working horizontally with them –a feature that differs from the vertical hierarchies traditional to police agencies. None of these attributes predominated among the UNP, which has traditionally been characterized by a military-type of hierarchy. Hence, the MI had the need of individually appoint *comisarios* to administrate precinct 25. The risk of leaving that decision to the UNP –as usually done– could have implied having the wrong person appointed to a key position for the program’s success. Still, leadership problems were frequent throughout the intervention.

Almost every person interviewed for this research agrees that all the commanders of the 25<sup>th</sup> displayed a strong commitment and stimulus to do their job. Nonetheless, not every one of them succeeded in spreading their commitment and enthusiasm to their subordinates. Several leadership issues were reported both by *agentes* responsible of doing POP, as well as by *oficiales* and frontline supervisors (*sargentos* and *cabos*).

One of the salient problems was linked to the confrontational leadership style of the Precinct’s command team. Tensions were expressed two ways. On the one hand, conflicts were common between *oficiales* and one *comisario* in particular. The divergence of opinions translated into personal conflicts that affected the implementation of the program. This viewpoint is shared by almost every one of the *oficiales* interviewed for this study:

Interviewee: He [in reference to one *comisario* who was responsible for the 25<sup>th</sup>] was very confrontational... He just wanted to do things his own way and didn’t care what we thought. He had an idea and didn’t mind who was on his way. With him, it was all about high-handedness and threats. That was a

problem. Didn't end well for him. At the end, he ended up isolated (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 22, 2017)

Interviewee: He [in reference to the same *comisario*] disagreed [on a suggested response to a drug dealing problem], which led to a rupture between us. One of us had to step back, and it was me, I requested a transfer... It was impossible to change his mind. He was way too intransigent. (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 3, 2017)

Interpersonal conflicts also took place between *agentes* and *oficiales*. Several *agentes* report mistreat and abuse of authority coming from some *oficiales* in charge of POP oversight at the Precinct:

Interviewee: This guy [a former *oficial* of the 25<sup>th</sup>] was obsessed with this GPS tracking software they used to control us while doing the POP walks. And when we went to help a fellow in the next beat, or talk to a local neighbor who lived 100 meters away, he was instantly calling us with a harsh tone: "Don't stand there!", 'Stay put!', 'Move to the next block'. It is very complicated to work like this (*Agente*, personal communication, July 8, 2017).

Interviewee: POP allows you to think, to trust your knowledge. With him [in reference to the same former *oficial* of the 25<sup>th</sup>] we went straight to a military regime... We had him on top of us yelling 'move here, move there', 'take four leaps'. So obviously nobody wanted to work... And there were worse things. The man forced us to patrol in the middle of a storm! He wanted us to get wet! And what result do you get by forcing people to spend six hours wet? I reported myself sick ten times in only six months! (*Agente*, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Besides interpersonal conflicts and tension at different ranks, several individuals report lack of horizontality on the side of the command team, which hindered the success of POP projects:

Interviewee: They [commanders] will tell you they were accessible, but not really. Let's say, if we needed to speak with them we could do it, we would have a meeting. But after that, it was whole another story. It was a façade, because if they didn't like what we said they just heard and say 'yes' to this 'yes' to that, but then nothing happened. Things were going to happen as they wanted anyway. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 13, 2017)

In like manner, other *agentes* endorse this viewpoint. When asked about how would supervisors respond to suggestions of responses coming from POP officers, an *agente* replied:

Interviewee: We would bring them up [ideas of responses] in meetings, but he [the same *comisario* mentioned above] wouldn't hear us. For example, robberies were taking place at a street corner in our jurisdiction. We performed the analysis and observed that *pichis* [local police slang referring to offenders] riding motorcycles took advantage of cars stopping at traffic lights and committed robberies against drivers during dawn. We noticed that, and suggested speaking with people at the City Hall to turn off traffic lights, at least a couple of hours during dawn to see if by turning off the lights and preventing cars from stopping at that corner, you see? No way. He said no, but didn't explain. I never understood his arguments (*Agente*, personal communication, August 12, 2017).

Many of the conflicts associated with leadership styles reflect certain lack of understanding of how POP operates on the side of leaders. For instance, another *agente*

explains how seemingly reasonable ideas coming from POP officers were unheard by the Precinct's command without apparent reason:

Researcher: Did they [commanders] hold meetings with you to discuss responses?

Interviewee: Um, not really. For example, this notion of the beats. We had to patrol the fifth beat, where people were getting robbed when coming down from the bus at a bus stop, ok? His [in reference to one *comisario*] response was to place cops 24 hours in that fixed area! 24 hours! It was not about 'let's analyze the problem, look at the crime maps, research offender's characteristics, see where they are escaping through'. No. We were supposed to stand there the whole time of our shift... But if I'm standing my whole shift at a fixed spot, how am I supposed to sit in front of a computer and log into the system [in reference to the UNP informatics system in which all crime reports and incidents are digitally registered] to look for information? How am I supposed to come up with a response? (*Agente*, personal communication, July 13, 2017)

As illustrated by these fragments of interviews, the authoritarian style of some leaders contrasted with the flexibility and horizontality at leadership levels that POP requires. Interpersonal conflicts resulted in the transfer of several cops to other precincts or zones. The recurrence of these incidents spread tensions and conflicts between cops throughout the Precinct, resulting in disbelief towards POP and discontent to carry it out. In addition, the absence of a real horizontality from leaders resulted in a lack of commitment and cynicism on the side of officers towards the initiative. Moreover, as described in the *Theoretical and practical inaccuracies* section, the depicted incidents also indicate a misunderstanding of POP's methodology, too often confused with standard patrol tactics at a fixed beat.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that these problems were not associated with all Precinct's leaders and supervisors. Many individuals agree that some *comisarios* and *oficiales* had positive leadership qualities. However, most of these leaders were transferred to other precincts due to interpersonal conflicts. Thus, interpersonal problems played a major role in hindering the potential of the program to produce change.

