Police Accountability

and the Measurement of Police Performance

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I. Introduction

Citizens have long sought some kind of "bottom line" to measure police performance. They have wanted to be assured that the departments in which they invested their hard-earned money were worth the cost. They have also wanted some objective way to hold police chiefs accountable for maintaining or improving their performance from year to year. And they have wanted some objective determination of whether "innovative" programs actually "worked".

Despite these persistent demands, there has been far more talk about measuring police performance than actual accomplishment. The fact remains that most police departments now operate with no agreed upon or consistent way of measuring their overall performance, or the success of particular innovations.

A. Conventional Performance Measures

When pressed to describe the performance measures that could now properly be used, most overseers and departments would identify four: 1) reported crime; 2) arrests; 3) clearance rates; and 4) response times. They do this despite the fact that these measures have long been criticized as inadequate to the task.

1. Reported Crime Rates: Strengths and Weaknesses

Reported crime rates have what appears to be an important virtue: they measure police performance on a crucial, ultimate objective -- namely, their success in reducing criminal victimization. One difficulty, however, is that reported crime rates are known to be inaccurate measures of criminal victimization. Many citizens do not report crimes to the police. They do not think the crimes are serious enough, or do not believe the police can do much to help, or are afraid of retaliation by offenders. Worse, blacks and other minorities feel this way more

often than whites. Because crimes are reported unreliably to the police, reported crime rates become a biased as well as an inaccurate measure of criminal victimization.

Reported crime rates have a deeper problem, however: they capture only one part of the overall police mission to "serve and protect". We know, now, that levels of fear are only imperfectly related to actual levels of crime and victimization. As a result, reported crime measures cannot, by themselves, reveal the success of the police in establishing a sense of security. It has also long been obvious that reported crime rates cannot measure the quality of the many other emergency services delivered by the police. The clear implication is that even if the reported crime rates were accurate measures of crime reduction, these changes would capture only a portion of the overall value contributed by police departments to their communities.

Finally, because many factors other than police performance affect crime rates, it is hard to use them to hold police managers accountable. After all, the police are only the first step in criminal justice processing, and it is possible that any observed increase in crime could be due to hapless prosecutors, lenient judges, or crowded jails as well as to ineffective policing. Or, it could be that any observed increase in crime rates could be due to unfavorable demographics, or to widening economic and social inequalities, or to the collapse of community and family values. Because police managers cannot control these factors, it is, arguably, inappropriate to hold them accountable for changes in levels of crime.

2. Output Measures: Strengths and Weaknesses

Compared with reported crime rates, the other conventional measures (arrests, clearance rates, response times) all have one obvious disadvantage: instead of measuring the ultimate desired outcomes of policing, they measure the immediate activities or outputs of policing -- the things that the police do to achieve their ultimate objectives, but are not the objectives themselves. This weakens their ability to establish the ultimate worth of a department, or the utility of an innovative program. Still, such measures can be useful -- particularly for holding police managers accountable for performance from year to year.

If arrests, clearance rates and rapid responses can be linked to an ultimate objective of policing (such as effective crime control) through some validated behavioral theory, then the achievement of the immediate operational objectives can be viewed as tantamount to achieving the ultimate objectives. And, of course, there is such a theory. In this theory, quality arrests, produced by rapid response and effective criminal investigation, will produce effective crime control through the mechanisms of incapacitation and deterrence.

The difficulty, however, is that, while this theory meets the test of common sense and has become part of the conventional wisdom about policing, it has not yet been shown to be true. Indeed, some components (particularly those having to do with the value of rapid response) have been specifically disproved. Thus, the value of these measures, and the accomplishments

they record, must be discounted by the uncertainty of their connection to the ultimate objectives of policing.

Output measures have two features that cause them to be frequently (if imperfectly) used in measuring police performance. First, compared with the ultimate outcomes of policing, they are much easier and less expensive to measure. The events to be recorded occur right at the boundary of the organization, rather than at some point removed in time and space from organizational activities. Second, because these activities are directly under managerial control, they are much more useful in holding managers directly accountable for performance, both externally and internally.

But these attractive features also have their downside. If the output measures are not connected to the ultimate objectives of policing, the convenience of these measures can become a trap. The police may become locked into the continued pursuit of operational objectives disconnected from their ultimate objectives, or that diverts their efforts from more to less valuable activities.

Furthermore, because these measures are reported by members of the organization, they can be manipulated to make the organization's performance look better than it is. The only way to guard against such activities, or to ensure overseers that this has not occurred, is to have these measures subject to outside audit. Yet, that is rarely done.

Finally, these measures do not really measure the quality of the organization's efforts, only the quantity. Quality may be as important in reckoning the ultimate value of the organization, and in holding managers accountable. For example, the common measures of arrests simply record when an arrest occurs, not how much care was taken in making the arrest to ensure the safety of officers or to protect the rights of citizens, nor whether the arrest was accompanied by enough evidence to ensure conviction at trial, nor whether the arrest was focused on a particularly active or dangerous criminal offender. Yet, all of these characteristics of arrests affect their value. Similarly, the response time measure reflects only one aspect of service quality in responding to calls for service. About other relevant attributes of service quality such as the courtesy and interest shown by the responding officer, or his resourcefulness or skill in responding to the situation, this measure is silent.

So, the performance measurement system as it now stands is hardly immune to criticism. Given its weaknesses, an important question is why more progress has not been made in improving it.

B. Obstacles to Improved Measurement of Performance

The criticisms of the traditional measures set out above give some indication of how difficult it is to develop a clear, unambiguous measure of police performance. From a technical perspective, it seems one faces a painful choice. One can, at great cost, measure some of the ultimate outcomes of policing, but remain somewhat uncertain about how much of the observed

changes in these outcome measures could be reasonably attributed to police action. Or, alternatively, one can, at considerably less cost, measure the activities and outputs of the police, but remain uncertain about the ultimate value of these activities.

Beyond the technical problems, however, there lies an important political problem. It is not at all clear that the society has reached any sort of settled agreement about what the overall objectives of the police should be. It is clear, of course, that a central objective of the police must be effective crime control. But there is also the expectation that the police will do this in a fair and economical manner, showing respect for the rights of citizens. There is also the expectation that the police will provide a variety of emergency services, and help to co-ordinate the use of public spaces such as parks, roads, and shopping areas. It is by no means clear how much emphasis should be given to each of these functions.

Were society to agree today, things might change tomorrow, for the political system that holds the police accountable for performance does not necessarily remain constant. The focus shifts -- often as a consequence of a high profile incident: one day it will be on the need for rapid response; another on the need for budget control; and on another, the need for restraint in the use of force.

The complexity, ambiguity, and volatility of the political mandate for policing does not fully explain why so little performance measurement is actually done in the field, and why there is not some kind of steady improvement. For this, one needs one additional explanation: for the most part, police managers have not truly committed themselves to developing and using them to guide their organizations' current performance, and future development. Partly this is for the same reasons that everybody seeks to avoid accountability: the risk that performance measures will reveal failure as well as success, and the failure will be both demoralizing and disempowering. Rather than face the prospect of criticism, it is better not to know.

