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Police Organization and Management Issues For the Next Decade

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This paper offers some thoughts about issues of police organization and management to which researchers and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) should attend in the next five-to-ten years. Given the framework NIJ has established for the three papers at this workshop, I take the domain of police organization and management to include how to staff, structure, direct, and equip public (local) police organizations.¹ I have been asked specifically to cover the topics of recruitment, training, structure and organization, management and leadership, technology and information use, and community policing. I will not pretend to offer a comprehensive review of the many important issues that fall within these domains, since a volume could easily be devoted to each, and unfortunately time does not permit an extensive review of the extant literature on the topics I have selected for discussion. For each area I will describe what I regard as a few of the important issues that deserve the attention of police researchers. I will select issues that are important, both from an academic perspective (that is, intellectually interesting), and from a practical perspective (that is, useful for improving the quality of police organizations and police performance). Regarding the “community policing” category, I have expanded that to include a wide range of recent innovations, some of which bear little or no relationship to community policing but which have received considerable attention over the last two decades.

Readers may note that many of the issues I nominate have been around a long while. I nominate them for two reasons: (a) Evidence is currently insufficient to draw

¹ Certainly a variety of other public and private organizations engage in activities that occupy our public police (Jones and Newburn 2006). However, I assume that NIJ’s principal interest focuses on (local) public police organizations in the United States.

conclusions on these matters, and (b) the issues are enduring; they will be with us for the next decade.

Police Recruitment

Who can doubt that the nature of the people recruited into a police agency affects the quality of that agency's performance in profound ways? We know that the profile of American police has been changing for several decades and seems likely to continue to do so (Skogan and Frydl 2004:79-82, 137-152). There are more women on American police forces, more ethnic minorities, and more college-educated people. It is reasonable to expect these trends to continue for the next decade, so it makes sense to ask what their implications will be and whether it would be wise to attempt to alter them.

Women in Blue

Over the last three decades there has been a considerable amount of discussion about the pros and cons of adding women in large numbers to the rank and file of America's police service. The increasing numbers of women on America's police forces (Zhao et al 2006) suggest a growing consensus that adding women is a good idea, yet the relatively small amount of available research has done little to answer key questions about this trend.² Below are some of the questions that deserve rigorous research.

- Is there a difference in the quality³ of policing performed by women and men?⁴ What are the sources of any differences detected?⁵ Do street-level strategies that

² The National Academies committee found "...that the body of available research is too small and the findings too variable to draw firm conclusions about the effects of officer sex on police practice" (Skogan and Frydl 2004:151).

³ By "quality," I mean both the *nature* of policing and its *value*.

⁴ Are women officers less aggressive and more nurturing than their male counterparts, as some argue (Skogan and Frydl 2004:151)? Are they less inclined to go in harm's way? Are they better or worse at selecting the right strategy for the situation?

⁵ Some research suggests that women police behave differently from their male counterparts; some research suggests no appreciable difference (Skogan and Frydl 2004:151). The ambiguity of results and the weak methodology employed can hardly be the basis for conclusive results. Just as importantly, there is

work well for women work equally well for men and vice versa? When dealing with certain situations (e.g., disputes), does the make-up of the police response team (all male, all female, or mixed) have a notable effect on the outcome?

- How, if at all, has the presence of women on the police force changed the practices and performance of men on the force? Is there a threshold proportion of women police on the force beyond which significant changes in police practice and performance are more likely or more profound?
- Do women in police supervisory and leadership roles behave differently than their male counterparts, and if so, what are the consequences for their subordinates' performance?

Some might question the utility of exploring answers to these questions, since Equal Employment legislation, in an effort to end unfair sex-based discrimination, has made it easier for women to gain and keep police employment. Nonetheless, it would be very useful for shaping the training, supervision, and deployment of officers to know if and how the officer's sex makes a difference. For example, many officers think that (certain) members of the public respond differently to forceful female officers than forceful males. Over the years my casual conversations with police officers of both sexes suggest to me that officers themselves vary considerably in their answers to these questions. Some may argue that these questions are moot, since law requires that women and men have an equal opportunity for employment on police forces. However, we still have very little evidence about what the consequences of this trend are for policing and how best to prepare our officers and police agencies to deal with any risks and to take maximum advantage of opportunities.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Blue

A similar set of questions arise for the race/ethnic identity of officers. The received wisdom, based on some evidence, is that any race/ethnic differences are

practically no research that is able to offer a systematic judgment on whether any differences between the sexes can be interpreted as policing of a higher or lower quality.

overwhelmed by the processes of selection and acculturation that officers undergo (Skogan and Frydl 2004:148-150). Few, if any differences are found in most (but not all) of the existing research. Is there anything worth studying here? One might begin by pointing out that nearly all of the studies of racial differences compare black and white officers. Hispanic officers are by and large ignored and deserve attention, not to mention other racial and ethnic groups. One might also wish for a larger and more empirically rigorous body of research, as did the National Academies panel on police policies and practices. But I think there are other substantive issues that should be considered.

The vast majority of available studies focus on racial differences in the use of coercive authority: arrest and use of force. However, much of the reform literature that advocates hiring more minority officers for instrumental reasons⁶ does so with the argument that minority officers will act in ways that treat minority citizens with greater respect and care and will perhaps sensitize white officers to the need to do this. Very few studies have assessed this argument. Doing so would require that researchers consider the sorts of street-level police performance dimensions that have been emphasized to enhance service delivery and police legitimacy (Mastrofski 1999; McCluskey 2003; Tyler and Huo 2002). And it means that researchers need to take into account the context of the street-level situation – especially the interaction between the officer’s race and the citizen’s race, as well as the neighborhood’s racial context (predominantly minority, predominantly white, and mixed). Further, we need research that assesses the extent of the benefits for being race-sensitive in assigning officers to neighborhoods. What, if any, are the advantages of matching minority officers to minority neighborhoods? Do multi-

⁶ The usual instrumental reason is that it will improve police performance. Of course there are other reasons, such as ensuring equal employment opportunity, which pertains whether or not performance benefits are realized.

racial teams work well? Do residents of those neighborhoods register greater satisfaction with the policing they receive than those where there is no racial matching? If researchers find, as reformers expected, that there are substantial benefits to having citizens policed by officers of a similar racial/cultural background, that has implications for beat assignment practices – a topic about which little research exists.

