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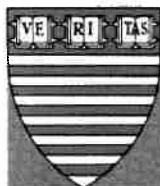

Perspectives on Policing

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Corporate Strategies for Policing

By Mark H. Moore and Robert C. Trojanowicz

Police departments embody a substantial public investment. Each year, the nation spends more than $20 billion to keep police departments on the street and vigilant.[1] More important, each year society puts its freedoms in the hands of the police by empowering them to use force to compel obedience to the nation's laws. That, too, is an investment, for the grant of legitimate authority is a resource granted to police by the citizens. As the Philadelphia Study Task Force explained:

> The police are entrusted with important public resources. The most obvious is money; $230 million a year flows through the police department. Far more important, the public grants the police another resource—the use of force and authority. These are deployed when a citizen is arrested or handcuffed, when an officer fires his weapon at a citizen, or even when an officer claims exclusive use of the streets with his siren.[2]

These resources—money and authority—potentially have great value to society. If wisely deployed, they can substantially reduce the level of criminal victimization. They can restore a sense of security to the nation's neighborhoods. They can guarantee civility and tolerance in ordinary social interactions. They can provide a first-line response to various medical and social emergencies such as traffic accidents, drunkenness, domestic disputes, and runaway youths.

Stewardship over these resources is entrusted to the nation's police executives. They largely decide how best to use these assets. They make such decisions every time they beef up a narcotics unit, or establish priorities for the dispatching of calls, or write new policies governing the use of deadly force

This is one in a series of reports originally developed with some of the leading figures in American policing during their periodic meetings at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The reports are published so that Americans interested in the improvement and the future of policing can share in the information and perspectives that were part of extensive debates at the School's Executive Session on Policing.

The police chiefs, mayors, scholars, and others invited to the meetings have focused on the use and promise of such strategies as community-based and problem-oriented policing. The testing and adoption of these strategies by some police agencies signal important changes in the way American policing now does business. What these changes mean for the welfare of citizens and the fulfillment of the police mission in the next decades has been at the heart of the Kennedy School meetings and this series of papers.

We hope that through these publications police officials and other policymakers who affect the course of policing will debate and challenge their beliefs just as those of us in the Executive Session have done.

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or the proper use of high-speed auto chases. At such moments, the police executives redeploy the money and authority entrusted to them in hopes that their organizations will produce greater value for society.

Judging how best to use the assets and capabilities of a police department is the principal task of police executives. As Professor Kenneth Andrews of the Harvard Business School says:

> The highest function of the executive is . . . leading the continuous process of determining the nature of the enterprise, and setting, revising, and achieving its goals.[3]

Performing this function well is no trivial task. It requires vision, judgment, and imagination, as well as disciplined analytical capabilities.

"... to use the assets and capabilities of a police department ... requires vision, judgment, and imagination, as well as disciplined analytical capabilities."

In the private sector, executives seek to perform this function through the development of a "corporate strategy." A "corporate strategy" defines the principal financial and social goals the organization will pursue, and the principal products, technologies, and production processes on which it will rely to achieve its goals. It also defines how the organization will relate to its employees and to its other constituencies such as shareholders, creditors, suppliers, and customers. In short, a corporate strategy seeks to define for the organization how the organization will pursue value and what sort of organization it will be.[4]

A corporate strategy is developed through an iterative process that examines how the organization's capabilities fit the current and future environment. The executive surveys the environment to see what customers want to buy, what competitors are likely to sell, and what investors are willing to stake money on. He analyzes what his own organization is able to do, what new technologies and products are becoming available, and what investments could be made to widen current capabilities. A strategy is defined when the executive discovers the best way to use his organization to meet the challenges or exploit the opportunities in the environment.

In the public sector, executives often consider the question of how best to use their assets much more narrowly. They tend to assume that basic purposes and operating objectives of the organization were set long ago and now remain fixed. Their job is to optimize performance with respect to these objectives, not to consider new challenges, threats or opportunities, nor to discover new capabilities within their own organizations. They also often assume that in conducting their organization's business, they are restricted to orthodox policies and programs. While public sector executives might field a few innovative programs to deal with special problems, the innovative programs are rarely seen as part of a sustained, staged effort to change the organization's basic strategy.

Recently, some police executives have begun considering different corporate strategies of policing. While these executives see enormous value in the knowledge and skill that have accumulated within police departments over the last 50 years, they are increasingly aware of the limitations of the past conceptions. They are reaching out for new ideas about how police departments should define their basic goals, deploy their assets, and garner support and legitimacy in the communities they now police.

The purpose of this paper is to facilitate the search for a corporate strategy of policing that can deal with the principal problems now besetting urban communities: crime, fear, drugs, and urban decay. The paper first explores the strengths and limitations of the corporate strategy that has guided policing for the last 50 years—a strategy that has been characterized (perhaps caricatured) as "professional crime fighting."[5] It then contrasts this concept with three other concepts that have been discussed, and to some degree developed, within Harvard's Executive Session on Policing. The other concepts are "strategic policing," "problem-solving policing," and "community policing."

"... the corporate strategy that has guided policing for the last 50 years ... has been characterized (perhaps caricatured) as 'professional crime fighting.'"

The concept of corporate strategy

Defining a corporate strategy helps an organization, its employees, and its executives. An explicit corporate strategy tells outsiders who invest in the organization what the organization proposes to do and how it proposes to do it.