Probably a more important reason for police executives' reluctance, however, is that they despair of being able to establish such a system. The scientific cautions and criticisms play an important role here. Because science has not yet spoken on the subject, or speaks with widely divergent opinions, police chiefs are neither obligated nor empowered to commit themselves to a scientifically mandated set of performance measures.

But a more serious problem is that police chiefs doubt their ability to negotiate a set of performance standards with their overseers that would properly reflect their views of policing, and would remain firm and solid over time. As suggested above, they are far more accustomed to having performance standards dictated to them by various overseers, and then having these standards ignored and over-ruled in crisis circumstances.

C. Performance Measurement and Strategic Leadership

The reluctance of police chiefs to embrace the challenge of developing and using performance measures for their departments, negotiated with their external authorizing

environment, is a great pity, for it strikes from their hands one of the most powerful methods they have for co-ordinating the expectations of their external environment with the performance of their own organizations. There is no better, more solid way to define the mandate of the police than in a negotiated set of measures by which the political authorizing environment will hold the police department accountable. It is in the forging of such an agreement that the mandate for the police becomes concrete and operational.

It also strikes from their hands one of the most powerful instruments they have for being able to exercise personal leadership over the definition of the department's mission. After all, it is in negotiations over performance measurement that police executives may have the chance to educate political overseers about the varied functions of the police, and to help shape their expectations. A negotiated agreement about performance measurement may also give police executives a basis for building trust with their overseers, and securing greater degrees of operational discretion, for, as they show that they can achieve what they have committed themselves to achieving, the world of political oversight may grant them wider latitude. The establishment of broad, formalized performance measures may also help to insulate police departments from some of the most damaging consequences of the operational crises that inevitably occur in policing, for they help to put the crises in the broader context of overall levels of performance.

These shortcomings are particularly harmful in situations where, as now, many police executives are trying to change their overall strategy of policing. One of the worst features of the traditional performance measurement systems is that, precisely because the system has evolved over time, it tends to embody past rather than contemporary philosophies of policing. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine a system of measurements that more perfectly expresses what has come to be called the "crime-fighting" model of policing.

In that conception, the single, overarching goal of policing is to reduce crime. That is reflected perfectly in the selection of levels of reported crime as the single most important outcome measure. The principal way that the police are thought to be able to contribute to that goal is through arrests that lead to deterrence and incapacitative effects. That is reflected perfectly in the emphasis placed on the number of arrests, and the clearance rates. The major activities that must be carried out to produce these effects include retrospective investigation of crimes, and rapid response to calls for service. These operational objectives are reflected in the traditional system's reliance on clearance rates and response times.

Insofar as these measures continue to be used to measure police performance, then, they tend to lock policing in to old conceptions of proper purposes and old conceptions of suitable means. They cease being simple reflections of an idea about how best to police, and become instead a causal force dictating and sustaining a particular style of policing. As a result, for those executives trying to chart new paths for policing, it becomes particularly to find some way of escaping this tight grip of the past. Because one cannot beat something with nothing, it becomes crucially important that police executives develop new measures of police performance. It is also important that they use the political negotiations about these new measures, and the

organizational efforts to design and implement them, as occasions for educating their overseers and organizations about the new paths of policing. In short, it is important that they use performance measurement as an instrument of strategic leadership rather than technically competent management.

This paper examines the issue of performance measurement from an unusual perspective. Instead of seeing the issue only as a scientific or technical question, it will examine performance measurement as a political and managerial instrument to be used strategically at a time when many police managers are trying to shift the strategy of policing from "professional law enforcement" to "community oriented" or "problem-solving" policing. We will be interested in how the embrace of accountability and the development of new performance measurements can be used as a strategic tool to re-position organizations in their environments as well as the question of what constitutes the best measure of police performance.

Now, it may seem that putting performance measurement in this managerial context is an evasion of the technical task of improving performance measurement as an abstract, scientific question. That may well be true. But I think by putting the subject in this context, some important technical insights about how to technically improve the measurement of police performance are also developed. They include: 1) a detailed discussion of how surveys and other feedback mechanisms may be used by police departments to evaluate their performance; 2) the development of a system that can both record and evaluate the pro-active, problem-solving activities taken on by police departments to complement the measures taken on the reactive side; and 3) a discussion of how police departments might remain accountable for performance even as they go through a lengthy, expensive transition from one style of policing to another.

II. The Point of Performance Measurement

Measuring performance is expensive: resources that would otherwise be available for **conducting** operations must, instead, be diverted to the bureaucratic tasks **describing** and **evaluating**. Such documentation ensnares the department in more "red-tape" and saps its operational initiative. Improper measures may even end up deflecting departmental efforts towards unproductive activities.

Also, the political environment may not respond favorably to sustained efforts to measure performance. The measurements are as likely to be used to criticize the department, or to rationalize cuts in the budget, as to provide the basis for rewards. Nor can the existence of performance measures that reveal that the department generally has performed very well always protect the department from the harsh criticism that inevitably attends any particular incident of misconduct.

A. Why Measure Performance?

For many police executives, then, the first question that arises in thinking about performance measurement is why do it at all?

1. To Meet One's Ethical Responsibilities

One important answer is that it police executives have an ethical responsibility to give an accounting to the public of how the resources that have been entrusted to their stewardship have been spent, and to what effect. That is what it means to be a public official. Thus, one mark of a police executive's ethical distinction would be his continued commitment to evaluating the performance of his organization, not only overall from year to year, but also and in particular innovations, or areas of special emphasis.

2. To Respond to the Inevitability of Evaluation

A second answer is less idealistic and more prudential. Since there is an insatiable (though somewhat fickle) demand for accountability in the public sector, it is inevitable that one's organization will be evaluated with whatever means are available. Rather than sit idly by while some bases for evaluation are arbitrarily selected, it might be better for police executives to propose the terms in which they would be prepared to be held accountable, and to begin gathering the relevant evidence. Otherwise, police executives are at the mercy of whatever criteria and terms others could develop.

3. To Lead and Guide the Department

The third and most important reason is that performance measurement is one of the most important devices executives can use to shape the behavior of the organizations they lead. Without concrete, measurable performance measures, it is not only impossible for police executives to hold their subordinate managers and officers accountable for performance, it is also hard for them to communicate what is expected in sufficiently concrete and compelling terms to guide their behavior. Being able to establish such expectations is a key to being able to lead police organizations.

Note that performance measurement is a key management tool even in the common case where the police executive alone feels responsible for defining the overall goals and objectives of the organization, and when those goals and objectives conform to settled organizational expectations. In this relatively simple managerial situation, performance measures are still needed for it is only when these goals and measures are made concrete through the development of operational measures that they become behaviorally exacting.

Performance measurement is an even more important tool when they reflect the expectations of those in the political environment who oversee the organization's operations as well as the chief's. Then, the established goals and objectives have not only the legitimacy that comes from the authority of the chief, but also the extra weight that comes from their reflection of the expectations of the entire community.

Performance measurement is most important of all as an instrument of leadership when the goals and objectives that are being defined for a police department are somewhat at odds with the settled traditions of the department. In these circumstances, concrete performance measures, backed by both the community and the chief, may play an important educational role as well as an important control role. They will identify the key areas in which an organization will have to begin innovating or otherwise improving its performance. Thus, executives who want to lead their organizations rather than merely preside over them will rely on performance measurement to help them do so.

