

Deregulating the Public Service

Can Government Be Improved?

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10 || Policing: Deregulating or Redefining Accountability?

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OVER the past decade, many of the nation's leading law enforcement practitioners and analysts have come to support the general ideas of community-based policing, and scores of jurisdictions have tried some form of it. Yet, despite the widespread enthusiasm, community-based policing remains more an aspiration than a reality. One major but often overlooked reason is that it requires changes in administrative ideas and operations that are inherently difficult to make and incredibly hard to sustain. Community-based policing means at least two things: bringing police officers and citizens into working partnerships at the neighborhood level and giving the police responsibility for identifying and solving neighborhood problems even if they are not conventional law enforcement matters. Thus traditional command-and-control forms of police organization must give way to forms that are less centralized, less rule-oriented, and less regulation-bound. Deregulation may well be the key to community-based policing.

In the analysis that follows, I will not dwell on community-based policing itself. Rather, my account of the administrative evolution of police bureaucracies will provide a window on deregulation and other reform strategies. Deregulation is a key to the development of community-based or kindred forms of policing, but only if deregulation means not merely mechanical changes in personnel and procurement procedures, flattened hierarchies, and the like, but also fundamental, discretion-enhancing changes in how police and other public servants define and act upon their accountability to the public. This vision of deregulation extends not only to police and other bureaucrats who interact directly and personally with the public but also to technical personnel, senior officials, and other

office-bound bureaucrats who have minimal direct and personal interaction with the public. I am relatively optimistic that deregulation in the service of fostering community-based policing is both desirable and possible. But there are no easy answers: this kind of policing demands a major shift not only in conventional ideas about law enforcement but also in conventional ideas about public bureaucracy.

Public Administration and Police Management

Long ago Max Weber observed that the essential, defining quality of a state was its monopoly over the legitimate use of force.¹ In doing so, he put police administration at the center of public administration, for it is through the operations of the police that the state enacts this defining quality.² The badge, the nightstick, and the gun are both the symbols and the tools of state authority, and it is municipal police departments that are supplied such instruments.

Because police administration is so closely tied to the defining purposes of the state, it follows that if there is something distinctive about public administration, it will show up in the theory and practice of police administration.³ Police administration will necessarily have to express those special qualities, and so, I think, it does.

Because police use state authority so extensively, police departments are under enormous pressure to be accountable, to explain and justify their actions to citizens and their representatives. The police do so partly by making practical and instrumental arguments: they point to the urgency of controlling crime, their success in doing so, and the crucial role that state authority plays in helping them.

But the police must also justify their actions by making principled claims about the fairness and propriety with which they operate. They must be able to show that they enforce laws fairly and impartially as well as effectively and that they use their substantial powers to detain, investigate, and subdue properly, that is, only when warranted and only to the degree necessary.

Finally, because police can restrain freedom, intrude into private life, damage reputations, and even injure and kill in pursuit of their law enforcement objectives, and because they often must act in ambiguous circumstances without the benefit of supervision, coun-

sel, or time to think, an enormous premium is placed on avoiding errors. They, more than many other public employees, must live up to a standard of "zero tolerance."

The persistent demands that the police be accountable for achieving important social results, operate fairly and properly, and avoid mistakes have caused police managers to adopt particular practices long viewed as the most effective devices for controlling officers and the aggregate performance of their organizations. These management doctrines were originally prescribed by Max Weber and then defended and further developed by Frederick Taylor.⁴

At their core is the claim that managers can achieve efficiency, fairness, and high degrees of perfection in operations by developing extensive written rules to control the behavior of operating-level officials.⁵ To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the rules should be based on the best available technical knowledge in the field. To ensure control and fairness, the rules should be complete and comprehensive, covering all situations that the officials can be expected to encounter.

Of course, these theorists knew that the rules were not self-executing. To ensure that the rules would be followed consistently, managers were instructed to establish clear lines of authority and accountability. In addition, narrow spans of control would ensure close supervision of operating-level officials. Extensive investment in training, ideally before officials began their jobs, would be necessary to equip and motivate them to do their jobs properly and effectively. And there would be strict accountability and punishment for any wrongdoing or corruption.

To avoid corruption, it was also important to organize operations to prevent low-level officials from getting too close to their clients lest they develop personal relationships that would bias their handling of individual cases. For the police, technology was enlisted to support the goals of reducing personal contact, ensuring equal access, and providing close supervision. By building an elaborate communication system that linked citizens to police officers through telephones and radio-controlled dispatching, police managers broke the close links between individual beat officers and citizens that had characterized the early days of policing (and fostered no small amount of favoritism and corruption). These arrangements also allowed all citizens to have immediate access to

the police department and enabled those at the center of the department to monitor the activities of individual patrol officers.

Thus police departments were initially conceived, and subsequently developed, as classic bureaucracies. They took this form partly to achieve effectiveness in accomplishing their mission. Just as important was ensuring that police exercised public authority uniformly, fairly, and impersonally—the defining attributes of public enterprises. It is in the field of police administration, then, that one should expect to find the strongest commitment to traditional theories of public administration and management and the greatest resistance to change. And, to some degree, that is the case.

What makes consideration of police administration so important to any exploration of the case for deregulating the public service and adopting alternative approaches is that the revolution in managerial thought is beginning to make inroads even in this most traditional of public bureaucracies. If, as Melvin Dubnick argues in chapter 12, deregulation and other contemporary approaches to reform share the goal of dethroning King Bureaucracy, then to reform police bureaucracies is to effect a coup against one of the oldest and mightiest kings of all.

In policing, as in other fields of public administration, there are compelling reasons to be interested in "deregulating the public service," developing a "customer service" orientation, or "re-inventing" government organizations. And these pressures have begun to spawn important managerial changes in police departments. Partly it is the pursuit for increased effectiveness that motivates the changes. As the police have been held accountable for achieving substantive results as well as merely enforcing the law as fairly and impartially as they can, and as research has revealed the weakness of some of their methods, managers have attempted to change both the ends and means of their organizations.⁶

But an important source of change is also increasing doubt about the success of the traditional methods for producing disciplined, high-quality organizations. It is no longer clear that police organizations can be free of error, corruption, and brutality by applying tighter rules, closer supervision, and stricter penalties for misconduct. Indeed, this bureaucratic apparatus increasingly looks like an expensive way to produce the form but not the substance of a disciplined, effective force.⁷ Thus the changes in police administra-

tion mark the depth of the discontent with the traditional models of public administration.

It is by no means clear yet where the current revolution in policing will go. Nor is it clear that the new forms of organization and control will be more effective than those of the past. Yet it does seem clear that those interested in public management might learn a great deal about the limits and possibilities of new forms of public administration by looking closely at the changes now sweeping through policing. More important, this might reveal why deregulation, customer service, and reinvention are, at best, imperfect slogans for identifying the true nature of the managerial work that must be done to improve the performance and credibility of public sector organizations.