### **Resistance and Motivational Issues**

Organizational resistance within the police has been identified as one of the greatest obstacles to the adoption of POP (Buerger, 1994). Resistance against POP can happen both at leadership and middle management levels, as well as at low ranks (Sollund, 2007). While factors driving resistance may vary depending on officer's ranks and position, all can exert resistance against POP to a great extent. With reference to Uruguay, resistance against POP did not seem to come from the top executive level. In fact, police executives and high-ranked administrators interviewed for this project display a great deal of support towards the initiative:

Interviewee: POP is the methodology we have chosen to develop police work in the near future. In other words, a method to confront and solve the most demanding problems of crime and violence in our society. Why? Because it deals better with problems than community policing as we knew it, and it's a good strategy to solve our problems of violence for good. (Police executive, personal communication, September 2, 2017)

Similarly, commanders who were in charge of the 25<sup>th</sup>'s administration, support and embrace POP as well. However, not all zone chiefs (the immediate superiors of precinct commanders in the organizational structure of the MPD) show the same commitment and support towards POP. One *comisario* interviewed for this research explains how the idea was received by a zone chief when he heard about POP:

Interviewee: We have a lot of close-mindedness here at the MPD. We have presented a couple of POP projects here to the Zone [Chief]. He told us cynically ‘Ok, this is beautiful. Beautiful! But you know, this won’t ever work here in Montevideo’. (*Comisario*, personal communication, July 4, 2017)

This very same zone Chief was later interviewed for this research, and when asked about what he thought about POP he said “I think it’s very important to reduce crime”, but immediately confused POP with beat patrol, and then with proximity policing. Later, when confronted against a textbook definition of POP he admitted “we don’t do that in my jurisdiction.” (Zone Chief, personal communication, September 2, 2017)

Resistance came at the operational level mostly from frontline officers, with *comisarios* and *oficiales* generally making sure that POP was carried forward as commanded. At the frontline level, resistance was not linked to a single factor, but to different personal motivations and beliefs.

First, a great deal of resistance came from community police officers. At the time of the early implementation, a community policing unit was operational at the Precinct, integrated by seven officers. This unit reported to the no longer active Office of Community Police, which depended directly of the UNP. These cops, however, also reported to the Precinct’s commander and, in practical terms –informally–, to Judges, who would ultimately assign them to conduct domestic violence custodies and related duties. This “triple command”, as one MI official interviewed put it, had at least two consequences. First, community police officers would not have a defined work schedule and routine duties. Second, and linked to the former, this situation would give them a great deal of flexibility, which translated into non-fixed schedules and a certain degree of freedom to organize their own work agenda. Since nobody would hold them accountable for their work, they were in a

marked contrast with their Precinct partners, who dealt with rigid work schedules and well-defined responsibilities typical of police work.

When the POP program extended to the whole Precinct –Stage II–, the work of community police officers dramatically changed. Their work schedules translated into 8-hour shifts, and their duties were closely overseen both by *oficiales* and *comisarios*. As expected, this caused tension and prompted interpersonal conflicts.

Interviewee: Community policing officers believed they were some kind of social workers; they didn't want to do real police work. They went to community meetings, talked to students, wrote some reports and so forth. And they reported directly to the *comisario*, not to us, and day-to-day supervision was practically inexistent. When we asked them to walk the streets or work within a schedule they didn't like it at all.

Researcher: So would you say that they didn't like POP itself, or that they didn't like the change in their duties and stronger controls?

Interviewee: Resistance came because we made them work and stick to a timetable! When community policing was formed, cops who didn't want to be on the streets requested to work at the community policing unit. They created the illusion themselves that they were not cops. And that confused them.

(*Oficial*, personal communication, August 22, 2017)

Interviewee: They [community policing officers] told me several times they didn't like the new system [POP]. But what really happened was that community police officers, in the older system, they had much more freedom. Sometimes they were assigned to work in a specific area, but their actual scope was the whole jurisdiction, so their work was very hard to supervise. I knew their activities; they went to a school, to a community center, etc. But they had

flexibility for sure. And then we put them to work a certain number of hours at a specific area, with a defined routine and they didn't like it.

Researcher: So, was it POP what they didn't like or were the controls and supervision that it brought with it?

*Comisario*: Controls! No doubt about it. (*Comisario*, personal communication, September 6, 2017)

Many different ranked cops interviewed for this research agree with the above statements. This is striking, since community police could have become the natural leaders of the implementation. Given their profile and professional experience, they had the highest social capital within the jurisdiction, together with a reputation in the community and ease of access to dangerous areas to which other cops could not access. A few months after Stage II started, all but one community policing officer had requested to be transferred to other precincts, and the unit of community policing was finally dismantled.

While resistance exerted by community policing officers was mainly against the higher amount of work and controls associated to POP, other cops had second thoughts about the notion of POP itself. For them, POP was essentially traditional community policing, which did not boost the same prestige within the UNP as traditional reactive tactics and operatives did. One *oficial* describes this:

Interviewee: POP *was* community policing. It was that way, whether you like it or not. In their minds [resisting cops] it was that way. One thing is POP, which is focused on crime and you use it to reduce crime. Other is community policing, which is essentially cops disguised as social services, and you want to benefit society with it. Both things help, the thing is the focus. You are a cop, and you want to fight crime, and you are prepared and trained for it, not to do social services. So these two things collide with each other.