Related to the above issue is the recruitment of officers to deal with rapidly growing immigrant communities. This is an old issue, dating back to the policing of immigrant communities that were concentrating in Nineteenth Century urban America. Many American cities are again experiencing the influx of large numbers of documented and undocumented immigrants. It would be useful to know what sorts of officers do the best job of policing these communities. Facility with the immigrants' language is the most obvious concern, but knowledge of immigrants' cultures would also appear to be an important consideration. Do officers recruited from immigrant communities do a better job than those who are not from those communities? If so, how can other officers be effectively exposed to the knowledge and orientation of those officers?

Baccalaureates in Blue

One of the most enduring and sacred of American police reform proposals over the last century has been that police should receive more formal education, and in recent times, that has meant more *college education* (Skogan and Frydl 2004:139-141). A clear trend in the last three decades has been an increase in officers acquiring at least some college credits and a baccalaureate degree. Enormous resources and funds (both private and government) have been devoted to increasing college education for police, yet the National Academies panel on police policy and practice concluded that the available

evidence was insufficient to draw conclusions about the impact of education on officer decision making:

The committee finds the available evidence inadequate to make recommendations regarding the desirability of higher education for improving police practice and strongly recommends rigorous research on the effects of higher education on job performance (Skogan and Frydl 2004:141).

The two groups that have the most to gain by promoting higher education for police are the police themselves -- who enjoy the increased status and material rewards that accompany a college degree -- and the academics who are in the business of higher education. What is not clear is how much and what kind of benefit is to be gained by policies that encourage, reward, or require a college education of our sworn officers.

First, we need to know what the college experience adds to the officers' performance -- independent of the effects of the screening process undergone to get into college. What skills and habits, if any, does college develop? Does college affect the morals and values of the students who become police officers? The capacity for moral reasoning (Muir 1977)? The inclination to conform and follow hierarchical direction or the inclination to question it? Further, assuming that there are substantial benefits to be obtained from officers with college degrees, we have been remarkably uninterested in assessing just what courses of study work best. Is there a difference in the quality of policing between people who obtain their degrees *before* they begin policing and those who acquire their degrees *after* they become police? Do programs of study concentrating on technical or professional matters produce better officers than those that require a broad range of more general topics (e.g., liberal arts degrees)? Do some police assignments benefit when college-educated officers perform them but others do not (e.g., officers who

are assigned to plan problem-oriented policing projects versus those who are assigned to respond to calls for service)?

If NIJ should take the National Academies panel’s recommendation to evaluate the marriage of the “badge and the baccalaureate” (Worden 1990), I have a couple of pieces of advice. First, we need research that can offer meaningful measures of police performance. Please deliver us from more studies of the impact of college education on officer attitudes and perceptions; they bear little, if any, relation to actual performance on the street. Researchers and police managers need to devise methods of measuring actual police practice – whether through third party observation, agency documentation, or self reports. Second, inasmuch as possible, these measures need to incorporate judgments not just about the choices officers make (e.g., Did Officer X make an arrest?), but about the *quality* of those choices (e.g., Did Officer X make the best decision here about what to do?).⁷ Third, researchers need to employ the strongest evaluation designs possible. Randomized trials may not be possible, but useful quasi-experimental designs should be. Such studies will require considerable advance planning. At least some studies might pursue a developmental approach. It is conceivable that the effects of college, like the effects of the police academy experience, will dissipate over time. I should think that police organizations would benefit from studies that examine how to reinforce and sustain whatever benefits come from the college experience.

Training

Training is the solution of choice, both to prevent problems and to correct affairs when, as Justice Cardozo said, “the constable has blundered.” There can be no question that police training in America has increased in quantity in the last four decades, but the

⁷ See p. 15 for a more detailed discussion of how to attend to the quality of police work.

National Academies panel reported once again that very little is validated with rigorous evidence about when and how training improves police performance (Skogan and Frydl 2004:141-147). Of course, it is axiomatic that police must receive training on a wide variety of topics, but here is a list of things about which we know little or nothing⁸:

- How effective are particular training programs in producing desired results? Most training evaluations include only pretest-posttest comparisons of knowledge gained or attitudes changed rather than looking at subsequent performance on the job.
- How successful is training that attempts to change values and beliefs versus training that attempts to develop knowledge and skills? What training most influences actual police practice?⁹
- What pedagogical styles and settings work best for a given type of training? For example, there are a variety of ways to set up the training of recruits and rookies. What works best? How much training should be in the classroom and how much experiential?
- Who are the best police training instructors for a given topic? Experienced police officers, civilian experts, or a mixed group? In selecting and developing trainers, how much emphasis should be placed on expertise on the topic, and how much on expertise in effective training methods?
- When should officers receive training of a given sort, at what intervals, and what intensity and duration?
- What are the minimum organizational requirements to make training effective? That is, what changes must be made to the organizational environment in supervision, performance monitoring, rewards and discipline, and other aspects of police leadership and management?

The last bulleted item above deserves additional comment. In my experience, many police departments (and universities) use training ineffectively when part of an

⁸ This list draws heavily on the National Academies panel report (Skogan and Frydl:146).