B. The Sad Past and Important Future of Measuring Performance

Given the importance of measuring performance, it is somewhat disheartening to review the history of efforts to measure police performance. The demand for police performance measurement has long been there. Yet most police departments still operate with no meaningful way of measuring their overall performance.

1. Technical Problems in Performance Measurement

One can offer many reasons for this sad state of affairs. One explanation is that the difficulty is a technical one: no one has ever been able to establish and defend a completely uncontroversial measure of police performance. Ironically, social scientists who study the police and are among the most ardent supporters of performance measurement have helped sustain this irresolution. The reason is that they have viewed the task of measuring police performance as a crucially important scientific matter. In their view, a set of performance measures must be *validated* before they can be confidently used.

What valid means in this context is that there must be both a political agreement about what the goals and objectives of the police should be, and enough accumulated experience to show that the specific operational measures used to measure performance are, in fact, reliably linked to those goals and objectives. Only then could one be sure that the performance measures were both reliably accounting for the value that policing was giving to the community, and correctly guiding the police along the proper paths to their ultimate goals.

For example, one can agree that an important objective of policing is to reduce the level of crime and victimization in the community. But the question then becomes whether that goal is measured best by the levels of crime reported to the police, or by surveys of the general population to determine how many citizens have been victimized.

Or, one can agree that an important goal of policing is to reduce citizens' fears, and then measure the achievement of that goal through surveys that ask citizens about their levels of fear. But the question then becomes whether it is desirable to have citizens be less fearful if they live in objectively dangerous areas, and if a little fear will motivate them to take preventive measures that protect them and their neighbors from actual victimization. From a scientific perspective,

until such questions are answered, it is risky to use these measures for the purposes of measuring the performance of police departments.

2. Managerial Uses of Performance Measurement

But there is a quite different way of thinking about performance measurement. Instead of thinking of it as disclosing once and for all the truth about a police department's overall contribution to the welfare of a local community, one can think of performance measurement as a managerial device that serves a variety of functional purposes. These functional purposes include helping police executives and police departments meet demands for accountability, and helping police executives lead their departments.

In thinking about what measures to use in the current, concrete world, the aspiration for scientific validity is only one criteria. Others might include the cost and convenience of making the measurements, the extent to which they reflect a community's current articulated aspirations and concerns about the performance of the department, and the likely behavioral consequences of adopting the measures for the performance of the department (judged against some perhaps untested but still plausible theory of what constitutes "high quality" or "effective" or "valuable" policing).

3. The Best is the Enemy of the Good

Technical wrangles about defining the best possible ways of measuring police performance have provided an excuse to managers to avoid the issue altogether. Since there are no objective measures of police performance, the argument goes, and since it would be irresponsible to try to account for or guide the performance of the organization with imperfect measures, it is impossible and inappropriate to establish performance measurement systems that really count. Managers must be seen as always trying to construct good measurement systems, but never quite succeeding at it. Or, they must establish one system at one point, and then change it a little later to ensure that no historical information about performance can build up that would give the measurement system some bite. In an important sense, the search for the best has become the enemy of the good.

4. The Uselessness of Trying to Avoid Accountability

Unfortunately, the security that police executives think they gain by avoiding performance measurement is illusory. Police executives can never escape the demand for accountability. All they can do is try to channel it and make it more rational and useful to the strategic management of their organizations. If they do not propose and use alternative measures, they will be held accountable for the traditional ones: fluctuations in the crime rate, the outrageous conduct of one of their officers, the speed of their response to calls for service, or the rationality of their manpower schedules. (Of course, they may be held accountable for these things even if they *do* develop alternative measures, but the chance is less.)

Moreover, most police executives wildly underestimate the potential benefits of developing performance measures that encodes a vision of what they think it would be valuable for their department to do. One of the strongest pressures that operates on the executive of any organization is the pressure that is exerted by the employees of the organization to give them protection from what they perceive as arbitrary threats and challenges from the external environment. Thus, for example, police executives are under constant pressure to "protect the morale" of the organization by offering assurances that the department is a fine department that is doing the right thing, and to accept the burden of protecting the organization from unfair external demands or criticisms. Indeed, it is at least partly these pressures that motivate police executives to try to protect their organization by avoiding performance evaluation altogether.

The effect of these pressures is to reduce the executive's will and capability to challenge the organization to perform at high levels of quality, or to make changes in the ways that they do business. The executive becomes a cheerleader for the organization rather than a leader and manager. With that change, the interests of the broader society in having the police executive press their expectations and demands on the organization is lost, and with that, some potential improvements in performance.

The only antidote to these pressures is for police executives to develop a strong external mandate for performance. Instead of warding off the demand for accountability, they must reach out to those who hold them accountable -- the community, the interest groups, the media, and the elected chief executives. They must find out what they desire from the police department, codify those demands in an overall statement of the mission of the department, and operationalize those expectations in a concrete set of negotiated performance measures that will reveal the extent to which they are meeting the expectations of the communities they police. That will give them the power to lead.

5. Establishing the Terms of Accountability

Thus, the task of a police executive with respect to performance measurement is not to wait for a perfect validated measure. Nor is it to flee the task altogether in the vain hope that the demand for accountability can be defeated. The task is to negotiate the terms of their accountability by developing a set of performance measures that are consistent with community expectations, feasible for the organization to achieve, and that encode their own vision (developed with the aid of the community and the department) about what constitutes a valuable way for the police to operate. Embracing accountability will allow them to lead their organizations. Codifying expectations in concrete, measurable terms will allow them to guide the efforts of their organizations. Performance measures must be designed to serve these purposes -- to harmonize external and internal expectations of what the department should do, and what it should achieve.

III. The Context of Police Accountability

Given that effective police leadership begins with the embrace of external accountability, it is important that police executives explore the question of who holds them accountable, and for what particular attributes of performance. This will differ from community to community, and from time to time. But there may be some common elements that could serve as a useful starting point for designing managerially useful performance measures. Consider the distinct groups in a community who are in a position to comment on the performance of police departments with important consequences for the standing and the performance of the department.

A. Mayors and City Managers

The most obvious person to whom police chiefs owe accountability is their immediate superior in the bureaucratic chain of command. That is usually a mayor or a city manager. There are some important differences between these two, with mayors typically somewhat more "political" than city managers. But what they generally want from police executives and police departments, however, is about the same.

Perhaps their most important ambition is not to have to worry too much about the department. They have many other items on their agendas, and there are real costs to them of having to "interfere" too much in police business. This means that they would like to have a great degree of personal trust in the loyalty, professional competence, and judgment of the person who leads their department. As a supplement to this, or as a way of building such personal trust, they would like to have some "contract" with the chief and the department that sets out what the chief and they together think is possible, important, and valuable for the police to achieve. It is this set of circumstances that give police executives some latitude in negotiating the terms in which they and their department will be held accountable.

In substantive terms, their ambitions for the department probably begin with the desire to control crime and victimization, and enhance feelings of security in the community. They are not sure that the police can actually accomplish these goals, for they know that many other factors intervene to influence these conditions. This skepticism often makes them open to new ideas about how the police might be able to accomplish this goal. Nonetheless, they would like the police to be expending their efforts in this direction, and will rely on crime statistics to offer some guidance as to whether the department is performing well or not.