Researcher: And you are saying that they resisted to the community policing portion embedded in POP?

*Oficial*: What I'm saying is that they confused POP with community policing, and that caused resistance. They even felt embarrassed if they were associated with POP by cops who worked outside the 25<sup>th</sup>. They mocked them. They used to call them 'popcorn cops'. (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 3, 2017)

An officer who came straight from the police academy to the Precinct after his graduation illustrates this association of the notion of POP with community policing:

Researcher: What were your expectations when you started doing POP and what did the *comisario* asked you to do?

Officer: Well, you come from the academy with one idea of police work.

Essentially I wanted to fight crime. But when we came here what he wanted us to do was to get closer to civilians, like community policing or something like that. It was ok, but wasn't what I expected. (*Agente*, personal communication, August 4, 2017)

Some individuals mention that cops both from inside and outside the 25<sup>th</sup> who were not involved in POP attempted to boycott the experience by pushing POP cops to go against the program. Whether if this is a rumor or not is unclear, but most interviewees conclusively agree that discontent with the experience came both from community policing officers as well from other cops who were neither involved in POP, nor in community policing.

Besides attitudes of resistance and skepticism described above, many cops who worked at the 25<sup>th</sup> did not feel motivated enough to embrace POP. Two main issues linked to motivation were identified in the field.

The first is linked to oversight and accountability. In traditional police organizations, supervision is focused on daily performance. Officers are held accountable for their individual task-related performance and attitudes (Shane, 2010). POP, nevertheless, encourages a different approach to oversight and accountability, in which quality predominates over quantity. As noted by Oettmeier and Wycoff (1997), problem solving requires innovation, creativity and stand-out performance at the individual and group level. In terms of performance evaluation, this means that leaders should not seek a quantitative measure of line officer's performance (i.e. counting the number of problems solved), but one that accounts for the uniqueness of a solved problem (Boba & Crank, 2008). In contrast to these "qualitative" measures, subject's testimonies depict POP oversight in the 25<sup>th</sup> associated to a vertical, hierarchical structure focused on permanent controls and daily performance measures.

As noted before, supervision during Stage II, for example, was closely linked to the confusion that prevailed among some *oficiales*, who associated POP with traditional foot patrol. Even more, some middle managers supervised POP as it was traditional patrol, using a confrontational, militaristic-type leadership style, which caused significant tensions with line officers. This is not recommended by contemporary performance management models for police organizations (Shane 2010; Boba & Santos, 2011). As a result of the demand for unquestioned obedience, many line officers expressed their lack of motivation to do POP:

Interviewee: He [an *oficial*] didn't treat us well, and was just concerned with giving orders. He placed me two hours in a car, then sent me to do foot patrol, then four hours in the motorcycle. You get bored. Either you give me clear directives or I do nothing. You feel demotivated. If it's POP what you want, so let me do POP. He had me six months in that crazy rotation of tasks. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 8, 2017)

Interviewee: POP is supposed to allow you to think... To go from that idea to a quasi-military regime, which was what happened with this guy [an *oficial*] who didn't understand the basics of POP, was terrible. It was not about POP anymore; it was about just complying with orders. He just wanted us to do what he wanted, no matter if was it POP or not. He used this software [a GPS tracking software] to control us. He wanted to know if we were walking or if we were standing somewhere else. 'Why did you move?', he used to say. 'I see you moved. You're sanctioned'. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 11, 2017)

I was interested to know what leaders and middle managers had to say about these versions. Specifically, I wanted to explore how did they manage to motivate officers who were skeptical and reluctant to do POP. A second motivational issue emerged as a result of my enquiry: the available motivational devices at hand of the command staff did not seem attractive enough to line officers. The transcription of a fragment of a conversation I held with a former *oficial* of the 25<sup>th</sup> illustrates this problem:

Researcher: Was there some type of motivational strategy implemented by you and your colleagues?

Interviewee: We tried. We definitely tried. We proposed some type of awards, and also offered days off to those who performed well. But many said 'I'm not interested on it'. We tried to showcase the work of POP cops to others, but that neither worked well.

Researcher: Why? Wasn't it attractive enough for them?

Interviewee: It seems so. We used the tools we had to seduce them, but they just didn't care about what we did. That was a great barrier towards

implementation. Maybe we failed in motivating them, but we used what we had at hand.

Researcher: And what type of complaints did you receive?

Interviewee: Whatever you might think of. 'I'm every day at the same place', for example. So we said, 'ok, but look it from this perspective, you go every day to the same spot, which means we're not sending you to the worst zones in the precinct. If you're at the same spot every day, that means you can do your job better and get to know the people who live there'. Also we used to tell them 'who has to cover football matches? Who has to cover Carnival celebrations? You work 8 hours here and you get a day off. Remember that cops who work at other places don't have that. Look at that as a benefit!' But all this didn't work. They just weren't motivated enough and we didn't know what to do to change that situation. (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 10, 2017).

From what this *oficial* expresses, it seems there was no apparent strategy or plan to deal with resistance coming from low ranks. When a *comisario* was asked how he managed to deal with resistance, he replied that he used to resort to individual conversations with resisters to try to change their perspective. However, most of these attempts ended with the transfer of resisters, as efforts to convince them by dialogue were futile.