It explains to employees what counts as important contributions to the organization. It helps managers maintain a consistent focus in sifting the material that comes through their in-boxes. It directs their attention to the few activities, programs, and investments that are critical to the implementation of the proposed strategy.

For any organization, many possible strategies exist. Three criteria are useful for evaluating and choosing among them. The first is the value of the strategy if successfully implemented. The second test is feasibility—whether the strategy is internally consistent in terms of the products, programs, and administrative arrangements emphasized, and whether it is based upon solid information and proven technologies. Feasibility is related to distance from current operating practice; greater distance makes the proposed changes more costly and difficult. The final criterion involves the degree of risk associated with a given strategy. Those strategies that lie close to existing expectations and capabilities involve little risk for the manager to pursue. Those that stretch expectations and capabilities, that are founded on experiments and hunches, involve much greater risk and often depend on substantial investments for their success.

The development of a corporate strategy is a complex matter. Often, however, complex corporate strategies can be captured in relatively simple phrases or slogans. William Ruckelshaus defined the mission of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as "pollution abatement."[6] Michael Pertschuk declared that his goal for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) was to make it "the largest public interest law firm in the U.S."[7] These apparently simple slogans embodied complex judgments that important changes in the operations of these organizations were both valuable and feasible. "Pollution abatement" focused EPA's efforts on finding sources of pollution and restricting them, not on monitoring levels of pollution or estimating damages. Challenging the FTC to become the "largest public interest law firm" not only raised professional standards in the organization, but also redefined the principal clients of the FTC to be consumers who needed protection from businesses rather than businesses that wanted protection from other businesses.

Simplicity in defining corporate strategies is a virtue for several reasons. First, a simple concept is easy to remember and repeat and therefore more likely to guide discretionary decisions throughout a large organization. Second, a simple concept helps to focus an organization's attention by what it explicitly emphasizes, or implicitly excludes, or the way in which it contrasts with previous strategic concepts. Third, a simple phrase has the virtue of openness. Its very lack of detail allows improvisation, innovation, and evolution in the operations of the organization. Because there is no detailed plan, only general guidance, employees with new ideas can find sanction for their efforts. And because the corporate strategy sets out purposes in broad language, many outside the organization can find reasons to support the organization's efforts.

Labels and corporate strategies of policing

The simple phrases that came to stand for complex ideas about corporate strategies of policing within the discussions of Harvard's Executive Session on Policing included "professional crime fighting," "strategic policing," "problem-solving policing," and "community policing."[8] At the outset, the discussion treated these concepts as nothing more than labels to be attached to the same elements of a future strategy of policing.

Indeed, many participants thought that the elements emphasized by these new concepts had already been incorporated in contemporary versions of the professional crime-fighting model. Others saw little difference between the concepts of problem-solving policing and community policing. Since there was little substantive difference among these concepts, the only issue in choosing among them appeared to be a marketing question: how powerful were the labels in attracting support from the public, in dignifying the work of the police, and in mobilizing them to action?

"... a simple phrase has the virtue of openness. . . . [allowing] improvisation, innovation, and evolution . . ."

In later discussions the words seemed to acquire important substantive significance, reflecting real differences in judgments about such crucial matters as:

- The fundamental purposes of the police.
- The scope of their responsibilities.
- The range of contributions they could make to society.
- The distinctive competences they had to deploy.
- The most effective programmatic and technical means for achieving their purposes.

- The most suitable administrative arrangements for directing and controlling the activities of a police department.
- The proper or most useful way to manage the relationship between the police and the communities for whom they worked.

"... while ... crime control [remains] a central purpose of policing, ... problem-solving policing and community policing accord greater significance to the order-maintenance and fear-reducing functions ..."

For example, while all the concepts make crime control a central purpose of policing, the concepts of problem-solving policing and community policing accord greater significance to the order-maintenance and fear-reducing functions of the police than they hold in the concept of professional crime fighting.

Similarly, while professional crime fighting encourages the police to maintain their distance from the community to ensure the fair and impartial enforcement of the laws, community policing emphasizes a close embrace with the community to achieve more effective crime control and to ensure that the police respond to the issues that concern the community. Such differences seemed large enough for some participants to advocate adopting one concept and dismissing the others.

Still later, it seemed that the concepts were valuable because each highlighted a different challenge or defined a different frontier for police executives to explore in managing their departments for increased value and effectiveness in deploying the police against the principal problems of the cities. Many departments, for example, are still working at the frontiers defined by professional crime fighting, such as enhanced technical capacities to respond to serious street crimes, greater discipline and skill in the use of force and authority, and greater independence from inappropriate political influence.[9]

Other departments have already realized the value associated with the strategy of professional crime fighting and now face the new challenges defined by these other strategic concepts.[10] Strategic policing highlights the technical challenges of dealing with the most difficult sorts of crimes and offenders: for example, terrorism, narcotics trafficking, political corruption, and sophisticated white collar crimes.[11] Problem-solving policing emphasizes the value of being able to diagnose the continuing problems that lie behind the repeated incidents that are reported to police dispatchers and to design and implement solutions to those problems.[12] Community policing stresses the key role that a working partnership between the police and the community can play in solving crimes, reducing fear, and resolving situations that lead to crimes.[13] According to our Executive Session discussions, these are the challenges that define the frontiers of policing in the next generation.

It is possible that these challenges can all be met simultaneously by a new, integrated corporate strategy of policing. In that case, police executives would not have to choose among competing strategic conceptions. They could meet all the diverse challenges.