Specifically, my research on police management suggests that to deregulate the public service makes sense only if the concept of deregulation encompasses working to change the terms under which public sector organizations and workers are held accountable.⁸ The demand for accountability in public organizations will continue to be strong, and managers' abilities to satisfy that demand will be an important mark of their talents. But what is needed is a wider recognition of the role that senior managers of public enterprises can and should play in shaping the terms of their own accountability. As James Q. Wilson argues in chapter 3, managers ought to be authorized to take the initiative in negotiating the terms of their accountability with their political overseers and in introducing important innovations into their organization. What I have in mind is not mechanical deregulation (fewer rules, more flexible procedures, less procurement hassles). Rather, it is better conceived as changing the *form* that the continued regulation takes.

My research also leads me to the view that the "customers" of the police organization are not simply the "clients" who call on the organization for services or are exposed to its efforts to impose public responsibilities on individuals. The customers are also taxpayers and their representatives who may be seen as having a collective view of what the organization ought to be producing and what particular features of the organization's performance would indicate quality.⁹ These overseers, evaluating organizations in terms of whether they embody some idealized general conception of how they should operate, are in many ways the most important customers.

These observations do not apply only to police organizations. Although policing may be an extreme case in terms of the prominence with which public authority is used, the police are similar to all public organizations in at least one crucial respect: by definition, *all* public enterprises rely on the use of public authority.¹⁰ This is most obvious in the case of the police and other similar organizations such as regulatory and tax-collecting agencies that impose obligations on citizens rather than provide services. But even public organizations such as welfare or public health agencies that provide services to their clients do so with the benefit of public authority. After all, public authority was used to raise the money to support their operations and provide the benefits they dispense. To the extent that special concerns for propriety and fairness attach to any use of public resources, then, these organizations too will have something important in common with police departments.

The Classic Theory of Police Administration

For the past two generations, a well-developed, coherent concept that defined important ends, programs, and administrative arrangements has guided the management of police organizations.¹¹ The concept is so powerful that it has produced a remarkable degree of homogeneity among municipal police departments despite the fact that 17,000 independent departments now exist across the country.¹²

Professional Law Enforcement

In the traditional conception the fundamental purpose of municipal police departments is to enforce the law and to do so in a professional way. What *professional* means in this context is using the best available technical practices and doing so in accord with the laws of the society.¹³ Of course, there has always been some ambiguity about what particular laws are to be enforced.

When municipal police departments were developed at the turn of the century, there were a great many laws on the books. Some were traditional common law prohibitions against murder, rape, robbery, and burglary, but others were municipal ordinances prohibiting "offenses against public order" such as swearing, spitting, and littering. Initially, municipal police departments accepted the

responsibility for enforcing all these laws. Gradually, however, the police narrowed their focus to enforcing the most important criminal laws.¹⁴ They did so for three reasons.

First, it seemed economical to give the highest priority to the most serious crimes. The pressures on police forces to provide adequate security to urban residents grew rapidly throughout the 1950s and 1960s, but resources did not keep pace, so something had to give. The natural response was to deemphasize the offenses against public order to conserve resources to deal with crimes that caused serious victimization.

Second, enforcement efforts focused on offenses against public order had always enjoyed less legitimacy and public support than efforts against the common law street crimes. Many had doubted the wisdom of using criminal laws and scarce criminal justice resources to regulate minor disorders and "crimes without victims."¹⁵ And to enforce these laws the police often had to act proactively.¹⁶ This left room for police biases to be expressed. Police statistics showed that the poor and the ethnic minorities bore the brunt of such enforcement efforts. The enforcement of public morality laws also led to corruption.¹⁷ Thus in reducing their emphasis on offenses against order, the police could not only save resources but avoid a great deal of unwanted criticism.

Third, the development of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's unified crime reports had the unintended consequence of encouraging concentration on common law crimes. The reports required local police departments to record crimes in categories that cut across the diverse criminal codes of the different states and defined different kinds of crime in a consistent way. The aim of the system was to aggregate these individual reports into an overall picture of the crime problem confronting the nation.¹⁸ Seven crimes were singled out as part I offenses: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, car theft, and arson. All the other offenses (including many offenses against public order) were relegated to the status of part II offenses. Eventually, the reports, particularly changes in the frequency of part I offenses, began to be used to measure the performance of police departments as well as to portray the national crime problem. Inevitably, these evaluations focused the attention of police managers and police officers on the common law crimes.

As the municipal police function developed, so did a body of law that sought to regulate the conduct of the police as well as that of citizens. This body emerged from interpretations by the Supreme Court of what constitutional protections against unwarranted search and seizure or cruel and unusual punishment actually meant in the operational context of policing.¹⁹ The police were ordered, for example, to abandon coercive methods for gaining confessions, to obtain warrants for conducting certain kinds of searches, and to warn those arrested of their constitutional rights.²⁰ When the judiciary became dissatisfied with police compliance with the laws regulating searches, they made illegally obtained evidence inadmissible in court.²¹ More recently, citizens have used civil laws to hold police officers liable for violations of civil liberties when they overstep constitutional limits regulating their use of authority.²²

Predictably, the police have never embraced this body of law as enthusiastically as the laws that regulate the conduct of others. Yet law enforcement agencies are duty-bound to enforce it both in principle and in practice. And agencies inside and outside police departments bring these laws to bear on individual officers.²³

Thus although police organizations like to describe themselves as law enforcement organizations, the particular laws they are committed to enforcing are not all the laws, but a fairly narrow set—those that prohibit common law crimes. The laws that regulate conduct in public locations have been deemphasized as less important and more difficult to enforce. The laws regulating police conduct have tended to be viewed as constraints that handcuff police efforts to accomplish their real mission: enforcing criminal law. Thus the goal of the police is not, strictly speaking, law enforcement, but using the criminal law to control crime and punish serious criminal offenders.

Patrol, Rapid Response, and Retrospective Investigation

To control crime, the police have developed three primary tactics: patrol, rapid response, and retrospective investigation of crimes.²⁴

From the very beginning, police in Anglo-Saxon countries relied extensively on patrol.²⁵ The basic idea was that if they could field a lookout force, offenders would be deterred from committing

crimes, crimes in progress would be thwarted, and criminal offenders would be caught quickly and brought to justice. In the early days this function was performed by constables, night watchmen, and foot patrol officers. The advent of motorized vehicles, however, greatly increased the enthusiasm for patrol. Police theorists hoped that the new mobility would create a sense of omnipresence that would dramatically improve the deterrent value of patrol.²⁶ Modern police began patrolling city streets in automobiles and on motorcycles.

Much of this patrol was random, one virtue of which was that unpredictable patterns would allow the police to magnify their deterrent impact. Randomness also ensured a kind of equity, or at least the absence of a bias, in the allocation of patrol efforts. Everyone would have an equal chance of having a patrol car pass by.