⁹ It is remarkable, for example, that even training on topics that require simple legal compliance -- as opposed to the typically more challenging choices of "workmanship" (Bittner, 1983) -- may be rather ineffective. A study found that on average officers get only about half of the test questions right regarding on Fourth Amendment requirements, and that even extensively trained officers are incorrect on a quarter of the questions dealing with legal issues (Heffernan and Lovely 1990/1991). A study Jon Gould and I conducted showed that officers in one police department failed to comply with search and seizure requirements about 30 percent of the time, even though all had received training on the topic at one time or another (Gould and Mastrofski 2004).

organizational change strategy. These in-service training programs are treated as modular devices into which employees are “plugged.” Once they have completed the program they are presumed “good to go,” even though they often return to units led by people who do not understand or are not committed to implementing what the training tried to impart. As any competent farmer knows, at least half the problem is preparing the soil so that the seed planted will flourish. Evaluations of the impact of training need to take into account the organizational environment to which trainees return.

NIJ could fruitfully develop a two-pronged training assessment program. One would be short-term, designed to provide rigorous assessments of currently popular and promising training programs. For example, there are a host of programs offered around the nation that train police managers. Which are the most successful in producing good managers, and what makes them successful? There are a variety of programs billed as useful in helping officers find ways to reduce the tension in potentially troublesome encounters with the public and avoid the need to resort to force (e.g., “verbal judo”). Are these programs effective? Over the last decade or so, many police have been exposed to training on how to do problem-oriented policing. How well do these programs work in producing good problem-oriented policing?

The second prong of a training assessment program would be more developmental. Innovative police departments might be encouraged to collaborate in a research program that is committed to trying a variety of promising training methods. Participants would agree to a coordinated effort to conduct experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of various training methods – much as NIJ sponsored with police interventions for domestic abuse in the 1980s and drug mapping in the 1990s.

This program of research could be used to answer some of the bulleted questions appearing above.

Structure and Organization

There are a host of topics that fall into this category. I have selected four: (a) Is the locus of decision-making power changing, (b) How are organizations coping with community pressures to influence them, (c) How are police organizations using their resources, and (d) How are police responding to heightened concerns about terror and the influx of immigrants?

Who's Running the Show?

Since the mid-Nineteenth Century police leaders in urban America have struggled to take command of their organizations – first attempting to wrest control from political machines and later from a machine of their own creation – the 911 rapid response calls for service system. The received wisdom is that control of the political machines was successfully overcome by mid-twentieth century (Fogelson 1977). The second struggle is a work in progress. The diffusion of the telephone into American homes made it possible for the public to summon the police conveniently, even as people were dispersing into suburbs. The automobile made it possible for police to respond rapidly to citizens' requests, and the two-way radio made it possible for headquarters to maintain contact with the officers, checking on the status of their work and giving directions.

Improvements in communications technology (the portable radio) and the computer made it possible to communicate more quickly and track large numbers of calls for service, as well as the availability of officers to respond. Police leaders found that they could create general orders and response protocols, thereby establishing priorities for the mobilization

of police officers, while tracking actual operations and documenting key aspects of what happened. This system, along with increased pressure (both internally and externally generated) to be as responsive as possible to the largest number of citizen requests, led to a sort of management-on-autopilot. The received wisdom is that the resulting calls-for-service response system came to take control of the lion's share of police resources. Many reformers came to argue that this "tyranny" of the 911 system interfered with attempts to be strategic in deploying police to deal with community problems effectively (Goldstein, 1990:18; Kelling and Coles, 1996:91; Sparrow et al. 1990:3-4, 105; Walker, 1992:92).

At the same time, certain aspects of police reform promoted more selective ways to use police resources – to replace at least in part the "you-call-we-haul" imperative of the 911 system. Many departments adopted a community policing style that paid more attention to what organized groups of citizens wanted (neighborhood associations, business, civic, and church groups). Problem-oriented policing advocates argued that analysis of problems and strategic interventions would be a more effective long-term strategy for reducing the calls-for-service workload by solving or reducing the problems (Goldstein 1990; Sparrow et al 1990). Hotspots policing required that officers concentrate their efforts in certain small geographic areas to deter and incapacitate disorderly and illegal activity. And Compstat called for an organizational structure that delegated key mobilization decisions to the middle managers running the precincts, while at the same time holding them accountable for results that were routinely reviewed by top management (Silverman 1999). Furthermore, some programs required that first-level supervisors take a more active role in how officers were deployed – some being freed

entirely from the responsibility of answering calls-for-service so that police could focus more resources on working with the community and solving problems (Skogan and Hartnett 1997).

The obvious first question is then, “What has happened to the ‘tyranny’ of 911?” Are relatively fewer person-hours of policing being devoted to the response to calls for service and more resources instead toward “strategic” interventions of one sort or another? If there is a shift in the direction that reformers desired, how widespread is it – just a few hard-core departments, or is it a more inclusive trend? If there is substantial variability in this trend, what accounts for it? Is it a matter of merely some chiefs wanting to do it and others not, or is it a matter of implementation problems? A study of this sort is important, because virtually all of the major police reforms of the last two decades require additional resources, which in practical terms means a capacity for police departments to disengage to a significant degree from the calls-for-service autopilot. There are many reasons to expect that any trend in the desired direction has been modest, and perhaps where accomplished, due mostly to the addition of more resources to policing (e.g., through COPS grants) rather than through what would probably be a painful allocation of existing resources. The public has come to expect the convenience of the rapid-response system, and many chiefs would be understandably wary of significantly reducing their agency’s response practices.

If the locus of decision-making is changing in American police departments, we should be curious about how it is shifting. It has become axiomatic among scholars that the greatest discretion in local American police agencies is found in the lowest ranks, and some brands of community and problem-oriented policing seem to accept this as

appropriate. However, Compstat attempts to harness precinct commanders' efforts to fulfilling top management's objectives, tracking their progress through a highly centralized system of accountability and control (Weisburd et al 2006). And the capacity of managers to oversee field operations in real time and to assess performance after the fact has never been greater. Rapid communications, GPS tracking, and digital video transmissions make it possible for supervisors to monitor their subordinates' work very closely. But how much direction are supervisors and managers giving their subordinates – either directly or before/after the fact? How are they monitoring their subordinates' performance? And how are street-level officers responding? If researchers were to conduct ethnographies or systematic observation of police patrol and detective work today, would they produce the same results as those conducted in the 1960s and 1970s – that is, that supervisors and managers have a tenuous and at most only indirect influence on how their subordinates exercise their discretion?¹⁰ I suspect that the answer may vary from department to department. Initially, I would suggest the comparison of carefully matched agencies – some that have made a concerted and sustained effort to transform the nature of management and supervision compared to those that have not.