When the aforementioned *oficial* expressed his concerns to me, I examined my previous interviews and notes to see if line officers expressed this type of discontent. I run into one very insightful interview I conducted with an officer of the 15<sup>th</sup> that not only confirmed this, but also pointed to a possible solution to it. When asked about what would he suggest to propagate the idea of POP within the MPD, he replied as follows:

Interviewee: I believe most of it has to do with incentives... Take PADO, for example. PADO cops have a lot of benefits, and on top of it they get paid a lot more than us! We don't have that in precincts... You have to bear in mind that cops always want something in exchange to what you ask. (Interviewee, personal communication, July 11, 2017)

Another officer put it simply. When asked the same question, the response was straightforward:

Interviewee: You have to see the big picture here. Look at PADO. Who would have asked to work in PADO if he'll be doing rotation shifts and standing 8 hours in a hot spot? But they [MPD] were smart. They stimulated them! They get a better payment. You have to stimulate cops if you want them to do something, that's pretty basic! (*Agente*, personal communication, July 13, 2017)

In sum, at least two main problems linked to motivation seem to have negatively affected the adequate implementation of POP at the 25<sup>th</sup>. First, a confrontational leadership style, concerned with daily supervision and quantitative measures of police work (i.e. number of minutes standing in a hot spot, hours spent on patrol, distance walked, etc.) failed to motivate line officers to carry out POP with the flexibility and discretion this type of policing requires. Second, motivational devices available at the hands of the command staff also failed to motivate line officers to do POP. Instead of offering extra days, or excluding them from doing specific activities (i.e. covering Carnival celebrations, soccer, and basketball matches), as it was done, a possible solution is right now being implemented at the MPD. Perhaps if POP officers got paid an extra salary, as PADO cops enjoy, they will be more willing to carry out POP. Since, as for today in MPD, both PADO and POP are about the same (a standard patrol response that involves problem-solving only to a limited extent), maybe it is not the

economic incentive what matters most for POP officers, but the disturbing feeling that some colleagues (PADO cops) do the same work but get paid better for it.

### **Resources**

Whether if POP initiatives are properly implemented or not depends heavily on the sufficiency and availability of resources (staffing, finances, equipment and so forth) (Scott, 2006). For the most part, until recently, lack of sufficient resources does not seem to have become an issue for POP implementation at precinct 25. Possibly linked to the fact of being created as a sort of “lab precinct” to host a praxis school and different programs, the MI always made sure to provide all resources necessary for the Precinct to ensure programs (including POP) were carried forward. This meant for the MI to meet not only the volume of resources required by the Precinct’s commanders (i.e. number of officers, number of cars, etc.), but also more specific requirements. For instance, appointing individual *oficiales*, frontline supervisors or officers in key positions, or making sure that large percentages of officers assigned to work at the 25<sup>th</sup> were recently promoted from the Police Academy and lacked previous experience working as police in other units. One *comisario* who administrated the Precinct emphasizes this support:

Interviewee: Everything I asked for was provided. All of it. What is more, all the proposals I made were heard [by the MI], and I received positive feedback and support for every single one of them. (*Comisario*, personal communication, July 13, 2017)

The notion that resources were generally available is shared by police officers with different ranks when asked about the sufficiency of resources to carry out POP:

Researcher: Do you think there were enough resources to do POP?

Interviewee: Yes, even at one point we had more cops than it was necessary.

We had more than enough to start with the program.

Researcher: And how about equipment, cars, etc.?

Interviewee: The same. (*Agente*, personal communication, August 4, 2017)

Interviewee: I think we had a great deal of support. We couldn't complain, because we had support. We always got what we asked for. (*Oficial*, personal communication, August 3, 2017)

Material support came as human resources and equipment (i.e. cars, motorcycles, vests, office supplies and so forth). This was made possible not only by the MI, but mainly because of the good coordination that existed between the MI and the MPD. Furthermore, at one point of the implementation, while the restructure of the MPD was taking place –which implied that cops were being removed from their precincts to staff the zones–, MPD agreed to increase the workforce of precinct 25 to 122 officers, in a marked contrast with the average 50 or 60 cops assigned to any typical MPD precinct.

Most cops who worked at the 25<sup>th</sup> agree that lack of resources was not a problem until late 2015. Mixed versions converge about the support of the MI in this year. Some high and medium ranked cops who worked at the Precinct complain that since reducing the time of response to 911 emergency calls was a priority during the MPD's restructure, MPD dispatch center used cars of the 25<sup>th</sup> too often to respond to incidents. Hence the Precinct seldom had vehicles available to do POP patrol. Nevertheless, such assumption is questionable as it assumes that the implementation of responses is often linked to patrol –even more, not foot patrol but vehicle patrol. In fact, a car is rarely key to implement POP responses. Such assumption entails a confusion of POP with police patrol that was explored earlier, and does not seem reliable enough to account for the hypothesis that the 25<sup>th</sup> lacked resources to do POP.

Yet lack of resources does have become an obstacle in Stage III. As previously stated, in little more than one year (from March 2016 to July 2017) the 25<sup>th</sup> loss 43% of its

workforce. This is a phenomenon that not only involves this police station, but most precincts of Montevideo, as many cops are attracted by the economic incentives offered by the PADO program. This means for new PADO recruits almost a 30% rise in their salaries. PADO has meant an indirect obstacle for doing POP in the 25<sup>th</sup>, as it caused a loss of staff and vehicles to the zone to which PADO reports. Staff reduction not only impacts the number of cops who do POP, but also the Precinct's whole organization. While before PADO a *comisario* had enough resources to allocate officers to work in different programs to cover the Precinct's workload, now, with almost half the workforce, task overlapping is an issue, and only a handful offices are able to do POP during their shifts. Even so, these POP officers usually do overtime and have few days off, due to the high demand of work at the Precinct. One of these officers describes how is like to do POP in a context marked by overlapping and scarcity of resources:

Interviewee: There are some months in which I only have two days off. And it's because I like what I do, and when my work demands me to stay working, I stay. Yesterday I was off at 6 pm [having started the shift at 6 am], and today I'll leave at 5:30 pm. That's because yesterday I helped my partners with patrol because we don't have enough staff, and in the afternoon I had to prepare these documents [an analysis report of a robbery problem to taxi drivers] ... If we could have more time to do this [POP] we would have more ideas. If we could work more comfortably it would be ideal. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 13, 2017)

Still, while the scarcity of resources has become an obstacle, quality has predominated over quantity. A mixture of managerial creativity on the side of supervisors, and motivation and tenacity on the officer's side have resulted in an overall adequate implementation of POP. In my interviews with the Precinct's staff, I could observe that, although the number of

problems approached is undeniably small –only three in a year–, all things considered, treatment and responses to these problems were adequate and triggered positive results.