Gradually, however, randomness gave way to an interest in directed patrol. At the most general level, this was reflected in the development of hazard systems that recorded when and where crimes occurred or calls from service were originated. These were used to define the geographic sectors that needed intensive patrol and to shape police work schedules.²⁷ More particularly, directed patrol allowed officers to concentrate in very small areas where crimes seemed particularly likely to occur. Most commonly, these patrols were directed toward particular times and places, but occasionally they were focused on individuals who were thought particularly likely to commit offenses.²⁸

Rapid response emerged from the development of motorized patrol and of dense modern communication systems. Once citizens could be linked to police headquarters through telephones and headquarters could communicate with individual officers through two-way radios, a mobile police patrol suddenly became capable of responding quickly to citizens' calls for service. The apotheosis of these developments has been the citywide 911 systems and the computer-aided dispatch systems, which together have made it possible for a police car to arrive at virtually any location in any city in less than five minutes after receiving a call.

This capability, like the patrol capability, was thought to be particularly valuable in deterring criminal offenders, thwarting crimes, and allowing the police to identify and apprehend offenders.²⁹ Indeed, it extended the potential reach of police from public locations that they could see from their cars to private spaces being

monitored by ordinary citizens. Heavy investments were made in rapid response capability because it seemed sure to be effective in controlling crime and producing arrests.

Retrospective investigation of crimes, like patrol, had long been part of the basic operational repertoire of the police. Once a crime had been committed, it was important to identify the offender and develop evidence to support the prosecution. The basic tools of criminal investigation had always included such procedures as interviewing victims and witnesses to help identify the offender and examining physical evidence associated with the crime. Fingerprint identification and extensive information systems that identified offenders and their favorite methods of operation gradually evolved to support criminal investigation.

To a great degree, it was detectives and the prospects for ever more sophisticated methods of solving crime that came to be the focus of policing's aspirations for a technical kind of professionalism. There were some important technical features of patrol, including the development of sophisticated communications equipment, and there was an emerging interest in traffic management that brought analytic methods to bear on preventing traffic accidents. But it was in criminal investigation that most of the technical, professional aspirations of the police lay. It was there that science could best be applied to making arrests and bringing offenders to justice.

Bureaucratic Mechanisms of Control

The organizational structures and bureaucratic systems established to support these operational tactics have several important and distinctive characteristics. First, from the outset, the police were organized in highly centralized, paramilitary structures with a well-defined and highly visible chain of command. Police officers were distributed across formally defined ranks. Those in higher ranks were authorized to direct the activities of those in lower ranks. Uniforms displayed the rank of the officers so that everyone would know who could give an order and who had to obey.

The paramilitary form may have been adopted for policing for no deeper reason than that it was available to copy. But it also seemed to be consistent with some important functions the police had to perform. Although most police work is undertaken by relatively small units operating independently, sometimes the police do have

to form up into larger units to accomplish their goals. This was particularly important in the early days of policing when they were called upon to handle large-scale disturbances.³⁰ It remains important today not only to deal with such disturbances but also to coordinate other complex tasks such as managing high-speed pursuits or responding to floods, earthquakes, and other civil emergencies.

The paramilitary form also seemed to ensure effective control over the conduct of officers and thereby to guarantee a consistent response to individual cases. Fixing accountability and providing for intensive, close supervision enhanced the prospects for discipline and fairness. The aim was to reduce individual discretion by making everyone in the organization nothing more than an expression of the will of the person at the top. The will of that person was expressed in the organization's general orders, policies, and procedures.

A second feature of the structures used to manage police departments was functional rather than geographic subdivisions. In the early days of policing, departments were often organized on a geographic basis, with the different functions, such as patrol and investigation, subordinated to geographically defined units. Because all the police functions reported to local precinct commanders, they became the functional equivalent of police chiefs for their local areas. This, in turn, fostered close relationships with locally based political machines, economic elites, and gangsters who could go to the local captain to get what they needed. That, in turn, fostered uneven law enforcement and corruption.³¹

To break the power of the local political machines and ensure a more uniform enforcement of the laws across a city, police departments gradually evolved into functional organizations. Now municipal departments are typically divided into a patrol force, a detective unit, and an administrative support unit.³² The patrol force is usually divided into geographic areas, but the detective and administrative units have citywide jurisdictions.

The result of these changes is that local groups can no longer manipulate all the police resources operating in their areas. If they want the police force as a whole to help them out, they must speak to the chief rather than just to the precinct commander. The chief, in turn, can resist their demands by talking to them about the overall policies and needs of the city as a whole.

Functional organization also aligns with the professional aspirations of the police: functional specialties recognize, and allow the

development of, technical expertise. Detective and administrative divisions house many units that require special training and qualifications to join. This also helps create career tracks inside police departments that allow aspiring officers to move out of uniformed patrol and enjoy the greater discretion and prestige that go with the department's more specialized operations.

A third bureaucratic characteristic is that because police departments are centralized, hierarchical, and obsessed with maintaining control over the activities of the officers, an enormous amount of paperwork must be done to document the organization's activities. Reports must be filed every time the police respond to an incident, every time an arrest is made or evidence seized, and every time an officer fires or even unholsters a gun. This extensive demand for paper is judged necessary to maintain effective internal discipline, support the processing of cases in the rest of the criminal justice system, and make police operations transparent to the outside world.

A fourth bureaucratic characteristic is a sustained effort over the past several decades to raise the eligibility standards for recruits and increase the amount of training they receive before they hit the streets. In earlier days the police were recruited from the ranks of the uneducated and the less industrious. Indeed, a third of the London police force was dismissed for drunkenness or sleeping on the job in the first few years of its operation.³³ But as recognition of the importance and complexity of the police job has increased and as the technical requirements of the job have grown, the police have sought to set the standards for recruitment much higher and to provide more training.³⁴ All departments now require that applicants have a high school diploma and a clean arrest record. Many require some college education. Similarly, most departments now provide a minimum of nine weeks of training before officers go onto the street.³⁵ The training focuses on understanding the law and mastering some of the technical arts of policing such as handling a radio, high-speed driving, and learning when and how to use a service revolver.

Bureaucratic Systems, Values, and Behaviors

Reflection on the way the police have defined their mission, developed their core technologies, and administered their organiza-

tions suggests the values that have guided the development of police departments and some important tensions among them.

It is surprising to many to see how greatly the police have been shaped by the concern for embodying legal virtues such as economizing on the use of the criminal law, preserving privacy, and ensuring consistency and fairness in law enforcement. This is perhaps most evident in modern policing's reliance on patrol, rapid response, and retrospective investigation. What is remarkable about these particular tactics is how superficial and reactive they are. Patrol skims over the surface of social life, regulating only public spaces. The police may probe more deeply into social affairs when circumstances or citizens invite them in and warrant their scrutiny. But it is only when citizens call, or only when a crime has been discovered, that the police really intervene and look closely into individuals and their activities. Vast areas of private life are thus shielded from public scrutiny.

Concern for protecting legal values is also evident in extensive efforts to ensure precision and consistency in the police department's response to individual circumstances. That is what fuels the interest in written policies, in hierarchies and close supervision, and in training. Respect for fairness and equity is also evident in the development of citywide 911 systems and the use of hazard formulas to allocate police resources. All this helps a department claim that it is equally available to all and that it polices a city equitably as well as effectively.