Answering these questions requires that researchers pay special attention to two things: (a) how and how much discretion police officers are exercising, and (b) what supervisors and managers are doing to direct, constrain, or guide that discretion. Some systematic observation of patrol in two community-policing departments conducted in 1996 and 1997 indicated that the mobilization of these officers was not overwhelmingly driven by 911 or the officers' supervisors – that three-fourths of their time was spent on activities selected at their own discretion (Mastrofski 2004:113). Further, supervisors

¹⁰ See, for example, Muir (1977) Skolnick (1966), Rubinstein (1973), Van Maanen (1974; 1983).

very rarely were present or otherwise communicated with subordinates about how they exercised their discretion during encounters with the public. Of course, supervisors need not provide hands-on direction to influence their officers, but we have few systematic studies that tell us how and how much direction is given by contemporary supervisors (cf. Engel 2000).

Two other ways that the discretion of the rank and file may be structured by management deserve attention, one bureaucratic and one professional – and neither requiring the direct intervention of the supervisory hierarchy in real time. Ericson and Haggerty (1997) argue that information gathering and recording protocols, built into the hand-written and computerized forms officers complete, structure how officers conduct much of their work. The proliferation of these forms and systems for monitoring their completion, they argue, means an increase in hierarchical influence on street-level practice. This is an interesting, but not rigorously tested proposition that is amenable to experimental design evaluations. The second indirect way to structure discretion is through training, at least some of which is intended to invest officers with the skill and judgment to use their discretion wisely in circumstances where simple bureaucratic rules will not be very useful in producing the desired results (Muir 1977:ch. 12) – disputes, for example. Such training is intended, not just to avoid bad policing, but to promote good policing. Whether, in fact, it does either is certainly worthy of study, and the effect of training (and different types of training of this sort) can also be assessed with experimental design evaluations (see earlier section on this topic).

A final point I wish to make about the structuring of discretion is that researchers have by-and-large ignored the essential normative component required to determine what

produces whether police discretion will be exercised well or poorly. Consequently, much of our research, as interesting as it is from an academic perspective, does not address fundamental questions about how an organization can promote *better* policing and avoid *undesirable* policing. For example, we have expended a lot more effort to determine what influences whether an officer will make an arrest than what influences whether the officer will make a *good* arrest, or whether an arrest was even the best choice to make at all (Mastrofski 2004). We tend to focus on the quantity of policing and not its quality. Yet we know that the best results obtain when the *quality* of the officer's work is attended to, such as when police take the trouble to listen to citizens, show respect and concern for their situations – even when they are the object of enforcement (Tyler and Huo 2004).

Of course, distinguishing discretion well-exercised from discretion poorly-exercised is a complex matter. It first requires that we specify the criteria that distinguish good from poor performance, and we know that there are many dimensions, at least by the standards of the craft (Bayley and Bittner 1984). For example, the following seem to be a minimal list of concerns that a competent police supervisor would attend to in evaluating the work of a subordinate in handling a domestic dispute or a routine traffic violation stop:

- Dispositional justice (legality, priority, and deservedness of the disposition)
- Procedural justice (respect, listening/concern, neutrality/transparency)
- Victim treatment (Procedural justice + services)
- Safety and order at the scene
- Prospects for reducing future problem risk (based on theory and evidence)
- Cost efficiency (effort worth the likely payoff?)

Of course, there may be others, depending upon the preferences of the evaluator, and that raises an important issue. We do not know much about the diversity of views about what constitutes good policing – both within police organizations and among the various

constituencies served by the police. An important step then is to determine the extent to which there is consensus about what the important criteria are and how to weigh them. This can be accomplished through survey research (factorial designs lend themselves to this). Another important step is to attempt to construct a set of criteria that are outlined in an actual operational setting and then develop a system to give officers before-and-after-the fact guidance on how well they were doing according to these criteria. Such an exercise could be done as an experiment or quasi-experiment and could tell us a lot about the capacity of a more structured approach to discretion control to produce a higher likelihood that officers will exercise their discretion in more desirable ways.

What Is the Influence of Community Pressure on Police Practice?

American police, at least as much as any other aspect of local service delivery, have long been the target of community efforts to influence practice. At the risk of a simplistic historical summary, we can say that until about the 1930s, America's urban police were heavily "penetrated" by the direct manipulation of local political machines. But the influence of machines waned, as over the next half century, the reform ideal was to seek ways to block such influence or weaken it through various "good government" filters (e.g., a professional, appointed city manager). But by the 1970s, significant segments of society, including the middle class, were seeking a less isolated, more responsive police (Fogelson 1977:ch. 11). And American police responded to this powerful stream of discontent much as the Army Corps of Engineers responds to untamed rivers: they attempted to channel at least some of this pressure through "partnership" arrangements that came to be known as a core component of community policing. These partnership programs – typically initiated by police and accomplished

through liaison with neighborhood associations -- have offered the public opportunities to “coproduce” safety and police services with the police, as well as offer venues to express preferences, complaints, and express their assessments on police performance (Skogan 2006b:28-34).