Alternatively, it might prove impossible to pursue all the different conceptions simultaneously. The challenges might be sufficiently diverse that, at least in the short run, managerial attention, the public's willingness to invest, and the officers' tolerance for experimentation are too limited to allow simultaneous advances on all fronts. In that case, police executives would have to decide which path to pursue first.

Or, it could be that the different strategies are somehow fundamentally incompatible—that the pursuit of one strategy makes it virtually impossible for the police agency to pursue another. This could occur if the different strategies require fundamentally different value orientations or cultures within the organization, too many different kinds of personnel and capabilities, or inconsistent administrative arrangements. In that case, police executives might have to make difficult choices among corporate strategies.

Whether executives must choose among these strategies, or whether some synthesis is possible, remains an important question. This paper seeks to help police executives answer that question. These different conceptions will be developed first as relatively complete, competing corporate strategies of policing. Then, in a concluding section, the paper will consider how, and to what degree, the apparently competing conceptions may be synthesized in an overall corporate strategy of policing.

Professional crime fighting

The corporate strategy that guided policing during the last half-century is captured by the phrase professional crime fighting. This strategy achieved a great deal for the police. It carried them from a world of amateurism, lawlessness,

and political vulnerability to a world of professionalism, integrity, and political independence.[14] The principal engines of this transformation include:

(1) a sharpened focus on crime control as the central mission of the police;

(2) a shift in organizational structure from decentralized, geographically defined units to a centralized structure with subordinate units defined by function rather than by geography; and

(3) substantial investments in modern technology and training of officers.

The aim of the professional crime-fighting strategy was to create a disciplined, technically sophisticated, quasi-military crime-fighting force. Crime control and crime solving became the dominant goals in policing. Those goals, as well as the common views about the best way to achieve them, are embedded in the current standards of accreditation and form the basic assumptions underlying both the majority of police training and the deployment of police resources throughout the country.

"... professional crime fighting ... carried [police] from a world of amateurism, lawlessness, and political vulnerability to a world of professionalism, integrity, and political independence."

The principal operating technologies of this strategy include (1) patrol forces equipped with cars and radios to create an impression of omnipresence and to respond rapidly to incidents of crime; and (2) investigative units trained in sophisticated methods of criminal investigation, such as automated fingerprint identification and the use of criminal histories.

In addition, this strategy emphasizes accountability to the law by seeking to eliminate police discretion through increased centralization, written policies and procedures, dense supervision, and separation of the police from the corrupting influence of local politicians.

This conception of professional crime-fighting policing embodies powerful values: crime control as an important objective, investment in police training, enhanced status and autonomy for the police, and the elimination of corruption and brutality. With the close connection to all these important values, it is no wonder that the concept of professional crime-fighting policing has been popular and endures as a corporate strategy of policing. There is much that citizens and police can rally around and great value to be claimed in pursuing this ideal.

"Several decades of ... experience with these basic crime-fighting tactics ... revealed some unexpected weaknesses."

Still, there are some obvious (and not so obvious) weaknesses of this strategy. The most significant is the limitations of professional policing in controlling crime.[15] Initially, it seemed that patrolling officers and skilled detectives would constitute an effective crime-fighting force. Several decades of operating experience with these basic crime-fighting tactics have revealed some unexpected weaknesses.

One is that the tactics are essentially reactive. They depend on someone noticing a crime and calling the police. That leaves many crimes—those "invisible others" that do not produce victims or witnesses who are willing to mobilize—beyond the reach of the police.[16] Such crimes include consensual crimes (such as drug dealing and bribery, in which the participants do not perceive themselves as victimized), extortionate crimes (such as organized criminal extortion, often rape, and child and spouse abuse, in which the victims are too afraid to come forward), dispersed crimes (such as embezzlement and fraud, in which victimization is diffused so broadly that people do not know that they have been victimized), and inchoate crimes (such as conspiracies, which do not have victims because the crimes have not yet occurred). Note that this list includes offenses which are committed by sophisticated, determined, and powerful criminal offenders. Thus, there is a gap in police capacities to deal with certain kinds of offenses and certain kinds of offenders.

A second problem with these tactics is that they fail to prevent crimes, except through the mechanisms of deterrence and incapacitation. In the professional strategy of policing, crime prevention is de-emphasized in favor of reacting after the fact. Little emphasis is given to mobilizing citizens to defend themselves. Indeed, the help of amateurs is discouraged as inconsistent with the image of a disciplined professional force that can deal with all the problems. Nor is any emphasis placed on analyzing and eliminating the proximate causes of crime. That is viewed as social work rather than crime fighting.

A less obvious weakness of this strategy lies in its discouragement of a close working relationship with the community. The concept of professional policing encourages distance between the police and the community in the interests of ensuring impartiality and avoiding corruption. That distance, useful as it is in pursuing these values, comes at a price. The police lose their intimate link to the communities. This hurts their crime-fighting capability because it cuts them off from valuable information about the people and conditions that are causing crimes.[17]

Another effect of maintaining professional distance from the community is that the police appear less accessible. Consequently the police become a less frequent recourse, even for fearful or crime-ridden communities. It is not that the police become unpopular; they remain extremely important to the community.[18] It is just that they seem less present, and therefore less able to meet the pressing needs and particular worries of citizens.