Of course, many of these features could also be justified by their contribution to economy and effectiveness as well as fairness. It is economical as well as protective of privacy to wait until a crime occurs before responding to it; otherwise police would waste a great deal of effort on situations that would not become criminal offenses. Hierarchies are efficient because they ensure that everyone in the department uses the best available knowledge for dealing with problems. Allocating patrol forces to places where trouble occurs is effective as well as consistent with the principle of allocating to need rather than wealth or status.

However, any fair reading of the development of policing would have to recognize that police departments have been powerfully shaped by the demand for propriety and fairness as well as for economy and effectiveness. Even though the police often talk as

though their only important objective was controlling crime and they chafe against legal restrictions, it is clear that they are a legal as well as an instrumental enterprise.

A sharper and less easily resolved tension in the organization and operation of police departments concerns the status of individual police officers. On one hand, administrative arrangements reflect a determined effort to dampen the initiative and discretion of individual patrol officers, to turn them into neutral functionaries who administer the law in a technically sophisticated but completely neutral and unbiased way. On the other hand, there is a trend toward recognizing the independent, professional stature of officers, which is apparent in the efforts to raise eligibility standards, insist on more education, and recognize different kinds of expertise in the functional organization of the departments.

In the past, police control systems have blunted professional aspirations, and limited progress has been made in increasing entry standards and educational efforts. To many both inside and outside the profession, policing remains—in its organizational form and its recruiting patterns—a blue-collar occupation. Yet research is gradually revealing what common sense has long held true: much about the actual practice of policing requires a high degree of professionalism. The tasks police encounter are technically complex.³⁶ The decisions they make are critical to the lives of citizens. And, despite the strenuous effort to keep them under close supervision, they do most of their work unsupervised. That is particularly true when it comes to their most consequential decisions—to pursue or not, arrest or not, shoot or not.³⁷ In these respects, then, society depends on the professionalism of the individual officers. It is also clear that the officers aspire to professionalism. For a generation, they have sought to increase their own professional standing, partly by working hard to increase the technical content of the jobs and partly by increasing the educational standards for admission to the force.

Whether the balance in attitudes toward police officers should continue to be struck as it has in the past is one of the crucial questions facing today's police managers. What has been true, however, is that police managers, acting with the encouragement of the broader society, have tended to view police officers as having more potential to cause trouble than to make significant contributions on their own.

Toward a New Strategy of Policing

A different way of thinking about the police has recently emerged, mainly but not solely in connection with the community-based policing movement.³⁸ This conception is guided less by principles of law and more by concepts designed to help managers maximize their organizations' value to local communities.³⁹ These new ideas about policing are based on both a general theory of public sector management and a particular application to the field of policing.

Strategic Management: A New Theory

The general theory of public sector management adapts the concept of private sector corporate strategy to the special environment of the public sector.⁴⁰ The idea is that the management of a public enterprise should be guided by an overall strategic concept, and that for a particular strategic idea to be useful and valuable, it must meet three conditions.⁴¹

First, the strategy must define a mission, or a set of goals and objectives, that is plausibly valuable to the public. There must be a rationale that explains why society should launch or maintain the enterprise. A claim that some people will benefit must include an explanation of why those people are particularly deserving. Perhaps the organization exists to solve a problem that society perceives as pressing and important, or to erase some kind of inequity, or to exploit an opportunity for public benefit. There must be something that citizens of a society could reasonably value.

Second, the goals and objectives that define the mission of the organization (and therefore the value that the enterprise seeks to produce) must be able to summon support and enjoy legitimacy from citizens and their representatives who oversee the organization's operations. This includes those elected to the executive and legislative branches of government and the media, interest groups, and professional associations that influence these groups. It also includes the clients and customers of the organization.⁴² The articulated goals of the enterprise must meet not only a theoretical, substantive test of public value but also a practical, political test.

Third, for a given strategy to be useful, the enterprise must have (or be able to develop) the operational capabilities to achieve the

desired objectives. This does not imply that all the capacity to produce the result must exist within the boundaries of the organization charged with implementing the strategy. That would be rare in the public sector, for the success of public enterprises often depends on many individuals and organizations outside the boundaries of a given organization. For example, children cannot be taught to read if parents do not help; rivers cannot be cleaned if companies do not participate in cleaning up; and the streets cannot be made safe if communities do not help defend themselves.

At some level, this concept of an organizational strategy is a fairly trivial idea. All it says is that to be valuable, public enterprises must pursue valuable purposes that are widely supported and can be achieved. What could be more obvious? Several considerations make this idea useful and important despite its self-evident quality, however.

First, it focuses managers' attention on the problem of making sure that *all* these different conditions are, in fact, met. This is important because it is tempting for managers to think that they can succeed if they have lined up one or two of the required conditions. If only they have the right objective, the rightness of their cause will ensure their success. Or, if there is broad political support for a goal, they are safe because the technical means for accomplishing the goal will surely come to hand.

The stern reality, however, is that managers must touch all three bases if they are going to succeed. Imagine what happens when one is missing one of the key elements of the strategy. If one has an attractive goal and political support for it, one can still fail if it is impossible to achieve the goal. And if one has an attractive goal and the capacity to achieve it, but no one supports the goal anymore, the enterprise will also fail.

Most public managers will testify that it is very difficult to meet these three conditions. It is even harder to sustain the effort long enough to make the investments in operational capacities that are necessary for success. Thus the idea is less than trivial because it forces a hard-nosed evaluation of circumstances and establishes a rigorous test that disciplines managerial aspirations.

This simple strategic concept is also a reminder that ideas about what would be worth doing can come from various places.⁴³ The traditional theory of public administration assumes that public enterprises operate with legislative mandates that define the specific

public purposes to be achieved and provide the authority and money to do the job. In such a world, all the manager must do is deploy the resources provided in the most efficient and effective ways: two parts of the strategic triangle (gaining legitimacy and support and defining purposes) can be safely ignored. The manager's attention can be focused downward on the operational management of the enterprise, rather than upward to the political environment that authorizes the organization to continue or outward to visions of the value that could be created or the opportunities that could be exploited.

If one takes the concept of strategy in the public sector seriously, however, one must recognize that ideas about what would be worth doing could be initiated by managers, who could receive them from many different places. For example, the organization's own experience in trying to do its work could reveal an unexpected problem that needs to be dealt with, an unexpected limitation in the organization's methods, or an opportunity that could be exploited. The manager might nominate those ideas for new action to those who authorize the enterprise. Or parts of the organization's political environment could become alarmed that the organization was sacrificing some important value and might insist that it change its operations. For example, the police, although effective in controlling crime, might be perceived as becoming corrupt. The manager could respond creatively to this emergent problem.

Perhaps the most interesting case, however, would be one in which the manager of a public enterprise notices that the organization has developed a capacity that is valuable in a use other than the organization's original purpose and that it would be relatively easy to adapt the organization to this new use. Thus, for example, a library might turn out to be valuable in caring for latchkey children, or a drug abuse treatment program helpful in controlling crime, or the U.S. Marine Corps useful in training delinquent youth to be accountable and responsible. The manager might propose this new use of the organization to its political overseers.