National surveys of America’s municipal police forces suggest that such partnerships have blossomed in the majority of these agencies (Roth et al. 2004), yet we know remarkably little of their character. What kinds of citizens and interests participate, and how much does this vary from community to community? How do police agencies attempt to channel their requests and demands? How do citizens respond? How effectively is the “river” of external pressure controlled? How much “power” is harnessed by the police in these partnerships? We are not without some very good research on these issues, but it comes from but a few cities, most notably Chicago, where researchers have been carefully monitoring that city’s CAPS program for over a decade (Skogan 2006a). The results in Chicago are interesting, and one would have to say encouraging in terms of the benefits that befall neighborhoods that organize well to deal with police and neighborhood problems (Skogan et al. 2004). However, we could use a much larger sample of communities so that we may better learn the full range of experiences; some researchers report a different sort of experience in other case studies (Lyons 1999). Ultimately, not only do we want to know more about the distributional effects of police-neighborhood partnerships on the distribution of police services among neighborhoods (the political science issue of who is getting what), but we should also be interested in how establishing these bonds affect the influence of other interest groups on the police (e.g., large business interests). Do police leaders (and their mayors) who have

established strong bonds with neighborhood groups behave differently toward other (sometimes competing interests) than those who have not established strong bonds?

What is the Business of the Police?

Police reform in the early Twenty-first Century has some crosscurrents that offer interesting opportunities for research. On the one hand, community policing calls on police to broaden the mission of the police – embracing a host of order maintenance and service activities to which the public usually attaches high value. On the other hand, Compstat’s proponents argue that the police mission is first and foremost about controlling crime (Willis et al. 2007). And to add one more hand, the federal government expects local police to join the war on terrorism by strengthening both its capacity for responding to critical incidents and by gathering and sharing information that will strengthen intelligence on terrorist activities. On top of this, of course, is the continuing vitality of private organizations that engage in things for which the police have long been responsible (security, investigations, for example) (Manning 2006). This raises one of the fundamental questions about public police organizations: what is their business?

If one takes Bittner’s (1970) approach – examining what police do, rather than considering views about what they *ought* to do – one comes up with little hard evidence on actual police practice. At a presentation at the 2006 meeting of the American Society of Criminology meeting, Los Angeles police chief, William Bratton declared that American police forces today, more than any other time in the nation’s history, are focused on crime. Is this, in fact the case, or have police actually maintained or even expanded their efforts in peace-keeping and service activities? And how much effort has been expended on target-hardening, critical incident response, and intelligence gathering

in the war on terror? It would be useful to attempt to track the trajectory of police resource allocation among these different “missions” over time. And it would be useful to know which particular types of problems and activities within each category account for most of the change over time. This sort of analysis could tell us just how malleable local police organizations are, and it would enable us to assess the influence of different reform efforts and other trends on the business of public policing.

Of course, a number of conceptual and measurement challenges must be overcome. The rhetoric of American reform tends to blur the distinction between such categories of work as crime, peacekeeping, service, and anti-terrorism.¹¹ And obtaining good longitudinal data on resource allocations across these categories would be daunting. Nonetheless, some departments will be able to provide this sort of information, so that multiple-site longitudinal analyses should be possible. Ultimately we can learn something about where we’re going by a careful assessment of where we’ve been.

Impact of the War on Terror

Because the times demand attention to terrorism, I want to focus a few comments on the impact of the sense of heightened risk of terrorist attack in America on local policing. An issue much on the minds of police leaders around the nation is whether their organizations have adequate resources to deal with “ordinary” crime and disorders while also doing their part in the war against terror – what is sometimes called the “dual role” issue. This is not an easy question to answer, because shifting risks can lead to shifting organizational priorities. What once might have been an acceptable level of police

¹¹ “Crime-focused” activities depend upon your theory of crime control. If you believe that non-enforcement activities can contribute to crime reduction, then you can argue that police-sponsored midnight basketball leagues, neighborhood trash clean-up, DARE, and showing respect for citizens are all crime-focused. It may make more sense to focus on the nature of the activity (what police do) rather than what the intended goal is.

activity to guard against terrorism, may no longer satisfy. Perhaps communities are willing to accept a reduced effort against “ordinary” crimes and disorders to pay for increased protection against terror attacks. Or perhaps Americans expect no reduction in the former, while increasing the latter. Researchers might begin to address this issue by combining studies of local community preferences about the war on terror versus ordinary crimes/disorders (through, for example, public opinion surveys) and the actual efforts and resource allocations of the local police. Some communities may have a much higher fear of terrorist attack than do others, so naturally one would expect police in those communities to increase their allocations to anti-terrorist responses. If Department of Homeland Security financial awards do not cover these costs, then police management is faced with some hard choices about whether and how to redistribute resources previously allocated to ordinary crime and disorder. How are police organizations in different communities with different levels of fear adapting to this problem?

The central federal role in the war against terror is undeniable, but the U.S. Government has established multi-agency task forces involving federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies (Joint Terrorism Task Forces). In addition, tremendous demands are being placed on local police agencies to feed information to agencies needing to develop intelligence on terrorist risks around the nation. Cooperation among levels of government in law enforcement has a mixed record in the U.S., and despite the pressure of the perceived risk of future terrorist attacks, the challenges are many. For example, local chiefs want access to timely and useful information about the risks of terror in their communities, and most bridle at the security restrictions placed upon them by federal agencies. And they sometimes are uncomfortable with the role federal

agencies want them to play in seizing, interrogating, and otherwise controlling suspects and persons of interest – especially in areas where there are large numbers of persons who are thought to be in a “prime” suspect pool (e.g., immigrants and persons from parts of the world believed to produce and shelter active terrorist groups) (Thacher 2005). The National Academies panel on police policies and practices raised the question in terms of whether in this environment local police would assume a more “militaristic” approach to their jobs – something seemingly counter to the community policing approach that dominated America’s police reform agenda until 2001 (Skogan and Frydl 2004:212-213). To the extent that local agencies can and will share information on the dynamics of their relationship with federal agencies, NIJ could advance knowledge on the challenges of inter-governmental collaboration in the war on terror and its consequences for police structure and practices.

Local efforts in the war on terror have also stimulated increased pressure for inter-agency collaboration across organizations with different functions in responding to a terrorist attack: law enforcement, fire, medical, transportation, communications, infrastructure, etc.). The Department of Homeland Security is sponsoring evaluations of how well these collaborations are working, but NIJ might focus more on how these collaborations are altering the structure and practices of local police organizations.