In some big cities, professional distance became particularly problematic, for just as police departments were seeking to insulate themselves from the communities and set higher professional standards, the cities began to change. In the 1960's, cities absorbed new migrant populations from the rural South, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Asia. Few police came from these immigrant populations and had little knowledge of these cultures. The result was that while the police thought of themselves as professionally distanced, the communities began to think of them as unresponsive and indifferent to their concerns. In extreme cases, communities saw the police as an alien, occupying army.[19] The political legitimacy of the police began to erode along with their operational value.

"... cities absorbed new migrant populations from the rural South, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Asia. Few police came from these immigrant populations.... while the police thought of themselves as professionally distanced, the communities [thought] them unresponsive and indifferent ..."

Newer conceptions of policing have developed in response to these weaknesses in professional crime fighting, just as professional crime fighting arose in response to the weaknesses of the older political conception of policing. The new conceptions differ from one another in that they respond to different weaknesses and offer different ways to eliminate the weaknesses of professional crime fighting.

Strategic policing

The concept of strategic policing seeks to improve on professional crime-fighting policing by adding thoughtfulness and toughness to the basic mission of crime fighting and crime control.[20] In strategic policing the basic goal remains the effective control of crime. The administrative style remains centralized. And the police retain the initiative in defining and acting on the crime problems of the community. In fact their initiative is enhanced as enforcement capabilities are improved—capabilities that allow them not only to deal more effectively with ordinary street crime but also to confront sophisticated offenders who lie behind the invisible offenses described above.

"... strategic policing emphasizes an increased capacity to deal with crimes that are not well controlled by traditional methods."

With respect to ordinary street crime, strategic policing seeks improvements through directed patrol,[21] decoy operations to catch street robbers, and sting operations to disrupt burglary and fencing operations. Strategic policing recognizes that the community can be an important instrument aiding the police. Hence, block watch associations are emphasized, citizens are urged to mark their property, and the police are available to offer advice on security to businesses and private homeowners.[22] Such programs embody a strategic rather than a reactive approach to street crime.

In addition, strategic policing emphasizes an increased capacity to deal with crimes that are not well controlled by traditional methods. Two kinds of crimes are particularly salient. First are crimes committed by sophisticated, individual offenders, such as career criminals or serial murderers, who operate beyond local boundaries. Second are offenses committed by criminal associations, organized crime families, drug distribution networks, gangs, sophisticated white-collar offenders engaged in computer and credit card frauds, and even corrupt politicians—the so-called superstructure of crime.[23]

To attack the first kind of crime, more sophisticated investigative capabilities are necessary. To attack the second,

the police have to employ more intrusive investigative procedures, such as informants, undercover operations, electronic surveillance, and sophisticated intelligence analysis. It is also important that the police gain some independence from their local political base. They need to widen their jurisdiction to attack the sophisticated, multi-jurisdictional criminal offender. They need to separate themselves from the influence of the local political community to be able to attack the superstructure of crime. Unless they can do this, they find themselves subject to its control, and thus occasionally hamstrung.

These points have important implications for the administrative arrangements and organizational alignments of police departments. For strategic policing in big-city departments, the need for sophisticated skills and wide jurisdictions necessitates the establishment of specialized, central investigative units. Such units are necessary to develop and sustain the appropriate skills, files, and equipment to carry out complex investigations. Centralized control of these units is also often considered essential to ensure an appropriate degree of supervision over the use of relatively controversial investigative methods.

Strategic policing in suburban and rural areas requires these smaller departments to band together in regional associations. Otherwise, they cannot afford the investments in the required specialized capabilities. Nor do they have a wide enough jurisdiction to deal with offenders operating across community boundaries.

To get out from under the influence of powerful criminal elements, local police departments in both metropolitan and suburban areas form alliances with and establish operational ties to Federal enforcement agencies and the judiciary, rather than with local politicians. Such alliances enhance investigative sophistication, effectively widen jurisdictions, and ensure that powerful allies are available when locally powerful offenders are the focus of investigation.

In sum, in strategic policing the police response to crime becomes broader, more proactive, and more sophisticated. The range of investigative and patrol methods is expanded to include intelligence operations, undercover stings, electronic surveillance, and sophisticated forensic methods. The range of targets is enlarged to include sophisticated offenders and inchoate crimes. The key new investments involve the creation of specialized investigative capabilities and improved criminal intelligence functions. Patrol operations are generally reduced as a share of police operations to make room for the specialized investigative units. The community is seen as an important auxiliary to the police in dealing with crime, but the police retain the initiative in defining and acting upon crime problems. The principal value claimed by strategic policing is improved crime control. The old values of political independence, lawfulness, and technical sophistication are also protected—even promoted—as police departments form alliances with Federal law enforcement agencies rather than with local politicians. In an important sense, strategic policing represents the next step along the path marked out by professional crime fighting.

"The principal value claimed by strategic policing is improved crime control. The old values of political independence, lawfulness, and technical sophistication are also protected . . ."

Problem-solving policing

Like strategic policing, the concept of problem-solving policing seeks to improve upon the older, professional strategy of policing by adding proactiveness and thoughtfulness. It differs from strategic policing in the focus of the analytic effort.

In professional and strategic policing, the underlying assumption is that crime is successfully controlled by discovering offenses and prosecuting the offenders. Such efforts control crime directly by incapacitating offenders. They also prevent crime by increasing the probability of arrest and successful prosecution (i.e., through general and specific deterrence). Thus, they prescribe tactics that position the police to see offenses and respond to them.