### **External Support and Cooperation**

POP responses involve not only the police working on its own. Since the implementation of responses often requires interventions that lay outside the scope of the police (i.e. cleaning vacant lots, improving public lightning, removing a bus stop, etc.), community support and positive media coverage, a police agency willing to implement a POP program will seldom succeed if it does not engage in collaboration with private and public agencies, the public and the media (Scott, 2006).

Overall, the POP program at the 25<sup>th</sup> enjoyed an outstanding degree of cooperation coming from both the public and private sector. The Montevideo City Hall (IM), the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES), the public lighting company (UTE), the Union of Taxi Drivers (SUATT) and some supermarkets are mentioned among the most collaborative entities for the implementation of POP responses. Representatives of these and other institutions frequently attended to meetings in the Precinct to plan ahead the relocation of a bus stop, a cleaning schedule of an obstructed alley, organize the removal of abandoned and vandalized cars and so forth. By the same token, fluid communication existed between *comisarios*, *oficiales* and *agentes* implementing responses. Such external support was frequently mentioned by interviewees:

Interviewee: Support has always been great. We work with the Mayor, the MIDES, UTE... They always come when we call them. We work very well with all of them. (*Comisario*, personal communication, July 4, 2017)

Interviewee: We frequently invite them [representatives from public and private organizations] to see how we work at the Precinct. There we make them

a brief Power Point presentation of the POP program to them. There is always good reception.

Researcher: And does this reception translate to actual support when implementing a response?

Interviewee: Absolutely. In fact, an intervention of the IM it was vital for one of the projects that involved improving public lightning. It sometimes can take up to one year for these requests to go through territorial development offices, then through public lightning offices, environmental management offices...

Instead, we got what we needed in only 48 hours. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 8, 2017)

Turning to the community, positive reception is also reported by interviewees. In most cases, response plans that enjoy grass-roots community support are more likely to be implemented than those which do not, mainly for two reasons. First, community members supportive of a response will be more likely to collaborate with police on its implementation. In precinct 25 this support often translated into vital information for the response's success:

Interviewee: People often tell us 'this is good' [POP], 'we feel safer'.

People in my beat shared information with me. That helped me to identify suspects, and many times this information was shared with [the] Intelligence [division of UNP] ... Probably they trusted us because they knew us. By watching us work with them every day they trust you, and you create a bond with them. (*Agente*, personal communication, July 11, 2017)

The second reason is that community support can be turned into influence, which can mobilize resources and action. A clear example of this is described by one of the officers interviewed:

Interviewee: People help us a lot. For example, we had identified the author of a series of robberies in one of our POP projects. We held several interviews with neighbors and retail owners. Their information helped us to catch him three times, but since he was underage he was always quickly released by the Judge. Every time he was released, the next day he was pointing a 9mm at someone. People were outraged, but they saw the commitment of the 25<sup>th</sup> to catch him... Finally, at the end, this guy was arrested and sent to the INAU [the responsible institution for juvenile justice in Uruguay] because of a homicide. He had 24 robberies and 33 snatches in only 6 months, ok? But why do you think we finally got him? Not because of us, but because of the people! They closed the street and made a public protest to complain that we had got him several times but the Judge had released him! It even came out in the press! (*Agente*, personal communication, July 13, 2017)

Overall, support from the community and organizations (public and private) has been consistent since the program started in 2012. While in general terms the perception of Uruguayans towards the police has been on the rise, the good reception to POP in precinct 25 can be explained for the very factors that prompted its creation. As previously noted, the jurisdiction of the 25<sup>th</sup> was a residential zone marked by a recent peak on crime and disorder. As a consequence, people might have been eager to collaborate with police to reduce crime in their neighborhoods, which translated into a great deal of support towards POP.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The police reform recently undertaken by the MI has been characterized by several innovations. Overall, the UNP has responded accordingly to these changes. For instance, the restructure of the MPD that took place in 2013 or the introduction of PADO in 2016 to reduce street crimes in Montevideo, can be listed among other successful attempts to adapt

the UNP to the reform promoted by the MI. One of the innovations of the police reform in Uruguay is the introduction of POP, which had no precedents in Latin America. However, contrasting with other innovations that were easily embraced by the UNP and worked smoothly, POP has faced important obstacles to its implementation.

This study examined the experience of Montevideo precinct 25 implementing POP. Consistent with research conducted in other parts of the world, qualitative data collected for this study indicates there was a large number of obstacles faced by the program across its implementation. While some of these were inherent to the program itself, many lay beyond the program's scope. A discussion of the problems confronted by the program is presented below, followed by a set of recommendations to mitigate them in the future.