This response is particularly interesting because it is much closer to the way private managers think than the way public managers do.⁴⁴ Because public managers have mandates that define their purposes and provide them with resources, there is little incentive to work outside the boundaries of their mission. Indeed, it would be a distraction. Public sector managers are constrained as to ends and

accountable for finding efficient means. Private sector managers think differently. They are free to pursue any enterprise that seems valuable. Consequently, they often begin by looking at the capabilities of their organizations and then ask what of value could be produced. Private sector managers are constrained as to means and free to define their ends.

There are other interesting features of the idea of strategy in the public sector, but it is enough for now to have introduced these four: managers in the public sector should try to manage their organizations by thinking about an overall strategy; the strategy should define a mission or purpose that is publicly valuable, politically sustainable, and operationally achievable; these three conditions must all be met concretely for the strategy to be useful and valuable; and a manager can begin thinking about what is worth doing from any of the three perspectives. This strategic conception can be used to contrast traditional and emerging strategies of policing.

Limitations of the Traditional Strategy

The traditional conception of policing has served as an enormously powerful and successful strategic concept. It has earned the police widespread public support.⁴⁵ It has carried policing from ridicule, incompetence, and corruption to an image (and, to a considerable degree, the reality) of discipline and professionalism. Yet some cracks are now appearing in this formidable pillar of police administration.

First, it is no longer clear that this strategy can succeed in eliminating police misconduct and corruption. Recent beatings by police in Los Angeles and Detroit testify to the limited success of the current administrative tools for preventing the misuse of force.⁴⁶ The reemergence of corruption in the New York City Police Department, despite the department's aggressive administrative efforts to minimize bribery, suggests the limitations of the traditional methods of controlling corruption.⁴⁷

A second weakness is that the strategy has done less to control crime and still citizens' fears than was initially hoped. Levels of violent crime have continued to increase as this strategy was being adopted and implemented across the United States. Fear seems to have increased even more sharply.⁴⁸

Third, to the extent that the popularity of the traditional strategy of policing rests on the claim that the police alone can succeed in reducing crime and fear, it has been founded on a dubious claim. Decades ago, experiments revealed that motorized patrol was essentially ineffective in reducing crime or reassuring citizens. When patrols in an area were doubled or halved, neither criminals nor citizens could seem to tell the difference. Both crimes and citizens' fears remained at the same level. Studies of directed patrol operations—some directed at locations, others at people—produced the same results: minimal or no effects on crime or levels of fear.⁴⁹

Fourth, numerous studies have undermined confidence in the value of rapid response. It had always been assumed (not at all unreasonably) that getting calls for service more quickly would allow the police to thwart crimes in progress, catch offenders, and help establish a sense of omnipresence that would deter offenders and reassure citizens. Studies of rapid response have revealed, however, that this capacity, too, seems ineffective in reducing crime, increasing apprehensions, or reassuring citizens.⁵⁰

The studies have also revealed the reasons. The overall response time is composed of several components, including the interval between the time when the crime occurs and when it is reported, as well as the interval between when the crime is reported and when the police arrive on the scene.⁵¹ The studies showed that the police have become very successful in arriving soon after they receive the call. But the crucial time interval is the one between the crime's occurrence and the reception of the call. Many crimes occur out of the sight of witnesses. Even when they are within sight, witnesses often do not recognize that a crime is occurring until after the fact or they hesitate to call. The victims are too busy being victimized to call. Indeed, their first call often goes to a friend or relative with whom they can share their pain. The result is that the police rush to crime scenes not to thwart the crime or apprehend the offender but to hold the hand of the victim. That may also be important, but it is not the result the police intend.

The fifth blow to traditional policing strategy came when studies focusing on the investigative function indicated that the police could usually solve crimes only when witnesses and victims told them who committed the offense.⁵² The sophisticated forensic methods have proved more valuable in nailing down a case for prosecution than in actually identifying the offenders.

Some observers have interpreted these accumulating studies as indicating that the core police programs for controlling crime have been ineffective. A more accurate view, however, would be that the effectiveness of traditional policing strategies depends on the amount of trust and cooperation the police receive from citizens. The police know this, of course. Even in the 1950s they were mounting campaigns that urged citizens to "support your local police."

But the police have probably not been aware of just how dependent they are on citizens. Nor have they focused attention on how to ensure that support would be available when they need it. They have simply assumed that citizens are interested in ensuring justice and crime control and that they will turn to the police to help them accomplish that result. This assumption has proved right in some parts of the community, but wrong in general and particularly wrong in minority areas of cities, where the support is critically needed.

The failure of the police to focus enough attention on increasing their contact with and support from citizens has produced a sixth major limitation of the traditional strategy of policing: public policing has not been able to keep its market share in the security industry. One of the reasons police felt comfortable with the traditional strategy of policing was that they thought they had no competition. There would always have to be a public police department. Enthusiasm for controlling crime would ensure that the public police would survive and flourish and would blunt any effective criticism of their efforts. As experts in the field, they could decide what their department should do.

This complacent view ignored the fact that the public police did face competition. In the field of public policing they were clearly monopolists. But in the broader market, citizens can buy private security as well as public. They can join together to hire private guard services or to patrol their own communities. They can purchase locks, guns, and dogs to help protect themselves and their property. And they can stay at home to avoid being victimized. Gradually, these private responses to crime have grown at the expense of the public responses. There are now more than twice as many private security guards as public police officers in the United States.⁵³

Of course, there is much of value in these private responses to crime. Insofar as they are successful in reducing fears and risks of

victimization, they contribute to overall social objectives. Yet there is also something worrisome, and not just for the bureaucratic interests of the public police. To the extent that security is privately provided, it will go to those who are most able to pay or most able to produce it rather than to those who are most in need, and the rights of ordinary citizens to travel freely through a city or have certain protections even when they are accused of crimes may be circumscribed.

But the fact that private security has been growing relative to public policing clearly indicates that something is wrong with the traditional strategy of policing. The public police continue to be popular as an abstract entity, but when the time comes to shell out money for security, citizens are increasingly turning to private suppliers.

Community-based Policing as a New Corporate Strategy

These increasingly evident limitations in the traditional strategy of policing have caused some pioneering police executives to begin searching for an alternative strategy of policing.⁵⁴ That search is by no means complete. It is being guided, however, by several important new ideas.

Improving Community Relations

The first axiom is that the quality of the relationship between police and the community is of paramount importance, both for the legitimacy of the police and for their operational effectiveness. If the police are not closely linked to the community, it is impossible for them to do their job. It follows, as a corollary, that the police should make a concerted effort to improve the quality of their services to support that relationship. A good relationship with the community is something the police can influence, and, given its importance, they should not rely only on a good public relations office or a community relations division. The task of earning a strong, supportive link to the community must be built into the day-to-day operations of the department. To achieve this purpose, several important

changes have been made in the way the police are organized and seek to operate.