In examining the impact of the war on terror on local policing, two kinds of studies seem useful. One would focus on the specialist units given responsibility for terrorism-focused activities (e.g., intelligence units, SWAT teams). What do these units do to deal with terrorism? What anti-terror strategies and tactics are favored? What legal issues (e.g., constitutional protections) are raised and how are local police agencies

dealing with them? The past record of American local police departments is spotty (e.g., dealing with alleged communists, civil rights leaders, and anti-war activists). What steps, if any, are local police taking to “remember this history so they are not condemned to repeat it?” The other kind of study would focus on the much larger general police units that have as their primary function the response to ordinary crime and disorders. How, if at all, has the daily work of these persons changed? How has their approach to their work changed? There could be considerable variability among communities, which suggests a sampling strategy that can capture that variability. Ultimately, it will be important for studies of the war on terror to focus both on activities designed to strengthen public safety/security *and* activities that protect or threaten civil liberties.

Impact of Immigration

Local police around the nation, not just at the borders, are confronted with increasing numbers of immigrants residing in their communities. Some are documented and some are not, but they present the not unfamiliar challenges of policing people who speak a different language, have a foreign culture, and are displaced from a stable community environment. How much variability is there in the relationship between local police and the cognizant federal authorities on immigration matters? How are American police agencies organizing to handle the burgeoning immigrant communities? To what extent do local police get involved in assisting federal agencies in identifying, capturing, and returning undocumented aliens? What are the patterns of street-officer decision making in how immigrant communities are policed compared to neighborhoods that have few or no immigrants?

Management and Leadership

I wish to discuss three issues about police leadership and management: (a) in what ways are police leaders relevant to the practices and performance of their organization, (b) what makes the best police leaders/managers, and (c) how are American police leaders/managers made?

The Relevance of Police Leaders

It is widely accepted that selecting the police chief is one of the most important decisions that can be made about how and how well the police organization performs (Sparrow et al. 1990; Wilson 1968). Yet in private, candid moments, most chiefs will admit that they are highly constrained in what they can do to direct and guide their organizations. Historical accounts of police leaders tend to emphasize the special contributions of celebrity chiefs – Vollmer, Wilson, and Parker and more recently Brown and Bratton. Of course, the historians tend not to select their samples randomly. What would a representative sample of chiefs show?

There is not much rigorous research on police leadership – most of which is limited to case studies of how chiefs matter or try to matter in shaping the policies, practices, and performance of their departments. There is a fair amount of such scholarship on CEOs in the private sector, and as one might expect, there is a considerable range of findings. An instructive pattern of findings, however, is that the turnover of private sector CEOs is only weakly related to the technical performance (e.g., profits) of their corporations (Finkelstein and Hambrick 1996;168). If this pattern were to be found in the turnover of police chiefs, one might question the common assumption that police chiefs are a substantial influence on organizational performance. That is, the working hypothesis is that police chief tenure is largely independent of their

organization's performance. But if the police industry is operating in a technically efficient fashion, then those whose organizations perform better than their peers (for example, in reducing crime) should either retain their current jobs longer or enjoy job transfers that are a step up in occupational status (typically a bigger or more prestigious department). Of course, crime rates are not the only criterion by which a chief's performance is judged. Chiefs gain and lose their jobs because a new political leader takes office, collective bargaining units support or reject the person, and assorted scandals and crises arise.¹² A study of police chief turnover could take a wide range of such criteria into account and thereby learn something about the criteria used across the nation's communities. Knowing something about the market dynamics of police leadership can tell us useful things about the sorts of people who get selected and retained and why. If the market does not reward technical efficiency, then what does it reward – chiefs who clamber fastest onto the bandwagon of the current fad (Crank and Langworthy, 1992; Mastrofski 2002)?

Another way to examine the contribution of police chiefs is to ask how much each chief changed the structure, practices and performance from the trajectory of predecessors. Some police departments may be so intransigent that the "reform" chief's task is like "bending granite" (Guyot 1975). Other organizations may be equally immune to significant declines in performance, even when the leadership is weak because key structures are largely immune to serious degeneration. For example, the autopilot calls-for-service response process may have kept truly exceptional chiefs from making their organizations as effective as they could be, but the autopilot system may also have sustained the organization when it had poor or mediocre leadership.

¹² Of course, sometimes police chiefs leave simply because they retire.

American police agencies, especially the larger ones, tend to keep their chiefs only a handful of years before getting a new one. This limits the capacity of any leader to change the organization and raises the question of whether the pattern in American departments is one of more or less sustained leadership and management in the same general direction (e.g., a particular model of community policing) – or whether the pattern is a lot more “zigging and zagging,” with new brooms undoing the work of their predecessor – either to correct what they believe to be failed practice or just to make their own mark. Longitudinal studies of the leadership of American police departments could help us identify their contribution to how smoothly police agencies move toward or away from a reform movement over time. The role of professional police leadership associations should be carefully considered as a force for sustaining trajectories of reform, even where turnover is high and the political winds shift frequently.

Making the Best Police Leaders

The United States offers an interesting laboratory to learn what makes the best police leaders. Our decentralized system of local police agencies presumably means that there is considerable diversity in how people become chiefs. Of course, the vast majority move up the ranks within the police occupation, if not within the same organization, but they undoubtedly vary in their education and at least some aspects of training,¹³ work experience, the mentorship they have received, their exposure to peer professionals (through professional associations), their collaboration with outsiders (for example, businesses and higher education), and the type of larger context in which they have worked (nature of the community and organization). To the extent that our local police

¹³ I suspect that a near constant for chiefs in medium-to-large departments is successful completion of the FBI's National Academy course.

vary on these sorts of potential influences, we have a natural opportunity to learn what produces the best leaders for a given type of police organization or circumstance.

The first order of business is to determine how we could measure “good leadership.” This might be done in terms of outcomes – for example, better-than-average crime rates or citizen satisfaction for departments of a given category. It might also be done in terms of process – for example, successfully implementing some important organizational structure or process.