There were several contextual factors that conspired against the effective implementation of POP. To begin with, the very ambitious and comprehensive nature of the Uruguay police reform –which included POP among other innovations– might have become an obstacle inherent to the reform itself. Wide-ranging police reforms –as it was the case of the “Dallas Five Year Plan” (Wycoff & Kelling, 1978) or the Team Policing movement (Kenney, n.d.)– that challenge too many elements of the organization where they take place, are likely to hinder their own success. Specifically, Uruguay's POP pilot challenged the UNP in different ways. For example, it did so with the organizational reform undertaken by the MPD in 2013 by focusing actions into one precinct instead of zones, as well as with traditional practices of the UNP to handle its workload, such as rotation of *comisarios* on weekends, or having the police covering special events such as football and soccer matches. These factors tensioned the relation of the 25<sup>th</sup> command team with the zones and other precincts' commanders. These conflicts meant failures to provide police services both at the precinct and at the zone level. At the same time, the MPD's restructure affected the program

when it took resources from precincts to create the zones, and by leaving them without a clear role in the new organizational structure.

Further, the creation of PADO in 2016 affected the program's implementation two ways. First, its creation caused –as happened with the 2013 restructuring of the MPD– a loss of human resources to precincts, who joined PADO motivated by economic incentives promised by the new program. Second, through the crime reduction strategy of the MPD. This strategy works by identifying “hot” segments in Montevideo, leaving the “hotter” ones to PADO and the “warmer” ones to POP. The underlying implication of this is that POP efforts are unlikely to produce the desired results, as POP is left to deal with areas where crime is decreasing and hence there are no problems to solve, or that directly no longer register crime.

Aside from the organizational context in which the intervention took place, there was a general misunderstanding of the notion of POP that resulted in its incorrect implementation. Consistent with what was reported in other settings (Maguire, Uchida; & Hassell, 2015; Read & Tilley, 2000; Corder & Biebel, 2005), an incorrect understanding of the idea of POP prevailed at precinct 25, at least across Stages I and II. Only three of the 20 cops interviewed for this study provided articulate definitions of POP reflecting its theoretical principles. POP was often described as standard police patrol –although requiring officers to engage in community relations– or traditional community policing. These confusions resulted in incorrect applications of POP in the field. During the first two stages of implementation, SARA was only marginally applied on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and POP mostly consisted of doing foot patrol in beats.

At the same time, confusion existed at the institutional level. Although top police executives interviewed support and embrace the notion of POP, MPD is sending mixed institutional signals to those responsible for doing POP. This point is linked to the assignation

of “warm” hot spots to POP, which causes skepticism among officers about the utility of POP to reduce crime at all.

Leadership problems were also pointed as a major obstacle to POP. While *comisarios* were described by front line officers as showing a strong commitment to do their job, some of them struggled to spread their enthusiasm to their subordinates. Several interpersonal problems between *oficiales* and one *comisario* in particular, as well as between *agentes* and *oficiales*, prevented POP from being embraced by the Precinct’s staff, who saw its implementation as a cause of conflict. In addition, the horizontality and flexibility on the hands of leaders that POP requires, was missed by some commanders. Many officers report how their suggestions remained unheard repeatedly by leaders, which made them lose interest on the program’s success. Nevertheless, a positive note is worth mentioning: these problems are mostly associated to Stage II, and seem to have been left behind at the present stage of implementation (Stage III).

Similar to what has been observed in the U.S. (Buerger, 1994), organizational resistance greatly affected the program’s implementation. While resistance did not come from top executives or precinct commanders, front line officers did manifest a great deal of opposition towards POP. Two main sources of resistance were identified. The first was the community policing unit operational at the 25<sup>th</sup> in early stages of the program. However, resistance was not against POP as a policing strategy itself, but to the changes on shifts and duties experienced by community police officers that the program brought with it. A second source was cops who associated police work to “tougher” tactics. For them, doing POP was not “real” police work, just a “soft” approach to crime. A similar phenomenon has been associated with community policing (Kenney, n.d.) and, specifically, with POP (Sollund, 2007).

Furthermore, at least two motivational issues were associated with the aforementioned resistance. First, oversight mechanisms employed by a number of Precinct's leaders resemble those of traditional police organizations (Shane, 2010), instead of a more flexible approach focused on quality over quantity, best suited for POP oversight (Oettmeier & Wycoff, 1997; Boba & Crank, 2008). This type of supervision was carried forward over what was defined as POP, but was actually foot patrol involving community relations. Therefore, performance was measured by quantitative indicators such as number of minutes standing in a hot spot, hours spent on patrol, distance walked, and so forth. A second issue has to do with the motivational devices at hand of the command staff. Interviewed *oficiales* report that these were not attractive enough to engage cops in POP, a belief backed by some of the *agentes* interviewed.

Another problem confronted by the program was linked to the availability and sufficiency of resources. This applies mostly to Stage III, when lack of resources is challenging the program's success. Mainly attracted by the economic incentives offered by PADO, a significant number of officers requested their transfer to this program. This translated into a 43% loss of the workforce of the 25<sup>th</sup> in one year, which has left only three cops doing POP. In spite of the meritorious efforts undertaken by them, such a small team (which includes the *comisario*) is doubtlessly insufficient to ensure a proper implementation of POP across a whole jurisdiction.

Finally, lack of support and cooperation external to the police agency has been reported as a potentially threatening factor to POP interventions (Scott, 2006). Nonetheless, the POP program at the 25<sup>th</sup> precinct has enjoyed an outstanding degree of external support and cooperation, as reported by all subjects interviewed. Such positive reception coming both from communities and the public and private sector is remarkable, and applies to the three stages of implementation.

## **Recommendations**

Under the light of these observations, a set of recommendations is provided below to be considered in eventual attempts of the MI to replicate POP in the future.