Problem-solving policing takes a different view of crime and its effective control. In problem-solving policing, one does not naturally assume that crimes are caused by predatory offenders. True, in all crimes there will be an offender vulnerable to prosecution under the law. But problem-solving policing makes the assumption that crimes could be caused by particular, continuing problems in a community, such as frustrating relationships or a disorderly milieu.[24] It follows, then, that crimes might be controlled, or even prevented, by actions other than the arrest of particular individuals. For example, the police might be able to resolve a chronic dispute or restore order to a disorderly street. Arrest and prosecution remain crucially important tools of policing. But ideas about the causes of crime and methods for controlling it are substantially widened.

This basic change in perspective requires police departments to widen their repertoire of responses to crime far beyond patrol, investigation, and arrests. For example, the police can use negotiating and conflict-resolving skills to sort out disputes before they become crime problems.[25] Disputes (between parents and children, landlords and tenants, merchants and customers, and between neighbors) might be mediated without waiting for a fight to occur and without immediate recourse to the criminal law, arrests, and prosecutions. Moreover, the police, with a heightened awareness of such underlying problems, might take such corrective action the 2d time they are called to the scene rather than the 6th or 10th time, thus making substantial savings in the use of police resources.

The police can make use of the civil powers vested in their licensing authority and other municipal ordinances to enhance neighborhood security. Bars can be cautioned on excessive noise,[26] merchants urged to comply with traffic regulations, and children cautioned on curfew violations to reduce occasions in which fear and disputes arise.

Community residents may be mobilized to deal with specific problems. They can replace lights in hallways, clean up playgrounds so that parents and young children no longer feel excluded from the park by teenagers,[27] and accompany the elderly and the vulnerable on errands.

“Bars can be cautioned on excessive noise, merchants urged to comply with traffic regulations, and children cautioned on curfew violations to reduce occasions in which fear and disputes arise.”

Finally, other government organizations may be mobilized to deal with situations leading to crimes. The Public Housing Authority can be asked to repair fences to prevent incursions by predatory offenders and to seal vacant apartments to eliminate shooting galleries for drug addicts and club houses for juvenile gangs. The Public Works Department can be encouraged to haul away abandoned cars and other debris.

This change in tactics has ramifications for the organizational structure of the police department. To the extent that problem solving depends on the initiative and skill of officers in defining problems and devising solutions, the administrative style of the organization must change. Since much more depends on individual initiative, the department must become more decentralized. Otherwise, the advantages of local knowledge and adaptiveness are lost. A further implication is that generalist patrol officers, knowledgeable about the communities they serve, become the new heroes of the organization (traditionally, the heroes have been the specialist investigators).

The focus of police action is widened in a different way from that of strategic policing. Strategic policing challenges the police to deal with sophisticated crimes and powerful offenders in addition to the street crimes such as robbery, rape, and burglary that are the main focus of professional crime fighting. Problem-solving policing challenges the police to deal with the disputes and conditions that make life feel disorderly and frightening to citizens and therefore breed crime and underlie later demands on the police department.

In sum, like strategic policing, problem-solving policing seeks enhanced crime control. The means, however, are quite different. They include diagnosing underlying problems which give rise to crime (rather than identifying offenders) and mobilizing the community and governmental agencies to act on the problems (rather than arresting and prosecuting offenders). Reliance on these means naturally encourages geographic decentralization and dependence on resourceful generalist patrol officers, rather than on the centralized functional specialist units. The problem-solving approach also draws the police into a different relationship with the communities—one in which the communities and other government agencies help the police work on underlying problems. Because many of those problems are not, strictly speaking, problems of crime and criminal victimization, a police department pursuing a strategy of problem solving will end up pursuing a broader set of objectives than the effective control of street crime. It will pursue order maintenance and fear reduction objectives as well as crime control.

Community policing

The third new concept, community policing, goes even further in its efforts to improve the crime control capacities of the police. To achieve that goal, it emphasizes the creation of an effective working partnership between the community and the police.

Many of the participants in the Executive Session see little difference between the strategy of problem-solving policing and community policing. They think of problem solving as a technique to be used in community policing rather than a different corporate strategy for policing. If there is a difference between the strategy of problem solving and the strategy of community policing, however, it lies in a different view of the status and role of the community institutions, and in the organizational arrangements constructed to enhance community involvement.

". . . families, schools, neighborhood associations, and merchant groups, are . . . partners to the police in the creation of safe, secure communities. The success of the police depends . . . on the creation of competent communities."

In community policing, community institutions such as families, schools, neighborhood associations, and merchant groups are seen as key partners to the police in the creation of safe, secure communities. The success of the police depends not only on the development of their own skills and capabilities, but also on the creation of competent communities. Community policing acknowledges that police cannot succeed in achieving their basic goals without both the operational assistance and political support of the community. Conversely, the community cannot succeed in constructing decent, open, and orderly communities without a professional and responsive police force.

To construct the working partnership and build competent communities, a police agency must view the community institutions as more than useful political allies and operational partners in the pursuit of police-defined objectives. They must see the development and protection of the institutions as partly an end as well as a means. Moreover, the police must recognize that they work for the community, as well as for the law and their professional development.