First, they have tried to reestablish and strengthen local geographic accountability. They have redefined precinct and sector boundaries to coincide with naturally occurring communities, established mini-police stations and storefronts to give them a physical presence in local communities, decentralized initiative and accountability to precinct commanders and beat cops, gathered detailed information about local areas and compiled them in "beat books" to link day and night shift operations, and reconfigured their dispatching systems to give lower priority to minimizing citywide response times and higher priority to maintaining a car in a given geographic area to allow continuity in who responds to calls for service.⁵⁵ Some departments have even begun decentralizing specialized functions to local patrol commanders for use as they see fit. All this helps to change the focus of policing from a citywide perspective to a local one, to build detailed knowledge of local communities, and to foster a sense of responsibility for and accountability to the local areas.

The police have also sought to rely increasingly on methods of policing that get them out of their cars and into closer, more sustained contact with residents. In the old style of policing, it was assumed that high-quality service consisted of a quick response to a call. This idea survives in the minds of many citizens, overseers, and police executives.⁵⁶ Yet there is an important paradox associated with the aim of producing a rapid response to calls that is perfectly symbolized by a common usage in policing. When a police officer arrives at the location to which he or she has been dispatched, the officer radios the dispatcher and announces that he or she is now going "out of service." After meeting with the citizen and dealing with the problem, the officer gets back in the car, radios the dispatcher, and announces that he or she is now back "in service." This usage declares that the time spent with the citizen is *not* service, while the time spent in the car waiting for the next call *is* service.

This is more than a semantic point. If the challenge to the police is to make rapid responses to calls for service and always have some cars available for emergency calls, then the task of the police is to be ready, rather than to supply the service to the citizen. The goal is to minimize the amount of time police spend with citizens so they

can get back in service to be available to rush to the next call, which can then be cut short to get ready for the next one, and so on. Moreover, to minimize citywide response times, the dispatching system tends to use the entire patrol force as a resource, which results in cars being dispatched across the city, far from their originally assigned territories. That reduces the knowledge and interest that the officers have in responding to any particular call for service. Thus by focusing on the speed of the response as the only important attribute of service quality, the police lose other aspects of quality, such as the sense among citizens that their problems are taken seriously or the prospect that the officer who arrives at the scene is someone the citizens know and trust.

The value of some of these other attributes of service quality has been demonstrated. Experiments with foot patrol, for example, have shown that citizens greatly value familiar, daily, face-to-face contacts with officers. They can tell when levels of foot patrol have been increased or decreased, unlike motorized patrol. Foot patrol turns out to be effective in reducing fears, and is also a more satisfying experience for officers.⁵⁷ On foot patrol, the officers have an entirely different experience with the communities. When they spend their days responding to calls for service, they see the community at its worst. They go only to places where people are dangerous or pathetic. Once they spend their days walking, they learn that there are responsible and resourceful people in the community.

Obviously, foot patrol is not feasible in many parts of the country or in all parts of cities. But the enduring lesson of the foot patrol experiments has been that devices that promote frequent, continuing, personal encounters between officers and citizens are extremely valuable, and that anything that can be done to promote these will improve the quality of police-community relations. This insight has justified not only foot patrol and "park and walk" programs but also the creation of decentralized police stations, greater use of surveys conducted by officers to make contact with citizens, and the use of motorcycles, scooters, and bicycles to help officers get around without reducing their contact with citizens, as cars seem to do.

The third important change designed to rebuild strong community relations is a reconsideration of how to handle the volume of calls for service. A huge increase in the overall volume of calls—

many calls concerning situations that are neither crime related nor particularly urgent—is one of the consequences of linking police officers to citizens through the 911 systems.⁵⁸ The reason the police get these calls, of course, is that they are the only governmental agency that is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and can be reached by a phone call. Apparently, the police are valuable to citizens for many purposes other than responding to crimes. In traditional policing, the nonurgent, noncrime calls have been viewed as a useless claim on police resources that distracts them from their primary purposes and reduces their overall effectiveness in controlling crime. The goal has been to get rid of these calls as quickly as possible.

The eagerness to reduce the burden of the calls without permanently alienating citizens spawned some important experiments in call management and differential police response.⁵⁹ Through these experiments, the police, like many service providers in the private sector, have learned important ways of managing citizens' expectations. They can prioritize their calls: not every call has to receive the same class of service. Citizens will accept slower service if they are given an accurate estimate of how long their wait will be. And citizens will often be satisfied with nothing more than a conversation on the phone with a police representative. Although these experiments were initiated to protect the police from being swamped by calls for service, it soon became apparent that the methods could be used to free up patrol time for other activities.

The strategy of community-based policing would approve of these experiments in call management as a way to improve service to citizens and increase the patrol time available for being present in the community. But the new paradigm goes further than call management in reinterpreting the potential value of "nuisance calls." Instead of viewing the noncrime calls as nuisances, the new strategy views them as an important opportunity to produce value for citizens. Far from being a distraction from crime fighting, the calls help support this key function because the community relationship is considered an essential crime-fighting asset.

The police can also view the nonurgent, noncrime calls as a potential opportunity for crime prevention. Many calls are about situations that could easily escalate into emergencies: a noisy argument could quickly become an aggravated assault or a homicide; rowdy youth could start a gang fight; a minor traffic accident could

become an assault if the citizens involved are forced to wait a long time for a response. Thus good responses to minor incidents might actually prevent crime.

Finally, the police can view the response to noncrime calls as valuable even if it makes little contribution to fighting crime. It is not a waste to do something useful for citizens that is outside one's primary mission so long as mission performance is not badly compromised.

Using Police as Problem Solvers

A second axiom guiding the development of the corporate strategy is that the police should think less in terms of responding to incidents and more in terms of responding to the underlying problems.⁶⁰ This is not to suggest that the police should pay more attention to the roots of crime or that they should become social workers. It is, instead, a recognition that they are frequently called to the same situation over and over. Research has shown that a very small number of addresses and locations, dubbed "hot spots," accounts for a very large proportion of all the calls for service.⁶¹ The challenge before the police is not to respond mindlessly but to learn more about what is causing the problem and what could be done to handle it more effectively. A few examples are useful to give the flavor of this important operational change.

In New South Wales, Australia, a patrol officer noticed that she was being dispatched to a particular location every Friday night at 11:00 in response to calls from a community of elderly people that they were being frightened by bands of marauding teenagers. By the time she got there, the area usually seemed quiet and secure, but the calls kept coming in at the predictable time. Instead of continuing to respond to the calls, she went to the area on a Friday night before the calls came in to see what was occurring. Sure enough, at 11:00 large numbers of teenagers suddenly appeared on the streets. She got out of the car and asked some of them what was going on. They explained that there was a roller skating rink nearby, and the owner routinely provided a bus to a group of teenagers from another part of the city to bring them to the rink for the evening. The rink closed at 11:00 and the teenagers were walking home. The shortest route passed through the elderly people's neighborhood. The obvious solution was for the officer to persuade

the owner of the skating rink to provide a bus home as well as to the rink. The calls stopped.