First, POP must acquire a new status within the UNP. At present, POP is considered a program of secondary importance by MPD officers, mainly because the UNP endorses that belief. The crime reduction strategy of the MPD, which consists in assigning “hotter” hot spots to PADO and “warmer” hot spots to POP, does nothing but to take away the purpose of POP. Following MPD directives, POP officers are currently working in places where crime is decreasing or no longer a concern, something that conspires against the potential of POP to reduce crime. Consequently, the prestige associated with crime reduction is linked to PADO only. The MPD crime reduction strategy is suggested to be reviewed in order to assign the hottest hot spots to POP. This way, not only POP will acquire prestige, but crime problems in Montevideo will be solved for good, not just temporarily mitigated through traditional saturation responses (PADO) which have a short-term effect when compared to POP (Braga, Papachristos, & Hureau, 2012).

Second –also related to improving the status of POP– it is recommended to assign POP to a unit capable of carrying it forward. After the 2013 MPD’s restructure, precincts were left with a lower organizational status compared to other units (i.e. zones). Since POP is precinct-based, it now reports to weakened units without a clear role in the MPD. If meant to endure, POP will need to be assigned to a unit with a higher hierarchy than precincts (for example the zones), or at least review the current role and status of precincts in the current MPD organizational structure, so as to upgrade their organizational status.

An alternative solution could be the fusion of POP and PADO into one single program. This program could continue using the name PADO as a brand to keep its prestige, but consist of a POP intervention instead of a standard foot patrol response –after all, it is the

quality of implementation, not a program's denomination, what matters the most. This new version of PADO could keep its current organizational status, reporting to a zone instead of a precinct.

A third recommendation –consistent with the hierarchical upgrade of POP– is to engage cops into POP through attractive incentives. According to what was observed at precinct 25, the promise of extra days off, or excluding officers from doing overtime activities (such as covering Carnival celebrations, soccer or basketball matches) proved unsuccessful to motivate cops to engage in POP. Instead, POP cops could receive the same incentives as PADO (i.e. a wage increase). Although this could imply a reorganization of the budget currently assigned to the MI, economic motivational devices are working as expected to stimulate cops to join PADO. The same would probably happen if these are linked to POP.

Fourth, it is recommended to adapt leadership styles to contemporary performance evaluation standards. This means to leave behind outdated oversight mechanisms consisting of permanent controls and daily performance measures, replacing them by a modern, horizontal leadership, focused on quality over quantity. Oversight mechanisms of this kind are better suited for an adequate POP supervision.

A fifth recommendation is to focus on “small wins”. When looking at social problems as crime, people often look at problems on a massive scale (such as eliminating crime broadly defined). This causes frustration and helplessness, as there is no recipe to get rid of crime for good. Instead, it is suggested to break problems into smaller ones to apply targeted responses to solve them. This way, while these “small wins” might seem less important than larger ones, when taken together, they can be a good measure of success (Weick, 1984, as cited in Kenney, n.d.). For the case of Uruguay, a “small wins” strategy was employed at precinct 25. The few but well-conducted solved problems in Stages II and III are good examples of “small

wins". If POP is to be replicated in the future, it is recommended to keep up with a focus on small problems instead of larger ones.

The sixth recommendation is linked to training. Although most interviewees praise the training they received by John Jay and Jill Dando professors between 2013 and 2016, the observed of confusion on the notion of POP was troubling. Few officers were able to provide correct definitions of POP. Yet, most of whom were interviewed had been exposed at some point in their careers to training in POP. Something that the POP training program did not do was to provide follow-up. If post-training supervision is implemented, the internalization of the concepts of POP by those who apply it would be ensured. It is suggested that, if UNP cops are exposed to training in POP in the near future, programs should include post-training follow up to make sure POP is adequately implemented, and students acquire a practical understanding of POP in real-world settings.

Seventh, it is recommended that the MI makes sure that resources (both human and material) are sufficient and available to ensure POP is adequately implemented. At present, POP is being executed at the 25<sup>th</sup> by two offices who receive support of the *comisario*. This number is undoubtedly insufficient. As done during Stage II in the middle of the MPD's restructure, it is recommended that the program receives adequate resources throughout its implementation.

The MI is committed to extending POP to the rest of Montevideo over the next years, in an ambitious goal that will entail a serious long-term commitment, as well as coordinated efforts from different UNP units. According to the lessons learned from the experience of precinct 25, the application of POP is possible in Montevideo. However, if the organization does not make the necessary adjustments, this goal is likely to be affected by the same problems that affected the POP pilot on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, if the MI's commitment to extend POP to Montevideo is real, several changes must take place soon in the organization of the

UNP. It is hoped that the recommendations provided above serve such goal and help the success of future POP endeavors in Uruguay.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire template

1. When did you start working at the 25<sup>th</sup> Precinct?
2. Do you still work there? If not, when did you leave?
3. Were you directly or indirectly involved in the Problem Oriented Policing program?
  - a. If no, what do you think about it, and how would you describe the opinions of your colleagues about it?
  - b. If yes, what was your role and activities working in the program?
4. How would you describe in general your experience working at the program?
5. How would you define in your own words the notion of “Problem Oriented Policing”?
6. How would you say POP relates to the mission of the UNP?
7. Do you believe you and your colleagues received adequate training in POP? What would you improve on this area?
8. According to your own view, what were the main obstacles faced by the program?
9. Do you believe the program had enough resources for its adequate implementation?
10. What is your opinion about the middle managers and station commanders in charge of the program?
11. How would you describe the way in which the program was received by the station personnel?
12. Do you believe the SARA method was adequately implemented? If not, which problems of implementation can you think of?
13. What do you believe were the outcomes of the program?
14. Would you say the program had an impact on:
  - a. The relationship between the police and the community?

b. Crime?

c. The fear to crime in the community?