Today, the chief executives of cities are also extremely interested in keeping costs under control. Their attention is focused primarily on total costs (rather than costs per unit of activity). They may also be particularly interested in categories of cost over which the department's management seems to have discretionary control (such as overtime), or that might be perceived externally and internally as "fat" in the budget (such as travel, training, or excess administrative costs -- including measurement).

They are also interested in avoiding instances of misconduct and the public scandal they bring. This translates into an interest in making sure that the department is "under control".

That, in turn, means that the department has written policies and procedures governing the behavior of officers, and adequate training and supervision to ensure that the officers know what the rules require, and are motivated to live up to them. They want these things partly because they actually believe that such methods of administrative control will, in fact, reduce the likelihood of instances of misconduct, but also because even if these methods fail to eliminate misconduct, the existence of these controls will nonetheless help to shield them from the political and financial liability associated with instances of officer misconduct.

Finally, they want to know that the police department is reasonably fair and efficient in its allocation of resources, and that it is, to some degree, responsive to particular demands that communities make on the department. Fairness and efficiency in the allocation of resources is commonly measured by comparing the geographic and temporal allocation of patrol resources with different indicators of the "need" for police as measured by levels of crime, or calls for service. Responsiveness is measured in the first instance by "response times" to calls for service, and beyond that through the softer measures that are associated with the level of articulated community complaints that the mayor or city manager is likely to hear.

Some mayors and city managers may take some pride in having their department be seen as one that is "progressive" in the field, perhaps even an innovator and leader. They would recognize this from such signs as the ability of the department to adopt and use techniques that seem to be at the frontier of the field, or to attract and use federal grant money of various kinds.

B. Overhead Agencies: Budget and Personnel

In most cities, police executives and police departments are also accountable to overhead agencies that not only oversee, but directly influence their operations. Two of the most important are the budget and personnel agencies (often Civil Service Commissions).

To varying degrees, the budget agencies work as staff agencies to the mayor or city manager, and thus reflect the chief executive's interests vis-a-vis the police department. Even when they operate as staff agencies, however, they tend to have special interests in making sure that the police department is "fiscally responsible."

They will hold the department accountable for staying within pre-set spending limits, exercising disciplined control over discretionary spending, even managing the rate of spending to help them meet overall cash management objectives.

They may also be interested in monitoring changes in levels of productivity, and to encourage the development of "workload measures" not only for the department as a whole, but also for specialized units. Indeed, among all the units to which the police are accountable, the budget agencies may be the most interested in developing new performance measures, or experimenting with new operational techniques (though their enthusiasm for such things diminishes as the pressure to do nothing more than stay within total spending targets increases).

These agencies will also be interested in exercising close control over any operational funds or assets (such as confidential informant funds, or departmental vehicles) that are vulnerable to theft or misappropriation. Along with the overhead agencies that oversee procurement, they will also be quite interested in managing capital investments -- particularly as in the case of computers when the investments are financed out of operating budgets, have long run future implications, and can usefully be co-ordinated with other departmental expenditures.

In sum, the financial agencies want to make sure that the departments stays within pre-set spending limits, and spends according to plan. They also want to make sure that no money gets stolen, and no assets are misappropriated. They are interested in promoting increased productivity through the development of workload measures, and the testing of new operational methods. And they want to make sure that when there are advantages for the city as a whole to be gained by co-ordinating the police departments financial and purchasing activities with the activities of other agencies, that those gains are exploited.

While the budget agencies are primarily interested in how police executives manage their financial resources, the personnel agencies are primarily interested in how they recruit, develop, and manage their human resources. Their over-riding objective is to make sure that the department is "fair" in its personnel decisions, and that it makes these decisions on the basis of "merit" rather than favoritism.

In recent years, a great deal of political and legal pressure has accumulated in the personnel area as a result of efforts to make departments more representative of the communities they police. In particular, suits brought by ethnic minorities who have felt discriminated against in hiring and promotion decisions have been successful in forcing police departments to change their recruiting programs, their selection methods and criteria, and their promotional policies. These changes have sometimes generated hard feelings among members of other ethnic groups who believe that they are now the targets of officially sanctioned discrimination, and that the professional standards of the department have been sacrificed to achieve ethnic diversity.

At the core of these debates, of course, is the question of what constitutes merit in a particular employee, and what constitutes quality in an organization's overall personnel system. The task in defining individual merit is to identify those "job-related" attributes and qualifications that make some individuals more entitled than others to be appointed and gain promotion in a police department. The task in constituting a high quality personnel system is not only ensuring that the organization operates according to the principles of individual merit, but also that the system as a whole helps build a police department that can be effective and inspire the confidence of the local community. It seems that there is ample room in both these objectives to establish the idea that the ability to relate to ethnic communities is an important "job-related" characteristic, and that that characteristic might turn out to be somewhat correlated with ethnicity.

At any rate, as things now stand, many civil service agencies, operating independently of the mayor and under the instruction of the courts, are holding police departments accountable for ensuring that their personnel systems are fair, based on merit, and produce increased numbers of women and minorities in police departments. That, too, becomes an important indicator of a police department's performance.

C. The City Council and Interest Groups

A third set of overseers who make compelling demands on the performance of police departments (and therefore help to define relevant performance measures) are those political entities that represent special rather than city-wide constituencies. Some of these sit on formally established representative bodies such as city councils; others press their claims through direct lobbying.

Obviously there are important differences between elected representatives sitting on city councils and informal lobbyists. The elected representatives have suffered the indignity of standing for election, and have acquired a different kind of legal and moral authority over the department's operations than community leaders who have not faced the voters. Elected representatives have the formal power to make legally binding policies, but to do so, they must win the consent of a majority of the others on the council. Community leaders must exercise influence through informal persuasion (or through influence exerted on elected representatives or chief executives).

Still, what links these two different kinds of overseers is the fact that they enjoy a kind of entrepreneurial freedom in developing issues and pressing claims against the police department that agencies with city-wide responsibilities do not have. Indeed, it is this fact that makes them particularly difficult from the point of view of police executives. They can advance special interests in having their neighborhoods policed more intensively, or in having the police develop certain kinds of programs that may not be in the general interest.They may also pick up issues and then drop them as their interests fade.

For example, a powerful city councilman, allied with the school teachers union, may insist that the police do more to guarantee safety in the schools. Or, a neighborhood group, concerned about an influx of drug dealing, may insist that the department initiate a special drug task force in their area. Or, a women's group may persuade the lone woman on the city council to hold hearings on why the department has not yet adopted a policy of mandatory arrests in the case of domestic violence.

These demands for re-allocations of police, or changes in operational policy, all come at the chief and the department as uncoordinated demands for improved performance that may or may not have been on their long run strategic plan, and which they may or may not think are in the long run best interests of the city as a whole. Moreover, those who raised the issue may or may not stay in the game long enough to see the chief through the criticism that might befall him later as those who were hurt by the re-allocation or disagreed with the policy reform come

to the fore in the aftermath of the changes. Nonetheless, it may be important for police organizations to be able to respond to these demands with new initiatives, and to evaluate them for their impact on the desired objectives, and on the overall performance of the department.