Determining what produces the best leadership would then involve drawing a sample of chiefs and collecting information on them and their success in their current organization. Any useful analysis would certainly need to consider that different types of leaders may perform better in a given situation (e.g., small town versus big city, department in crisis versus one in a stable political environment). A particularly interesting question to consider is whether there is substantial value in having a chief who has undergone extensive police leadership education, such as what Bramshill provides to UK police leaders. The lack of this sort of national police academy for American police leaders was recently noted with regret at the 2006 American Society of Criminology meeting by William Bratton and Gil Kerlikowske, both prominent west coast police chiefs. Evaluators might attempt to get some sense of what the value added of such an educational experience would be by using educational proxies, such as the acquisition of a graduate degree in management or criminal justice by a police chief. Of course, there are some aspects of police leadership education and training that *are* accessible to experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations (short term leadership programs of a few weeks’ duration). Professional police associations and the providers of those

programs could agree to randomized trials and pre-post assessments of police leadership performance to detect short-term and long-term benefits of these programs.

Another interesting to know are the advantages and disadvantages of drawing top police leadership from persons who had little or no prior police experience in lower ranks. I do not know how many such chiefs there are of this sort in the United States, but even a study of a small sample might prove useful in considering the advisability of this approach. Another alternative is to go abroad to study nations that have adopted the creation of a separate “officer corps” of leaders who have not had the street-level experience of the rank-and-file officers.

The Making of Our Police Leaders

In tandem with research on how best to fashion the selection of local police leaders, it would be useful to conduct research on how police leaders are *actually* selected. Here I propose a sort of “life-course” study of police, some of whom will eventually become top leaders in their field. What distinguishes those who get there from those who do not, and what does that tell us about the choices our communities are making about who gets to become their police leaders?

It might also be useful to study key parts of the selection process over time. For example, to what extent over the last 50 years has the market for police chiefs (especially in departments of 100 or more sworn) become a regional or national market instead of one limited to the same department or other departments in the locale? I suspect that national (and perhaps state) police chief associations play an important role in the selection process – not to mention private consultants. To what extent do their efforts homogenize the criteria used to select chiefs? Over time are we getting police chiefs in

the United States who are increasingly like each other? From a Darwinian perspective, diversification is a useful adaptive device, but if the national market is indeed changing, then we should expect to see that reflected in the characteristics of the chiefs hired.

Technology and Information Use

This section briefly discusses two types of police technology: that which analyzes information gathered by or for the police, and that which gathers information through surveillance.

Crime and Problem Analysis Information Technology

A great deal has recently been made of the rapidly growing capacity of American police agencies to analyze information on crime and other problems to make possible more effective police interventions. Hotspots policing, pulling-levers policing, Compstat, and evidence-based policing all rely heavily on the presumed insights to be harvested from more efficient and sophisticated systems of information manipulation and analysis (Weisburd and Braga 2006b). Indeed, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) argue that for some time western policing has been transforming into an enterprise heavily dependent upon innovations in information technology. Manning's (2006:108) recent review of police technology and reform in the United States makes him skeptical that much has changed due to limitations in the available technologies, their low capacity for inter-operations, and especially the strong occupational culture that resists abstract, general, and complex methods. This skepticism is buttressed from a variety of studies that suggest that the crime and problem analysis capacity of American police may be considerably overstated by those who argue that information technology has made substantial improvements to police crime control effectiveness (Cordner and Biebel 2005; Greenspan 2003; O'Shea

and Nicholls 2003; Willis et al. 2007). In my own field work on Compstat, I have been impressed by the size of the gap between the willingness and capacity of most police middle-managers to use mapping and other crime analysis methods and the capacity of those systems to analyze data. Part of it is undoubtedly habit, and another part is the lack of adequate education and training to use these technologies to greatest effect. Large numbers of managers still have more confidence that they can “map in their heads” and rely more on their private information pathways about crime in their districts than that this new technology can tell them something useful. Certainly most patrol officers have little time for these new methods.

The current limitations of crime analysis technology notwithstanding, we should recognize that the opera isn't over yet. There are strong incentives to rectify the technical flaws in the crime analysis systems. Moreover, occupational culture does not change overnight. As more police receive computer training, and college degrees, more of them will likely have an appreciation for and facility with these methods. And police organizations may increasingly draw upon civilian technicians who have all of the requisite technical skills to produce crime analysis. The real challenge comes in creating a sufficiently large class of adept internal “consumers” for this information – consumers who will use the information to guide their work. This will take time. NIJ should consider sponsoring research projects that track departments over time to learn more about whether and how an “information and analysis culture” emerges among police. And NIJ could fund experimental evaluations in which some police units (or entire departments) receive advanced information technology and some do not, evaluating the impact in terms of such things as case clearance and crime rates.

Surveillance Technology

I now venture into an area about which I know little, but which strikes me as extremely important because it presumably influences the police capacity to prevent crime and apprehend criminals on the one hand and the police capacity to infringe on citizens' privacy and civil liberties on the other. Again, reaching with that third hand, I would say that there is the potential in much of the new technology to monitor more closely the practices and performance of the rank and file police as well.

One question is simply what is the state of local policing in the adoption and use of the rapidly developing technologies of surveillance? Which departments use which technologies and how extensively are they used? Here surveys and site visits to samples of police agencies could answer this question. A second question is, what impact does each of these technologies have on the capacity of the police to solve and prevent crimes? Especially with cutting-edge technologies, this question could be answered using experimental and quasi-experimental designs; the available research has produced mixed results (see NIJ Journal 2003 on CCTV technology, for example). We also need to know how intrusive and extensive these technologies are and how frequently and egregiously citizens' rights are violated. Since 2001 there has been considerable debate about what citizens' rights to privacy are, but a carefully performed evaluation could use multiple criteria to assess a given set of practices. The challenge, of course, is obtaining access to such information, and that is certainly no easy matter, especially where national security interests are claimed. However, it may be possible to conduct some evaluations using transcripts of civil suits.