In Baltimore County, Maryland, the police were summoned several times to deal with fights that broke out at a bus stop. A little investigation revealed that the bus stop was being used by students from a predominantly white private school and a predominantly black public school. The fights were nasty disputes fueled by school rivalries as well as racial prejudice. The police dealt with the problem first by creating two bus stops so that the groups would not come into close contact. Then, because that seemed to leave the racial attitudes unaddressed, they joined with the schools in teaching a program of racial tolerance, linked to the particular problems at the bus stop. When the bus stops were put close together again, the fighting did not resume.

These may seem like trivial ideas, but in the context of police work they are potentially revolutionary. In some deep way, problem solving changes the basic unit of work in a police department.⁶² In the traditional strategy of policing, the basic unit of work is the "incident." The important question is whether a crime has been committed and, if so, who is the probable offender. The job of the police is to make this determination accurately and to identify and arrest the offender. If no crime has been committed, the police lose interest.

In the community-based strategy, the police are encouraged to look through the incident to see what lies behind it.⁶³ The crucial analytic work that goes into determining the police response is not simply whether a crime has been committed, but what seems to be causing the problem. The response that the police can make is wider than simply making an arrest; it can include resolving disputes or mobilizing other agencies like the skating rink and the schools to help the police deal with the problem.

Of course, problem-solving activities have always been part of police work. Indeed, if one presents these examples to experienced police officers, they are astonished to discover that this is considered new. However, if one then asks them whether they engage in such activities with the official sanction and encouragement of the department's administrative systems, their answer is no. All such activity, which they understand and recognize as good police work, occurs despite rather than because of the administrative systems of the department.⁶⁴ As an official enterprise, problem solving is new to modern policing.

How to recognize and support problem-solving activities in the administrative systems of police departments is no trivial problem. The simple way, of course, is to divide the police department into one unit that does community problem solving and one that does rapid response policing.⁶⁵ This solution at least ensures that some of the police will engage in proactive problem solving. However, it also creates a potentially divisive conflict in the organization over which kind of policing is real policing and whose job is better. Moreover, this solution still leaves the problem of how to guide, account for, and control the activities of the problem-solving unit. One solution is to establish some formal system in which problems would be treated as cases are treated in detective bureaus. Each problem would have a file, and efforts and progress in dealing with it would be recorded. Quality in identifying and solving problems could be ensured through supervisory or peer review of the efforts that are made.

Some important issues remain unresolved, however. One is that problems come in many different sizes. Some require substantial resources, take lots of time, and make heavy claims on specialized capacities or the assistance of higher-level commanders in contacting other organizations. Other problems are much smaller. How to accommodate this variability and have the right distribution of differently sized problems is an important question.

Another issue concerns what qualifies a problem to be taken seriously. To a degree, of course, problems can be identified through the examination of information available to the police from their operations, such as calls for service or levels of reported crime. And the officers will have their own views based on their experience with the local communities. But it might also be important to create mechanisms for individuals or small groups within the community to nominate problems for the officers' attention. This is consistent with the goal of promoting community relations as well as solving problems. Because the idea of problem solving is open-ended, the police can accommodate the many different kinds of problems that communities can and do nominate, ranging from street-level drug dealing to abandoned cars.⁶⁶

A third matter is how to evaluate the success of problem-solving efforts. This is partly a technical problem of defining indicators that should be measured and monitored. But it is also a conceptual difficulty in that some problems never get solved; they just get

improved.⁶⁷ And others get solved by being moved to a different location (often with some corresponding reduction in level or intensity).

By far the most difficult issue, however, is how to promote problem-solving activities beyond the boundaries of a special unit. The reasons for doing this are to avoid the divisiveness that inevitably attends the creation of special units, to extend the reach and scope of problem solving beyond what could be done by a special unit, and to encourage the synergy that is possible when the problem-solving efforts of the police are informed by experience with the calls for service from the same geographic area.

Whatever the reason, there are serious management challenges involved in making problem solving part of the dominant culture and operational style of an entire police organization. One is how to create both the time and psychological room to get off the treadmill of responding to 911 calls. Call management systems and additional resources for the department can create additional time for problem solving, but some way of recognizing administratively and accounting for the organizationwide problem-solving efforts is also needed. The techniques developed for managing this work in special units can, of course, be extended to the wider organization. But ordinary patrol officers must be able to bring problems they would like to solve to the attention of their managers. They must also be able to be temporarily relieved of some or all of their rapid response responsibilities to work on these problems. The officers will need a great deal of training and information to do this job well, and that is difficult to get when one is not part of a special unit.

Probably the greatest difficulty, however, comes from the radical change in the overall conception of how the organization works and where the locus of initiative and creativity should be. Under the traditional strategy of policing, police organizations are structured as production line organizations. Although there are many different products associated with the heterogeneous tasks they perform, there is a standardized way of producing them that is laid out in the organization's extensive rules. In the new strategy, police organizations may come to be seen more as job shops. They will face heterogeneous problems that require customized responses. Thus some of the brains and initiative of the organization must move from the top of the organization to operational levels and from staff operations to line managers and patrol operations. The organiza-

tion must be made flexible enough to allow it to form teams of different sizes to deal with varied problems, and officers should be encouraged to take the initiative in nominating problems and proposing solutions. This usually means organizations that are much less hierarchical than those in the traditional model of policing.

Making Police Professionals

These requirements lead to the third axiom that is now guiding police managers: if the police are going to give high-quality service to their clients and participate in creative problem-solving efforts initiated by operational officers, police organizations must recognize and value officers' discretion, prepare them to exercise it well, and hold them accountable for their performance after the fact. In short, police officers must become true professionals and be controlled through the methods that are used to control professionals. It is not enough to deregulate the bureaucratic structures of traditional policing; the norms and values of public accountability that motivate deregulation must be internalized by the officers themselves.

This point can best be illustrated by drawing an analogy to the concept of a commissioned officer in the military.⁶⁸ The distinction between commissioned officers and enlisted men is a very old one. One important and continuous difference has been how enlisted men and commissioned officers are armed. When the fighting was done without firearms, the enlisted men were armed with longbows, crossbows and pikes; the commissioned officers had swords and daggers. Later, the enlisted men were armed with rifles, machine guns, and bazookas; the officers were equipped with pistols. In each case, the enlisted men's weapons could reach the enemy and the commissioned officers' could not. The officers' weapons were designed to help them reach their own men. The fundamental job of the commissioned officer was to make sure that the enlisted men stood and fought rather than ran.

But what caused the officers to stand and fight? Maybe it was easier when the enlisted men were between the officers and the enemy. But the more appealing answer was that this was what the commission was for. Commissioned officers could be counted on to do the right thing because they completely identified with the highest values of the society and would fight for honor rather than

out of fear. Enlisted men, without the same stake in the society, the same sense of honor, or the same training, had to be coerced into doing the right thing by the commissioned officer's weapon.

This analysis poses rather sharply the question of who is commissioned in modern police departments. One answer is only the chief. He is the only one who can be trusted and therefore the only one who is really accountable for the performance of the organization. It is the chief's vision, skills, and virtue (honed by tradition) that infuse the organization's policies and procedures. And because the policies have all been thought out, the only task for the officers is to be obedient to those rules. That is essentially the answer that traditional policing gives.