D. The Media and Public Opinion

The most salient and volatile "overseers" of police operations are the media. Of course, the press would deny that they themselves represented any effective oversight of public agencies. In their view, their only function is to report what happens. If some official action is to be taken in response to what the press reports, that is the responsibility of the formally established agencies of government. Whether other agencies act or not depends on their own decisions, not on what the media reports.

To police executives who feel themselves under intense scrutiny by the press, and extremely vulnerable to press coverage, such claims of disinterestedness and powerlessness seem disingenuous. They know that press coverage of them and their departments will affect their standing with the mayor and city manager and other overseers: if they are popular (but do not seem to be taking too much of the limelight), mayors will treat them with more deference than if they are unpopular (or a threat). They also know that press coverage of their department can alter their policy agendas: some issues can be propelled forward for attention, others relegated to the background. And it often feels to them that the press coverage is in some important ways "biased": it focuses too much on the negative aspects of their agencies' performance and not enough on the positive; and too much on notorious individual incidents and not the overall performance of the department. They attribute this bias to the media's need to appeal to audiences with dramatic rather than balanced stories.

Both sides of this familiar argument have a point. It is true that the media are nothing more than a media. They have no formal power in themselves to alter departmental policies or procedures. As a corollary, they have no duty to balance the conflicting values that are often at stake in any given policy or governmental action. They do have the duty to give an accurate and balanced account of what is of importance in judging the public interest. They achieve that balance by making sure that everyone has their say, and that what they say is reported accurately.

While they have no formal authority, they have substantial informal power. That power comes from being able to focus the attention of many people on the same subject at the same time, and from their ability to make citizens and their representatives sense that some important value is being sacrificed in the way a particular government agency is operating. These make the tasks of mobilizing a political constituency to demand changes in an organization's performance much easier to perform, and thus attract "political entrepreneurs". But it is the political entrepreneurs who must act to give formal bite to the press' informal bark.

The police executives are right to think that some stories are more newsworthy than others, and that the press will write the story to interest readers. And they are right that

instances of misconduct and scandal will be heavily covered, for these stories are both interesting to readers, and an expression of one of the most important constitutional purposes of a free press in a democracy. But they often way over-estimate how "biased" the press really is.

The fact is that the press is quite interested in covering good stories as well as bad. They are interested in stories of individual successes by officers, in new experiments or ideas that are being tried, and in examining the overall performance of the department. Indeed, an objective review of a year's coverage of a police department will often reveal a large number of "good" stories as well as bad; and some stories about overall performance and long range plans as well as individual incidents. The reason the bad stories feel so much more common is that the good stories are taken as one's due, while the bad stories are felt keenly as a threat to one's professional and personal reputation.

The real challenge that the press represents to police executives is forcing them to think through the question of how the performance of their department might be accurately represented within the constraint's of the media's interests and capabilities. It is one thing to represent the department's performance through quarterly statistics submitted to the budget office. It is quite another to learn how to paint a picture of the department and its operations through a series of interesting media stories ranging across the department's various activities and personnel.

Succeeding in this is partly a function of knowing what story one is trying to tell, partly having the real facts to present that tell the story, partly knowing how to dramatize the facts, and partly knowing how to how to interact with the press in ways that makes it possible and easy for them to tell the story. Success also depends on recognizing that press coverage is only partly under one's control, that unexpected "bad" stories will inevitably occur, and that graciousness and candor in such situations will be rewarded over the long run.

It is also important for police executives who are interested in making their organizations accountable and developing useful performance measures to recognize that the press coverage of their organization, viewed over the long run, is an important source of information to them about the particular values that their local community would like to see them advance. Every news story is a morality tale as well as news event. What makes a bad story both painful and powerful is that some evidence is presented that makes it seem as though one's department has willfully or negligently sacrificed an important public value: it has spent too much of the public's money, or done it thoughtlessly, or has sacrificed some important rights of a citizen, or has been unable to catch a criminal. Conversely, what makes a story good is that it offers evidence that the department has pursued or expressed a public value in its operations: it has caught an offender through skillful investigation, or resolved a neighborhood conflict through successful and principled mediation, or found a way to increase its responsiveness to a neighborhood's concerns.

By looking at all the stories about a department, both good and bad, one can identify the values that the press is guessing are most important to the broader public. And that, in turn, might suggest some important dimensions of performance that a police executive might want to

measure. Thus, media coverage can help shape the design of important performance measures that serve the purpose of accountability and leadership.

E. Special Commissions and Accreditation

On occasion, the credibility of a department will be so damaged in the eyes of some powerful parts of the oversight system, that the only way to restore the credibility of the department is through the establishment of some kind of independent commission. Sometimes these are focused on narrow issues having to do with corruption or the use of force. Other times, they have a much broader charter. Sometimes the reviews are staffed by local volunteers; other times, they are conducted by professional groups who are thought to be expert in the overall assessment of police departments.

Recently, in an effort to set standards for policing throughout the country (and through that device to not only strengthen policing, but also to provide some insulation from arbitrary evaluations), the field has established a national Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies. This Commission has set out a tough protocol through which interested police organizations can gain national accreditation. The protocol focuses on such things as the existence of written policies and procedures in certain areas, minimum levels of training, and so on.

Interestingly, until recently, most of the independent commissions that have been formed have tended to review police organizations in terms central to the professional law enforcement model of policing. They have looked at the police impact on crime, and the speed of the police response to emergency calls for service. They have looked at whether police staffing schedules matched the time profile of crimes and calls for service, and whether police resources have been fairly distributed across a city. They have also looked at the extent to which police departments made use of civilians in the department, and the quality of the recruit training. In these concerns, they were following the format that was originally pioneered in the President's Crime Commission Report on Policing in 1967.

More recently, independent commissions have been more divided. They have heard some of the ideas associated with community and problem-solving policing, and have begun incorporating some of these concerns into their reports. Nonetheless, because there is not yet a well developed frame for looking at a police department's overall organization and performance from the community policing perspective, the reports continue to emphasize many of the themes from the previous era. The result is that some chiefs, now committed to community and problem-solving policing, will sometimes face evaluations by independent commissions or consultants that hold them accountable for adhering to the forms and achieving the goals of professional law enforcement rather than those characteristic of community or problem-solving policing.

F. Unions and the Rights of Employees

In many cities, police chiefs are accountable to unions representing their employees as well as to their political overseers. In the interest of maintaining reasonably good labor relations, recognizing the rights of one's employees to fair treatment, and avoiding strikes and slowdowns, the city administration and the chief have made promises to the officers who work for them. These promises are reflected in legally and morally binding contracts.

Many think of such contracts as designed to advance narrow interests. The interests of money, and time off, and protection from effective discipline. But often such contracts improve the quality of management. They require managers to have defensible reasons for their personnel actions. Some may even reflect judgments about effective ways to police -- including the idea that line officers ought to be consulted about the safest and most effective ways to police a city.

Many people have an interest in maintaining high quality labor relations, and one mark of good management in a police department is how successfully it accomplishes this goal.

G. The Courts and Civil Liability

The last institution to which the police are accountable are the courts -- both federal and state. They are accountable to the courts in two somewhat different ways.