15. How do you believe the community received the program?

16. How do you believe other agencies received the program?

17. What is your best memory while working in the program?

18. What was your most difficult challenge while working in the program?

19. According to your own experience, how would you improve the program?

20. Do you believe is it a good idea to replicate the program in other Precincts?

## Appendix B

Informed consent for participants

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

**Title of Research Study:** Roadblocks to the implementation of Problem-Oriented Policing in Montevideo

**Principal Investigator:** Federico del Castillo  
Student  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

**Faculty Advisor:** Dennis Kenney  
Professor  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

You are being asked to participate in a research study because you worked at the 25th Police Precinct of Montevideo between 2012 and 2017.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research study is to examine the implementation of a Problem-Oriented Policing program that was implemented by the Ministry of Interior in the 25th police Precinct of Montevideo.

**Procedures:** If you volunteer to participate in this research study, we will ask you to do the following:

Define a time and place at your convenience in order to conduct a personal interview with the Principal Investigator. The interview will take approximately an hour, and will be intended to know your experience working at the Precinct while the Problem Oriented Policing program was active. Nobody else than the researcher and you will be present at the time of conducting the interview. Additionally, it will aim to know your opinions about the program and its outcomes

**Audio Recording:** To ensure the accuracy of our findings, the interview will be audio recorded for later transcription and review by the research team. You can still participate in this study if you do not consent to audio recording. Recordings will be destroyed after transcription and will not be used for any other purpose.

**Time Commitment:** Your participation in this research study is expected to last for a total of one hour.

**Potential Risks or Discomforts:** This study provides no potential physical harm, but it may cause some discomfort to subjects. This comes from having to express opinions or feelings which they may have not shared with anybody before for fear of being punished.

### **Potential Benefits:**

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research study.

The study will help the Ministry of Interior extend a Problem Oriented Policing strategy to Montevideo. Since Problem Oriented Policing has been associated with less crime, less fear to crime and greater trust towards the police, if the strategy is adequately implemented, the Uruguayan society will benefit from all these outcomes.

**Payment for Participation:** You will not receive any payment for participating in this research study.

**New Information:** You will be notified about any new information regarding this study that may affect your willingness to participate in a timely manner.

**Confidentiality:** We will make our best efforts to maintain confidentiality of any information that is collected during this research study, and that can identify you. We will disclose this information only with your permission or as required by law.

We will protect your confidentiality as follows:

A system of encoding will be established to prevent any names or identifying marks from being recognizable there by protecting subjects' confidentiality.

You will not provide your name or any other personal information during the interview.

Audio recording of the interview will be absolutely subject to your comfort.

Numbers will be used to identify respondents on their interviews.

The names that correspond to these numbers will be kept in a separate location from interviews transcripts and consent forms.

Consent forms will be kept separate from all other data collected. This data will be secured, stored and locked away in the faculty advisor's office. Therefore, only the principal investigator will have access to the materials.

The research team, authorized CUNY staff, and government agencies that oversee this type of research may have access to research data and records in order to monitor the research. Research records provided to authorized, non-CUNY individuals will not contain identifiable information about you. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not identify you by name.

### **Participants' Rights:**

Your participation in this research study is entirely **voluntary**. If you decide not to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your participation or non-participation in this study will in no way affect your employment at the Ministry of Interior.

You can decide to withdraw your consent and stop participating in the research at any time, without any penalty.

**Questions, Comments or Concerns:** If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to one of the following researchers:

Federico del Castillo. Email: federico.delcastillo@jjay.cuny.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or you have comments or concerns that you would like to discuss with someone other than the researchers, please call the CUNY Research Compliance Administrator at 646-664-8918 or email HRPP@cuny.edu.

Alternately, you can write to:

CUNY Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Attn: Research Compliance Administrator  
205 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017

**Signature of Participant:**

If you agree to be audiotaped, please indicate this below.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to be audiotaped

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT agree to be audiotaped

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign and date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Signature of Individual Obtaining Consent**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Individual Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Individual Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C

### Institutional Review Board approval form



University Integrated Institutional Review Board  
nd  
205 East 42

New York, NY 10017

<http://www.cuny.edu/research/compliance.html>

### Approval Notice Initial Application

05/10/2017

Federico Castillo,  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

RE: IRB File #2017-0335  
Roadblocks to the implementation of Problem-Oriented Policing in Montevideo

Dear Federico Castillo,

Your Initial Application was reviewed and approved on 05/10/2017. You may begin this research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Type	Description	Version #	Date
Interview Question(s)	Semi Structured Interview - Problem Oriented Policing in Uruguay.pdf	1	03/18/2017
Email Text	Email request	1	04/06/2017
Informed Consent/Permission Document	Informed consent	1	04/06/2017
Informed Consent Document	Informed consent.pdf	1	04/06/2017

Protocol Approval Period: 05/10/2017 - 05/09/2020

Protocol Risk Determination: Minimal  
 Expedited Categor(ies): (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.; (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.);



Documents / Materials:

University Integrated Institutional Review Board  
 nd  
 205 East 42

Street

New York, NY 10017

<http://www.cuny.edu/research/compliance.html>

Email Text	Email request.pdf	1	04/06/2017
Curriculum Vitae	PI's CITI Certificate	1	04/06/2017
Curriculum Vitae	Faculty advisor CITI Certificate	1	04/30/2017
Site Letter of Compliance	Letter from the MOI	1	04/30/2017

Please remember to:

- Use **the IRB file number** 2017-0335 on all documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.
- Review and comply with CUNY Human Research Protection Program [policies and procedures](#).

The IRB has the authority to ask additional questions, request further information, require additional revisions, and monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Lynda Mules 212-237-8914  
 lmules@jjay.cuny.edu