Partly to recognize the status of the community institutions and partly to develop the working partnership, police agencies pursuing the strategy of community policing must become more open to community definitions and priorities of problems to be solved. In problem-solving policing, the police retain much of the initiative in identifying problems and proposing solutions to the community. They are the experts. They know what crimes are being committed. They know what citizens have been calling to complain about. They know how police resources can be deployed to deal with the problem. In community policing, the community's views have a greater status. Their views about what constitutes a serious problem count. So do their views about what would be an appropriate police response. In short, the police seek a wider consultation and more information from the community.

Consistent with that philosophy, a police agency pursuing a strategy of community policing relies on many different organizational devices to open the department to the community. Police executives direct their officers to make face-to-face contact with citizens in their areas of responsibility.[28] Where feasible, police executives establish foot patrols to enhance the citizens' sense of access to the department.[29] The executives restructure the organization in decentralized, geographic commands, symbolized by neighborhood police stations.[30] Community consultative groups are established and their views about police priorities are taken seriously. Community surveys, as well as crime statistics, are incorporated in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the police.

Opening police departments to community concerns inevitably changes their operational focus, at least to some degree. As in problem-solving policing, the focus widens beyond incidents of criminal victimization to include lesser disorders that stimulate fears and conditions that suggest a general deterioration of community standards; for it is these things that are often of greatest concern to citizens. The inevitable police involvement in social and medical emergencies is also viewed differently in community policing. While the police role in handling domestic disputes, runaway children, and traffic accidents is viewed as a dangerous distraction in professional crime fighting, these activities are viewed more positively in the strategy of community policing, since they provide a basis for developing the working relationship with the community. With community policing, a police executive might see value in deploying police resources for such activities as school-based drug education programs, programs to punish and educate drunk drivers, or a joint program with schools and the juvenile justice system to stop school violence and reduce truancy.[31]

"While the police role in handling domestic disputes, runaway children, and traffic accidents is viewed as a dangerous distraction in professional crime fighting, . . . in community policing, . . . they [develop] the working relationship with the community."

The close relationship with the community also raises important questions about political interference that must be resolved with new understandings of police accountability.[32] From one perspective, creating close links with local communities increases the risk that the police will be unduly influenced by illegitimate political demands. The police might be used by powerful local interests to undermine the interests and rights of less powerful citizen groups.

From another perspective, however, the relationship enhances police accountability by making the police more responsive to community concerns as expressed in meetings, surveys, and face-to-face and telephone contacts. The issue here is whether the police are accountable to the law and its impartial enforcement, or to the community and its representatives who pass the laws and consent to be policed in a particular way.

This tension, between legal impartiality and political responsiveness as the basis of police legitimacy, can be theoretically resolved by saying that the police are strictly accountable to the law except where discretion exists. In those areas for discretion, the police may properly be guided by the desire to be responsive to legitimate expressions of neighborhood concerns. What this theoretical perspective leaves unacknowledged is that many of the most important questions facing police executives remain unanswered by the law. The criminal law simply distributes a set of liabilities through the society which the police are duty bound to act on if requested by a citizen. It does not tell police executives how they ought to deploy their resources in response to citizen complaints, nor what offenses they should emphasize as enforcement targets, nor the extent to which the police should feel responsible for preventing crime, reducing fears, or offering emergency services as well as enforcing the law.

"... what the police must take from their legal foundation is the obligation to say no ... when the community asks them to do something ... unfair, discriminatory, or illegal ..."

As a practical matter, what the police must take from their legal foundation is the obligation to say no to the community when the community asks them to do something that is unfair, discriminatory, or illegal. In the end, although it is valuable for the police to seek a close working relationship with the community by being responsive to community concerns, the police must also stand for the values of fairness, lawfulness, and the protection of constitutional rights. Indeed, they must defend those interests from the interests of the politically powerful. That crucial lesson is the hard-won legacy of the strategy of professional crime fighting.

Overall, under the community policing concept, the ends, means, administrative style, and relationship with the community all change. The ends expand beyond crime fighting to include fear reduction, order maintenance, and some kinds of emergency social and medical services. The means incorporate all of the wisdom developed in problem-solving approaches to situations that stimulate calls to the police. The administrative style shifts from centralized and specialized to decentralized and generalized. The role of the community is not merely to alert the police to crimes and other problems, but to help control crime and keep communities secure. While the department remains confident in its professional expertise and committed to the fair application of the law, it is more open to discussions with local communities about its priorities, its operating procedures, and its past performances.

Excellence in policing: a synthesis

The frontiers marked out for development by these different strategies of policing add up to a major challenge for police executives. If pursued simultaneously and aggressively, the different strategies would require significant changes in the mission, primary programs and technologies, and basic administrative arrangements of police departments. They would also require important changes in the relationship with the community. In some cases, the cumulative challenges merely stretch the organization to incorporate new capabilities. In other cases, however, the different challenges seem to twist the organization in opposite directions.

With respect to the mission of policing, the cumulative impact of these corporate strategies is to broaden more than to twist. The mission is no longer limited to the effective control of street crime. It also includes: (1) a strengthened attack on dangerous offenders, organized criminal groups, and white collar offenders; (2) a more determined effort to resolve the problems that underlie incidents reported to police dispatchers; and (3) a heightened concern for fear, disorder, and other problems that communities designate as high priority issues, or that the police choose to handle as the basis for forming a more effective partnership with the community. The mission might even widen to include police action on community problems such as drugs in schools, drunk driving, public drunkenness, unsupervised children, and other medical and social crises. While it is by no means easy for an executive to create an organization that can accommodate these diverse purposes, there does not seem to be any fundamental tension among these missions. Indeed, most police departments are already pursuing these diverse missions with reasonable degrees of success.