On one hand, they are accountable to the courts through the mechanisms of civil liability. Increasingly, individuals who have complaints against the police have pressed their claims against the police through civil suits. The courts have been open to such claims. And the claims have begun to make substantial financial claims on police organizations. That, in turn, has caused the police to make important changes in policies and procedures.

On the other, the police depend on the courts to give meaningful effect to the arrests they make. The arrests cannot mean much if the defendants are found not guilty. The courts pass judgment on whether the police followed the rules in gathering the evidence that is used as the basis of the prosecution, and if they have not, exclude the evidence from the court proceedings. That often vitiates effective prosecution.

Through both these mechanisms, the courts hold the police accountable for their protection of individual rights. Increasingly, even though both these mechanisms have expanded, it seems that the public is still dissatisfied with the extent to which the police are held accountable for the protection of individual rights. As a result, an increasing number of jurisdictions are considering establishing some kind external review board to hear citizens' complaints of mistreatment at the hands of the police.

IV. Choices in Developing Performance Measures

Putting the issue of performance measurement in the broader context of the overall system that actually holds police executives accountable changes the way that we ordinarily think

about measuring police performance. Commonly, the central concern in police performance measurement is to develop particular, concrete measures that will help the community reckon the "bottom line" of policing. That implies most importantly developing measures that capture the important outcomes of policing such as reduced crime or enhanced security. Alternatively, the focus is on developing output measures that are known or commonly thought to be closely connected to the achievement of the ultimate objectives such as arrests and response times. Given that mayors, budget agencies, the media, and the community want such things from police organizations, providing such measures is clearly part of the overall task of measuring police performance.

But, once in the context of the wider system that holds police executives and police departments accountable, it becomes obvious that police departments are held accountable for more than simply their overall effectiveness in controlling crime or enhancing security, or for their success in undertaking activities that are thought to be linked to these goals.

A. Different Meanings of Police Performance

Beyond achieving outcomes, police departments are also held accountable for the proper use of the resources entrusted to them. One might think that this concern would be subsumed by the concern for efficiency and effectiveness. To some extent it is. But what is surprising is the degree to which the idea of proper uses of resources exists <u>independently</u> of their value in operational uses designed to achieve valued outcomes.

When one is looking at money and equipment, for example, many things other than the value of these resources in achieving operational objectives comes into judgments about whether the resources are being used properly. A fiscally responsible department is one that stays within pre-set spending limits, and spends according to plan rather than one that spots important opportunities to spend more money to make a contribution to the quality of life in the community, or that finds a way to save money for the taxpayers. It is also a department that spends a great deal of resources and efforts to ensure that there is no suspicion that any equipment has been stolen or discretionary money wasted. Fortunately, most police departments are now well served in performing these functions by the existence of well developed fiscal management systems.

The discrepancy between notions of effectiveness and propriety seem even wider when one looks at the question of how police departments are held accountable for the management of human resources. There, questions of fairness to applicants and employees are as important as questions of merit. And the demands are pressed urgently both by courts and unions.

And it is wider still when one looks at the ways that police are held accountable for their use of force and the legitimate authority of the state. Of course, most people do not think of authority per se as a kind of resource that is entrusted to the police to use in achieving instrumental purposes. But when one thinks about it a little, it becomes apparent that this is one of the most important resources entrusted to the police. It is crucial to their ability to perform

the job entrusted to them. Overseers -- particularly the communities that feel vulnerable to the police, the media, and the courts -- demand that this resource be used economically and properly. And great pains are taken by the department to teach their officers to use the resources of the law, the nightstick, and the gun with skill, economy and propriety. In this domain, the issues of fairness and propriety dominate the issues of effectiveness in achieving goals.

In short, the police are held accountable not only for the ultimate achievement of their objectives through outcome measures, and not only for the performance of the particular functions and activities that are under their direct control and thought to be related to the overall objectives, but also for the way that they mobilize and use resources such as money, personnel, and legal authority.

B. Comparisons with the Private Sector's "Bottom-Line"

It should not be surprising that this is true, for even in the private sector there is more to the "bottom line" than the value of the products produced. The bottom line in an income and loss statement is an accounting of the value of the organization's production net of the resources used to produce it. Thus, to have outcome or output measures for policing is to have only half the problem solved. One must put those outcomes or outputs against the cost of producing them to see their net value to the society.

Moreover, many of the most successful private sector firms have discovered that there are disadvantages of focusing too much attention on short run profitability, and more important to think in terms of increasing the future value creating capacity of an organization. In pursuit of this goal, they have found that the management of on-going relationships with customers, clients, employees, suppliers, bankers, and stock-holders are as important as deploying the specific technologies needed to produce high quality products. The reason is that if one gets the relationships right, it becomes relatively easy for the organization to figure out what should be produced, in what ways, with what financing. Conversely, if the relationships deteriorate, it becomes all to easy to err in deciding what to produce, and much more difficult to mobilize the resources required for production.

Public sector organizations -- and particularly police forces -- may also have some special responsibilities that differ from the simple maximization of their ultimate performance objectives. For example, many think the police have special obligations to police fairly as well as efficiently. In this context fairly means not only with respect for individual rights, but also even-handedly across different populations, and with equal levels of service to citizens. They might also have special obligations to become an exemplary employer with respect to labor relations and the achievement of ethnic representation.

So, it is quite appropriate that the police are held accountable for so many things. A police department is not simply a machine for achieving a particular set of goals and objectives. It is also a place in which individual employees make their careers. And it is an institution through which a city as a whole tries both to realize and enact an ideal of proper relationships

among citizens. Successful performance of a police department properly includes recognition of all these different purposes.

C. Implications for Technical Choices in Measurement

These observations, if accepted, have important implications for what many have seen as the choices to be made about the design of performance measurement systems. For example, one important question that has long been debated in the literature is whether there should be a single performance measure or multiple performance measures. This paper is unequivocally in favor of multiple performance measures. Indeed, the implicit idea is that anyone in the authorizing environment of a police department, who has a particular concern relating to the performance of the department, ought to be served by the organization with some statistical or other objective means of representing the organization's performance in their area of concern. The overall performance of the department can be judged only by looking at its performance in various areas through various measures. Reliance on a single measure is inadequate.

Another issue has been whether the performance measures should focus on outcomes, outputs and organizational activities, or inputs and the proper use of resources. This has been an important issue for the simple reason that, in the absence of validated output and outcome measures, the police have had to rely only on input measures, and that is manifestly unsatisfactory. Thus, much emphasis has been placed on the development of outcome measures, and on validating the utility of output measures.

That has produced important improvements in the measurement of outcomes, and in our understanding of how police activities do or do not contribute to outcomes. For example, we have added victimization surveys to counts of reported crime not only as a way of improving our estimates of levels of crime, but also as a way of determining levels of fear in the community, and individual contributions to self defense. We have also usefully explored the connection between police activities such as random patrol, directed patrol, rapid response to calls for service, foot patrol, and criminal investigation and the ultimate goals of policing such as reduced crime, reduced fear, or enhanced justice achieved by holding offenders accountable for their crimes. And these activities have added importantly to our ability to focus the attention of police executives and police departments on activities that contribute to public safety.