Also, we might wish to know how technological innovations are changing the nature of police work. I am especially intrigued by the ways in which closed circuit television (CCTV) might change how police engage in enforcement and prevention activities. It is used much more extensively by police in the UK than the US, and in the former, research suggests that, unlike crime mapping technological innovations, the response across the ranks to CCTV has been almost uniformly positive (Levesley and Martin 2005). CCTV potentially reduces the need to allocate so many officers to traffic enforcement, and it might be developed as efficient alternative to random patrol in some areas – and perhaps even a deterrent in hotspot areas (NIJ Journal 2003).¹⁴ However, it is still labor intensive for the purposes of monitoring locations, albeit this activity does not require sworn officers (Levesley and Martin 2005). Observational studies could be conducted to learn how police are using this technology and whether and how it alters the dynamics of crime prevention and law enforcement efforts.

The aspect of CCTV that seems fraught with the greatest potential to change the structure and practices of policing is the capacity for the organization to monitor more closely the activities of its own personnel. Systems not owned or operated by the police have been used on an occasional basis to determine whether officers misbehaved or performed unsatisfactorily in criminal and civil cases. CCTV is routinely used in many departments to monitor traffic stops. It is not difficult to imagine a not-too-distant future when each patrol officer will carry a portable device that transmits audio and video signals of the situation with which he or she is dealing. As this technology becomes available, NIJ should certainly conduct evaluations to determine how the technology

¹⁴ Current research, especially in the UK, suggests that CCTV is more effective in identifying offenders for later apprehension and conviction.

changes the way that police organizations supervise street-level police work. Do supervisors and managers attempt to give more direction to officers on the scene of events? Do they do more after-action reviews of performance? In what ways, if at all, will supervisors and managers be forced to engage their subordinates more directly in specifying what constitutes good performance?

Recent Police Innovations

A recent edited volume on eight police innovations in strategy and practice over the last three decades offers essays both supportive and critical of community policing, broken windows policing, problem-oriented policing, third-party policing, hot-spots policing, Compstat, and evidence-based policing (Weisburd and Braga 2006b). These essays summarize and interpret the evidence pro and con about the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. I will not attempt to recount their points here, but I can note a few things that may help guide a research agenda on these reforms and their implications for the organization and management of the police. The editors argue, “These innovations represent fundamental changes to the business of policing” (Braga and Weisburd 2006a:339), but they also note that the evidence is far from conclusive about how successful these innovations are or could be. I suggest that there are two fundamental questions about these innovations.

First, just *how much* have they changed police organizations and the practice of policing? If police organizations *are* changing in fundamental ways, researchers should be able to observe and measure these changes. NIJ should consider developing a program to monitor the state of organizational transformation that goes well beyond analyzing LEMAS and other periodic mail surveys that ask a large sample of police

organizations to self-describe what they are doing that is relevant to innovative practices.¹⁵ NIJ might consider sponsoring an on-the-ground assessment of a more selective sample of police agencies across America that is much more intensive.¹⁶ It is simply not enough to know whether a police department has adopted a given program or practice; we need to know much more about the dosage of that implementation (Maguire and Mastrofski, 2000:38-39). How many resources have been committed? How extensive in the community is the treatment? How faithful has the execution of program protocols been? This could be conducted on an ongoing basis (reported annually) and done cost effectively by setting up long-term contracts with researchers located proximate to the selected departments (thereby allowing a close working relationship, the development of researcher knowledge of the site, and much less expensive than paying for the travel of out-of-town researchers). Aside from providing a much more useful measurement of the nature and scope of implementation of the various innovations, this program could also attempt to get information from participating departments about the difficulties they have faced in making their programs work properly and how they have attempted to deal with them.

The second fundamental question about these innovations is, “How well do they work? Do they produce desirable results? Any undesirable results?” While there are some studies with encouraging results for several of the eight innovations listed in the Weisburd/Braga volume (e.g., hotspots policing, problem-oriented policing, third-party policing, pulling-levers policing), there simply is not enough evidence to say

¹⁵ We are all well aware of the limits of self-description, especially when what we’re asking about carries a heavy valence of social desirability. Respondents tend to report themselves in idealized versions that may look very different to a disinterested observer who has detailed knowledge.

¹⁶ Perhaps 100 such departments carefully selected could serve this purpose well.

conclusively that these innovations work or under what conditions. And there are other innovations where the evidence is mixed or virtually non-existent about the effects of the innovation (community policing, broken-windows policing, Compstat, and evidence-based policing). So NIJ could attempt to develop evaluation programs that strengthen our evidence on and confidence in conclusions about what works, when, and why. Here NIJ already has a good model for developing knowledge of this sort – the Spouse Abuse Replication Program, which was used to test and expand on the findings of the pioneering Minneapolis domestic violence study. In many cases it may be possible to conduct experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation studies that could offer a greater degree of confidence in conclusions drawn about the benefits and limitations of these innovations.

Conclusion

I have outlined a rather selective agenda of research issues on police organization and management for NIJ to consider. As selective as it is, it is still quite ambitious and certainly well beyond NIJ's current financial capacity. It hardly needs to be said to this audience that the resources allocated by the federal government to dealing with these and other criminal justice issues are woefully inadequate. If I had to select just a couple of items from my list to suggest as the highest priorities, I would be inclined to select the systematic study of the implementation and effects of police innovations as the top priority and a systematic program for evaluating police training as the second priority. Please note the use of "systematic" to characterize both priorities. Given a greatly restricted resource base, I suggest that a few more comprehensive and rigorous programs of research on policing will serve the nation better than an eclectic collection of small research projects. I give these particular topics a high priority because so much effort,

money, and hope are invested in them as ways to improve policing. I understand the pressure that federal agencies are under to respond to “hot topics of the moment,” but if NIJ is able to adopt a more strategic approach, the long-term benefits seem greater to me.

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