A quite different answer is that all police officers are commissioned by the public. When they put on a badge and take up their gun and nightstick, they are expected to act as officers of the society and its laws. They are trusted to do the right thing not only because they have the proper technical skills and character, but also because their values and commitments are sound and appropriate. In short, they are professionals.

It is not simply technical skills that justify commissioning people as officers. Technical skills are important and necessary features of becoming a doctor, a lawyer, or a commissioned officer. But society expects more of commissioned officers and professionals who are authorized to act on behalf of others. Such people must also commit themselves to using their talents to advance important social values.

The drive for improving the professionalism of policing has gone astray in this regard. Advances in professionalism can never be made solely by honing the technical skills. Advances also depend on the development and inculcation of proper values, and it is here that the police have worked less assiduously than they might. By continuing to base their legitimacy and standing on their technical effectiveness in fighting crime and by signaling their resistance to some of society's important values by opposing many laws that seek to regulate their own conduct, they have raised suspicions about whether they can be trusted (that is, commissioned) to use their substantial powers without someone who can be trusted—a judge, a prosecutor, a superior officer—looking over their shoulder.

This is also one of the important reasons that those who are experimenting with new strategies of policing are trying to manage by articulating primary values to which officers should make com-

mitments rather than by developing detailed rules and regulations.⁶⁹ This is also why police administrators are experimenting with training and evaluation by peer reviews of officers' work rather than trying to avoid any mistakes by insisting that officers get prior approval of their actions. Such measures are not only consistent with the professional aspirations of the police; they are also consistent with the operational realities of policing where most of the time, and for the most important decisions, the officers work alone without close supervision.

Conclusion: Leadership and the Risks of Reform

These axioms point toward a new strategic vision of policing. That vision includes the following elements.

—The goals of the police would be expanded to include preventing crime, maintaining order, reducing fear, and responding satisfactorily to social emergencies of various kinds in addition to controlling crime and regulating traffic.

—The legitimacy of the police would be based not only on their ability to enforce the law fairly and equitably and to control crime, but also on the responsiveness of their operations to the large and small concerns of the communities they police.

—The operational capacities of the police would include problem solving as well as the ability to patrol, respond rapidly to calls for service, and conduct investigations. Mobilizing community groups and other government agencies might become as important to police operations as making sound arrests.

—To support such operational capacities, police organizations would probably have to have fewer layers of bureaucracy and become more decentralized. Officers might advance by adding to their specialist knowledge rather than rising through the ranks.

There is no guarantee that such reforms will occur or will be successful. Yet someone must explore these new opportunities because the problems of spiraling crime and pervasive fear are urgent and the current answers unsatisfactory.

To take advantage of the opportunities means society needs to rethink its relationship to its public managers. In traditional doctrines of public administration, public managers are accountable for

means, not ends. And they are supposed to know answers, not have ideas about what might be valuable. Exploration of new possibilities is supposed to be left to elected representatives or officials in the legislative and executive branches of government. But as examples of community policing show, it is enormously valuable to have the public engaged in the search for better ways to accomplish a public organization's purposes and use its capabilities. It is the police executives who see most clearly the limitations of their current strategies, and it is they who are groping their way toward better ones. They, and other public managers, need to be supported in their search for public value, not viewed as self-serving empire builders.

Still, when society sees public executives embarking on changes as large and significant as those now occurring within policing, and changes that could produce bad results as well as good, it is not enough to simply deregulate the managers and send them on their way. Nor is it enough to offer bland assurances that the customers of the organization will be happier and more satisfied. Democratic accountability demands more than this. These executives must continue to satisfy their overseers as well as their customers. Indeed, because they are using public resources to produce public results, their overseers are their most important customers.

The need to satisfy overseers imposes two demanding burdens. First, managers must engage them in an intelligent discussion about what is publicly valuable to do. They must help the conflict-laden, fluid political process that defines and evaluates their work become articulate about what is worth doing and then help sustain the political agreement long enough to allow them to meet the operational demands of the mandate they helped develop. Second, they must create a flow of information about their organization's activities. That is what makes them accountable and earns them the support they need to do their jobs. The need to be accountable, particularly when one is engaged in a strategic innovation, cannot be wished away. Managers must remain accountable to political expectations they encounter at the reporting end of their organization as well as to the customers they meet at the operational end.

Obviously, this accountability places burdens on managers and may blunt their initiative. Yet managers who engage in the hard political work of getting their efforts authorized and making them accountable to overseers may be rewarded by discovering that their

ability to make their organizations work is improved. Accountability to overseers may give managers the leverage that allows them to ask their organizations to do things that are hard but ultimately valuable to the public. In the case of policing, for example, it may be impossible for police managers to control corruption and brutality without making themselves accountable to external agencies.

Similarly, the process of mobilizing support for reforming organizations may also enlist citizens to help managers reach their goals. In policing, for example, one way of rousing the community to action is to explain over and over again to anyone who will listen that the police must rely on citizens to be the first line of defense in controlling crime and increasing security.

Finally, the success of public enterprises depends not only on the skills of the leaders but also on those of the front-line workers. If public employees can be counted on to do the right thing, performance improves and administrative costs fall. If they must be intensively supervised, performance deteriorates and administrative costs rise. This suggests that much more needs to be done to attract, develop, and retain high-quality personnel. It reinforces the lesson stated by Paul A. Volcker and William F. Winter in the introduction to this volume: high-quality people languish or leave when they are forced to operate within bureaucratic structures that do not reward public-spirited performance. It also suggests a need to reconsider the devices now used to control public sector employees. For example, more frequent use of after-the-fact peer evaluations, rather than before-the-fact approvals by supervisors, is probably called for. Whether such devices can satisfy the demand for accountability and instill the determination in public employees to do things right remains to be seen. But in evaluating these methods of control, the right comparison is with the level of control that is really (rather than theoretically) delivered by the existing systems of control.

Policing is just one frontier on which creative public managers are exploring the possibilities of a deregulated, postbureaucratic public sector. With any luck, they will produce a new and better vision of policing. They will also produce important lessons about public management, for there is no organization that feels the tug of the traditional models of public administration more strongly than the police. The methods police executives invent to escape from these powerful gravitational fields will almost certainly help other managers who wish to make the same journey.

The example of policing shows that there is enormous utility in having police executives actively searching for better ways to police cities. It is they who have begun to develop the promising new strategies. And it is they who will have to act to realize their potential. Yet society remains enormously ambivalent about the kind of leadership it wants from public executives. It may not tolerate gambling with public resources to find better ways to do a job. Thus it is not clear that police executives will be allowed to develop the potential of the new strategies.

Perhaps the answer to this dilemma is for police executives to recognize that they will never be granted *carte blanche* to experiment. The public will always demand that the executives and their officers remain accountable. The way to innovate, then, is not to plead for deregulation but to negotiate the terms of their accountability with their overseers. The important deregulation that may be required is for the overseers to encourage the executives to become innovative and to enter into a negotiation with them about what can be done. Included in their ideas for the future should be risky new ventures as well as continued operations.

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