But what this effort has not produced is a fully validated set of outcome and output measures. Some take this fact to mean that we should not rely too much on the existing measures of outcome and outputs. This is wise insofar as we recognize that measures such as reported crime rates, and responses to calls for service have limited utility as the one perfect measure of police performance, and that taken alone, they could cause us to misdirect police resources. But their imperfection should not cause us to refuse to use them altogether, or to stop searching for better measures. In the short and long run, we will continue to rely on measures of outcomes, outputs, and inputs, and all of them can be improved.

A third issue has been whether one should rely principally on routine, organizational wide measures to evaluate police performance, or on ad hoc evaluations of particular programs or organizational units. Again, there are some clear advantages to having routinized, organizational wide measures of performance. Only such measures can show trends in the overall performance of the department, and it is the trend information that is probably most important for any given community or manager to know.

But it is also worth noting that one should not expect such systems to fill the need for more ad hoc, occasional evaluations of programs, or particular organizational sub-units. The tour through the context of accountability helps remind us of how lively that environment is, and how imaginative it is in terms of thinking up things that the police department should be considering. Special interest groups may want an evaluation of the department's efforts with respect to shoplifting, or rape, or hate crimes. Budget offices, interested in the potential gains from privatization or civilianization of some functions may demand analyses of department auto repair functions, or the staffing of the communications room. Consequently, it would be foolish to think that one would have responded adequately to the demands for accountability and evaluation once one had established a small number of organization wide performance measures that would be reviewed each year. Indeed, it is possible that any of the ad hoc projects would suggest yet another dimension of the organization's performance that could usefully be monitored on an on-going basis, and contribute to an overall assessment of the department.

V. The Administrative Aims of the Executive

So far, we have been discussing general considerations about the purposes and methods of measuring the performance of police departments. We have concluded that the principal reason to engage in performance measurement is to meet the demands for accountability. (Additional objectives could include testing the effectiveness and understanding the limits of existing police programs and technologies, or experimenting with new programs that are plausibly superior to current practices). Now we explore the use of performance measurement to strengthen the hand of the police executive in leading the department.

A. Performance Measurement as Strategic Communication

Measurement systems embody broad ideas of policing as well as create specific objectives for which the police will be held accountable. Consider for a moment the gestalt of policing that is embodied in the common measurements that are now relied upon. The most commonly used performance measures now used are: 1) levels of reported crime; 2) arrest rates; 3) clearance rates; and 4) the speed of response to priority calls.

These measures perfectly reflect a conception of policing that I have elsewhere described as the "crime fighting" model of policing. The principal outcome measure is levels of reported crime reflecting not only the priority but the exclusivity of crime control as the overall goal of policing. The output and activity measures (arrests, clearance rates, and speed of response)

perfectly reflect the conviction that the best way to address crime is through arrest of offenders, and that the best way to arrest offenders is to have a patrol force that can respond quickly to calls for service, and a detective squad that solve many crimes. Thus, it is not surprising that these are the most commonly used measures of police performance: they perfectly reflect what has been our dominant idea about the objectives and means of policing.

What is potentially more interesting and important is that continued reliance on these measures might reinforce the continued commitment to this strategy of policing. If this were true, relaxing our reliance on these measures and experimenting with new performance measures that more perfectly reflected the gestalts of new strategies of policing such as community policing or problem-solving policing might become very important as devices for helping to change the basic strategy of policing. Thus, it is interesting to consider what sorts of performance measures might embody these new styles of policing.

B. Community Policing and Community Surveys

In many ways, the community survey seems at the heart of the idea of community policing. It has this quality at the gestalt level since the survey so obviously reflects an effort to reach out to the community to determine what their concerns are, and what their level of satisfaction with community services. At the technical level, surveys also have some important advantages.

First, surveys change our picture of the nature and location of the crime problem. They allow us to see into areas of the community that were previously shielded from the police view by the reluctance of the victims to report their victimization. They allow us to understand more about the context of the relationships in which crimes occur. They remind us that the victim's pain and indignation is as important a part of a crime as the offender's identity.

Second, surveys allow us to measure some things that, in the philosophy of community policing, are considered important overall goals of policing. They allow us to measure levels of fear in the community. They also permit us to learn about the level and nature of self-defense measures that the community is taking. And they facilitate the recording of information about the experience of citizens who have received non-crime-related services from the police. Since the goals of community policing include the objectives of reducing fear, encouraging citizens to engage in some kinds of individual and collective self-defense efforts, and providing a variety of emergency services, the surveys make it possible to see what the experience of citizens have been, and to begin considering what role the police have had in shaping these experiences.

Third, surveys also allow the police to learn a great deal about how they are perceived by citizens. They can learn, for example, to what extent citizens are reluctant to call them and why. This is important not only because it sheds light on the biases that exist in measuring only reported crime, but also because it tells police managers something about the level of trust that exists in the community. Properly constructed, surveys also provide useful information about citizens' experiences of the services provided to them. This is valuable at a technical level since

if provides information to managers about the overall level of courtesy and responsiveness showed by police officers. It is also valuable at a gestalt level since it communicates to citizens, their representatives, and the officers themselves that the attitudes of the citizens toward the police matter. The routine use of surveys emphasize that citizens are viewed as valuable customers and clients rather than as nuisances.

Of course, there are many different ways of using surveys. The most common current use is in one-shot, or intermittent efforts to determine levels of victimization, or citizens' attitudes toward the police. In managerial terms, this is the least useful form, for it makes it impossible to gather trend information to be used in determining whether managerial efforts to make the police more responsive to community concerns have been successful. In order for a system to become managerially important, it must be repeated.

Possible forms of repetitive surveys include at least the following. First, surveys of the general population to determine levels of victimization, fear, self-defense efforts, and attitudes toward the police.

Second, surveys of those who have had actual contact with the police to determine what happened and their degree of satisfaction with the service they received. This could at least include citizens who called the police for assistance. It might also include those who were cited for misdemeanors of one kind or another.

Surveys of "police customers" could even include those who were arrested for felonies. Although this might seem absurd at the outset, some police managers have noted that some of their officers always seem to bring in arrested defendants "bloody" and angry, while others bring in defendants who seem calm and resigned. In their view, these differences matter in gauging the quality of policing, and it would be important to learn whether offenders thought they were being badly mistreated by the police. Indeed, some departments have even used this technique as an investigative tool to help them identify individual officers who misuse their office.

It is also symbolically and substantively important for police managers to survey their own employees. Through this device, police management can tap into the "mood" of the force, and get a quantitative sense for whether morale is improving or deteriorating. It can also signal that the working relationships with officers are as important to the organization as the relationships with the organization's "customers".

In deciding what kind of surveys to use, managers should be guided by concerns for cost as well as their managerial aims in gathering information, communicating gestalts about policing, or creating incentives for their officers and managers. General population surveys are very expensive, and particularly so if they are large enough to allow one to make comparisons from one service area of the city to another. Surveys of customers give less information about some important aspects of policing, but give a powerful and inexpensive picture of customer satisfaction.

There is also a question of who should do the surveys. Arguably, the validity of the results increases if the surveys are done by outsiders who have no stake in the outcome, and who will not influence the respondents. But it may also be true that the costs will increase, and the department may lose the symbolic benefit of sending officers out to the community to ask the community its opinions about the police force. When the police do it themselves, it may mean more both to the citizens and to the department than when it is done by outsiders.