With respect to the principal programs and technologies, the cumulative impact of the challenges is once again primarily to stretch and widen, not to twist. To deal with the broader

mission, new functions and programs must be created. Strategic policing demands much more effective intelligence and investigative techniques than are commonly used in professional crime fighting. Problem-solving policing demands greater diagnostic skills and a far broader repertoire of responses to problems than arrest and prosecution. Community policing demands a more varied set of interactions with individuals and groups within the community, as well as the development of new capacities to deal with community-designated problems such as teenage drug use, violence in schools, or public drunkenness.

“Strategic policing demands much more effective intelligence and investigative techniques than are commonly used in professional crime fighting.”

With respect to the administrative organization of the police department, the combined set of challenges twists police organizations in opposite directions. Strategic policing requires (1) centralization (to ensure tight administrative control over sensitive intelligence and investigative functions); (2) the establishment of specialized functional units (to ensure the development and maintenance of expertise in key areas); and (3) independence from local communities (to ensure a platform from which to attack powerful local interests if they are committing crimes). Problem-solving and community policing, however, require (1) decentralization (to encourage officer initiative and the effective use of local knowledge); (2) geographically defined rather than functionally defined subordinate units (to encourage the development of local knowledge); and (3) close interactions with local communities (to facilitate responsiveness to and cooperation with the community).

Perhaps the greatest torque created by the cumulative weight of these challenges exists in the domain of community relations. It is a deep philosophical divide as well as an administrative issue. In strategic policing, the community is seen as a potential threat insofar as it conceals, even nourishes, the superstructure of crime. In community policing, the community is seen as a crucial aid in dealing with crime and fear. In strategic policing, the community is to be held at arm's length and worked on by the police department. In community policing, the community is to be embraced and worked with.

These contradictions may be more apparent than real: a product of the stylized way in which the alternative strategies are presented. But as police executives contemplate the demanding challenges envisioned in these strategies, two important conclusions emerge.

First, if police departments are to stake out the frontiers marked for exploration by these different corporate strategies, they will have to become more capacious, flexible, and innovative than they now commonly are. They will have to contain within the organization a wider and more complicated set of functional capabilities than now exists. For example, they will need:

- Sophisticated answering and call-screening capabilities to preserve time for activities other than responding to calls for service.
- Generalist patrol officers who are as comfortable outside their cars as in, and as capable of organizing meetings and mediating disputes as of making arrests.
- Analytical and intelligence capabilities that can discern both nagging community problems and activities of dangerous, sophisticated offenders.
- Sufficient flexibility in deployment and capability to deal with different sizes and kinds of problems.

Indeed, police departments might well have to shift from a relatively inflexible organizational structure based on stable, fixed chains of command to a structure based on projects and programs of different sizes and duration, led by people of many different ranks. That will cut deeply into traditional organizational structures and command relationships.

“It seems relatively simple, for example, to resolve the question of whether the police will seek to deal with street crime, sophisticated crimes, problems giving rise to incidents that trigger calls, or community-designated priorities. They have to deal with all of them.”

Second, if police organizations of the future are to respond to the various challenges posed by the different strategic concepts, police executives must face up to the apparent contradictions and be able to resolve them. In some cases, this will not be hard. It seems relatively simple, for example, to resolve the question of whether the police will seek to deal with street crime, sophisticated crimes, problems giving rise to incidents that trigger calls, or community-designated

priorities. They have to deal with all of them. None can safely be neglected. The only thing necessary to incorporate all of these within the mission of policing is to keep reminding the officers and others that the mission properly includes all these features. No single front represents "real police work."

It also seems relatively easy to resolve the question of whether the police are responsible for managing fear and disorder as well as serious criminal victimization. The answer is clearly yes; certainly no other government agency regards itself as specifically responsible for it. Without doubt, the police are responsible for these matters not only as an important approach to crime prevention, but also as important value-creating activities in their own right.

It is a bit more difficult to resolve the apparent tension between the further development of sophisticated investigative techniques to deal with complex offenses and powerful offenders on the one hand, and, on the other, the development of the diagnostic capabilities and working community partnerships that can solve nagging community problems. There seems to be a cultural stumbling block in confronting these challenges. The crucial difference seems to be that professional crime fighting and strategic policing focus on "serious crime," view the cause of such crimes as the bad motivations of offenders, and seek to deal with the problem by arresting and prosecuting offenders. Problem-solving policing and community policing, on the other hand, focus on anything that is named as a community problem and seek to handle the problem with any means available—not simply arrest and prosecution.

"The long-ignored reality, however, is that [detectives and patrol officers] have a great deal in common."

Part of the reason that these distinctions strike a sensitive nerve in police departments is that the differences are enshrined in an organizational distinction between detectives and investigative units on the one hand, and patrol officers and community relations units on the other. The long-ignored reality, however, is that these apparently diverse functions have a great deal in common. Both depend on being able to see behind the surface manifestations of a problem. The attack on sophisticated crimes and dangerous offenders requires an ability to discern a common mechanism behind apparently unrelated incidents. The attack on community problems similarly requires the officers to see behind sets of incident-driven calls, widespread community fears, or persistent crime problems, and to understand and deal with the deeper causes.

Both also require a great deal of imagination and initiative on the part of the officer in devising and executing a solution to the operational problems they encounter. In both countering sophisticated crimes and problem solving in the community, the investigative approaches must be invented and tailored to individual cases.

In short, the investigative-detective style of operating needs to be applied to a wider range of problems than investigators now handle. It is therefore important that the investigative style (without the narrow focus on crimes and offenders) seep into the rest of the organization. The manager has to be aware that the same imagination and resourcefulness, which is invoked in combatting high-tech crime, can also be profitably spent on more common and more nagging problems facing the community.

Perhaps the most difficult contradictions to resolve are those related to organizational structure and to the relationship between the department and the community. These are firmly linked because the structure of the organization has strong implications for whether and how community institutions can have access to the police. Centralized structures tend to make midlevel managers responsive to the administrative demands of headquarters, rather than to the interests of local communities. Decentralized structures do the opposite. A functional organization (in which the subordinate units are based on technical specialties) tends to be unresponsive to local demands; a geographic organization (in which technical specialties are lumped together in units that are coterminous with organized communities) is much more responsive to local concerns.

Initially, the tension between the centralized, functional structures suited to professional crime-fighting policing and strategic policing, and the decentralized, geographic structures suited to problem-solving and community policing seems irreconcilable. Professional crime-fighting policing needs the tight discipline and control that centralization seems to promise. Strategic policing requires the development of specialized skills that can be produced only by committing a portion of the force to the development of those skills, and by protecting it from ordinary demands. Problem-solving and community policing, on the other hand, need decentralization to encourage the initiative of the officers. They require geographically based units to encourage the creation of working partnerships. And they need generalists to ensure that diverse skills can be combined to produce solutions to community problems.

"... one could create a narcotics squad to develop specialists who would be knowledgeable about drug problems ... But ... their principal assignment would be to equip and assist the generalist units as narcotics problems arose."

One possible resolution of this conflict is to create specialist units, but to keep them small, and use them as consultants to the generalist units rather than rely on them for all operations within their sphere of competence. For example, one could create a narcotics squad to develop specialists who would be knowledgeable about drug problems and the complex investigative techniques they require. But they would not be responsible for all narcotics operations. Their principal assignment would be to equip and assist the generalist units as narcotics problems arose. They might also function as program managers for narcotics enforcement throughout the department as a whole. The program would not be executed by the narcotics unit alone, but instead by many officers outside the unit's command.

An alternative would be to organize primarily around geographic commands, which would include officers qualified by training and experience in specialized functions. Assignments of officers would be created from projects and programs that varied in terms of scale and longevity. When a problem arises that requires the services of an officer skilled in, say, juvenile matters, officers would be drawn from the geographic commands to resolve the problem. When a citywide program in narcotics enforcement is needed, officers skilled in narcotics enforcement would be called on to work on the problem.

In short, instead of organizing by relatively large, durable commands, police departments would organize (and frequently reorganize) on the basis of specific problems and programs that are identified as being important. These would vary in terms of scale and longevity. This would require the police to shift from managing through specialized operational commands to managing through a combination of program managers and general geographical commands—a change that challenges traditional conceptions of responsible police management.

Even harder than creating flexible responses to specific problems is the issue of how to properly structure community relations. In professional crime fighting, the community is operationally important as an aid to solving crimes. Calls from individual citizens alert the police to crimes being committed. Victims and witnesses supply the evidence necessary to convict offenders. Thus, the community is a key operational component of professional crime fighting. But a key imperative of professional crime fighting is separation from community demands lest law enforcement integrity be compromised.

Strategic policing goes even further in seeking police independence as it tries to find a secure platform from which to launch attacks on powerful offenders. Problem-solving and community policing, on the other hand, seek a closer embrace with the community. In the interests of building effective working partnerships, both problem-solving policing and community policing reach out for a close relationship and respond to community concerns.

The resolution of this paradox is conceptually simple, but exceedingly difficult to implement and to explain to outsiders. The police must remain loyal to the values that they have pursued for so long in professional policing: a commitment to the fair and impartial enforcement of the law; a capacity to use force and authority economically and fairly; a determination to defend constitutional rights, particularly those of minorities; a kind of discipline that allows them to resist both the desires of powerful people to use them for their purposes and their own impulse to use the powers of their office for expressing their own angers, fears, and prejudices; etc. At the same time, they must recognize that while these values might be tested in seeking a close connection with the community, they need not be compromised.

"The police must remain loyal to the values that they have pursued for so long in professional policing ... At the same time, ... in seeking a close connection with the community, [these values] need not be compromised."

Indeed, to assume that the only way these values can be protected is by separating the police from the community is to give too little credit to the achievements that have been made in professionalizing the police. A true professional is one who can hold to his values (and exercise his skills) when they are tested in use. In practical terms, this means constant affirmation of these professional values throughout the

organization, especially as members of the force at all levels are urged to do more to respond to the public's concerns.

These conclusions suggest the shape of a future corporate strategy of policing. It might be called "professional, strategic, community, problem-solving policing." It is a challenging task for police executives to realize such a vision. They must overcome the powerful claims of tradition in articulating the mission and organizing their departments. They must override the desires and expectations of many of their employees who have different visions of policing. They must cope with powerful external pressures to produce the illusion of accountability through rigid, centralized management. And, most important, they must cope with their own uncertainties about the best way to use the assets of their organization to produce decent, civil, tolerant communities. It is up to today's police executives to find the solution.

Notes

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