C. Problem-Solving and Program Evaluation

If community surveys express the heart of community policing, it seems that serious efforts to evaluate the impact of police initiatives is the heart of problem solving policing. At the core of problem solving policing is the idea that the police should be less interested in their internal processes and more on the impact that their operations have on community life. This admonition forces police to begin focusing on outcome or impact measures as well as input and activity measures, and to do so in the particular areas in which they have initiated problem-solving methods.

But there is an additional wrinkle in the idea of problem-solving policing that changes the way that we have thought about program evaluation. The idea of problem-solving policing also includes the idea that problems come in many different sizes and shapes, and that they might require many different kinds of actions to resolve. From this observation it follows that police departments may have to restructure themselves to allow officers at many different levels to take the initiative in defining and acting on problems. Also included in the idea of problem-solving is the notion that the effective solution of a given problem might depend on the local circumstances. There may be no general answer to the question of what is the best way to deal with graffiti or an outbreak of daytime burglaries. The causes might well be different from one place to the other, and even if the causes were the same, the solutions might be different because the resources with which one could work differed from one place to another.

These observations about problem-solving policing have three important implications for the way that we have thought about program evaluation. The first is that there may well be many problem solving efforts initiated by police departments that deserve documentation and serious efforts to assess results, but nonetheless do not deserve a fully elaborated program evaluation that seeks to establish beyond reasonable doubt that an important effect occurred, and that it was caused by the police action. The technical apparatus necessary to accomplish that scientific objective is enormously expensive, and frankly probably not worth it for many of the small initiatives that would be taken under problem-solving policing.

The second is that there may be less reason to undertake very fancy program evaluations even in cases when the program that was undertaken was large, or the problem that was being addressed was a recurrent one (such as domestic violence). The reason is that, to some degree, the principles of problem-solving undermine the idea that there are particular problems that can be fixed with a particular technology, universally applied. Or, more accurately, problem solving suggests that that may ultimately turn out to be true, but until we have a much more

differentiated way of describing problems, it is unlikely that we will find one best technology for dealing with them. And even if we know that some technologies are more effective than others in dealing with a given problem, that general conclusion might need to be adjusted in local circumstances to take advantage of different local resources or constraints that affect the feasibility of adopting the approved technology.

The third point is simply to observe that under problem solving policing the requirements for some kind of program evaluation will increase enormously, and it may be impractical to rely on outsiders to do all the evaluations. In effect, if a problem shifts to problem-solving policing, a very large proportion of its effort may come to be expressed in individually designed, pro-active projects that vary a great deal in terms of size and scale. Each will need an evaluation of some kind. No longer will program evaluation be done on one or two projects a year for which the department received a federal grant. Instead, it will be routine business. In this world, much more of the responsibility for evaluation will rest on planning units within the department, or supervisory review, or perhaps even peer review of particular initiatives.

To evaluate problem-solving efforts, then, it is necessary to find some administrative way to recognize, record, and evaluate these efforts. Moreover, the system has to be capable of accommodating problem-solving efforts of many different sizes. No organization has yet worked out such a system.

One way it might be done, however, is to establish something that could be called the "Program-Project-Problems" system. The basic idea of the system is that everyone in the organization regardless of rank would be invited to nominate for organizational attention a particular problem that they though was important to solve. The problems would be recognized as coming in different sizes where sizes were measured in terms of: 1) the number of officers that would be involved; 2) the length of time the effort would be continued; 3) the variety of different specialties that would have to be involved; and 4) the innovativeness of the approach taken.

Relatively small problems (say, for example, an effort by a patrol officer to deal with a little group of school truants that seemed to be involve in daylight break-ins on his beat) would be called "Problems", and they could be authorized by sergeants. Larger efforts (for example, an effort to clean-up retail drug dealing in a housing project) would be considered "Projects". They could be authorized by a Captain. Still larger efforts (such as an effort to implement a mandatory arrest policy in domestic assault cases) would be considered "Programs", and could only be approved by the Command Staff of the Department.

Regardless of whether an initiative was a program, project, or problem, a file would be created on the initiative. It would include an initial description of what the problem was, why it was important, what seemed the appropriate line of attack, and what objectives were to be accomplished. Subsequent reports would detail actions that were taken and their results. Occasionally, these would change the initial definition of the problem and the effort to be undertaken, and those changes would be recorded in a re-definition of the exercise. When the

operation was completed or terminated, a summary "after action" report would be written that described what was done and the effects. For larger programs, more formal methods of evaluation would be appropriate. For smaller problems, the methods could be less formal. Taken together, and analyzed statistically, these files would capture the departments overall problem-solving efforts, and reveal the extent and impact of this proactive approach to policing.

D. Accounting For Transitions

The decision to develop measurement systems that reflect the ideas of community and problem-solving policing rather than those of professional crime-fighting would presumably be part of an executive's decision to re-orient his department towards these new styles of policing. But the decision to strategically re-position an organization creates a new and different problem in measuring performance. One way to think about this problem is the organization will have to find ways to relax the grip of the existing performance measures while it is making the change and adding the new systems of measurement to what already exists.

But a different way of thinking about this problem is to understand that the changes that are to be made in the organization's measurement systems are only one of the things that will have to change as the department re-orients itself. The personnel system will have to change. So will the dispatch system. And so will the management style of mid-level managers. Moreover, these changes will have to be made in a period in which the value of the enterprise will be somewhat uncertain.

Viewed in this light, the strategic re-positioning of a police organization can be viewed as an investment. A great deal of time and energy is going to have to spent up-front building an organization that is capable of executing the new strategy. One should not necessarily expect it to pay off in traditional performance terms immediately. Indeed, it is unclear whether the investment will ever pay off. But nonetheless, one would like to find some way to hold the managers of the police department accountable for their performance even in the transition period.

Again, no department making the change to community and problem-solving policing has quite solved this problem, but there may be a way to solve it. The simple idea is simply for the management of the department to identify all the investments that they think will be necessary to "re-tool" the department, and to develop milestones that can be evaluated along the way. This is what high-tech companies have done when they initiate a set of development activities that require lots of money up-front, but will not produce a marketable product for many years -- maybe never. They have told a story about what they intend to do, and why they think it will be valuable. And then they have identified the activities that are en route to their final goal, and some critical milestones at which point the accuracy of their initial planning can be re-assessed. Based on such information, investors have been willing to give them the money.

What police executives who are planning to strategically re-position their organizations need to maintain their accountability through a period of transition is a similarly thoughtful plan.

Included in that plan must be provisions for building the measurement systems that will support community and problem-solving policing.

VI. Conclusion

Knowing what value the police produce for the society is important to citizens, their elected representatives, and to those responsible for managing police departments. In estimating that value, it is important to assess police contributions to controlling crime. But it is also important to be able to assess the police impact in restoring a sense of security, in channelling citizens fears into benign rather than dangerous modes of self defense, in responding to the variety of crises and emergencies that beset citizens in today's cities, and in initiating and designing actions designed to solve particular problems that the community nominates for police attention. The current systems of measurement which focus attention on such measures as reported crime rates, arrests, clearance rates, and response times are not up to this complex task.

Police executives seeking not only to measure the value of what their organizations produce, but to use this measurement to actually increase the value of what their organizations produce, must overcome their distaste for performance measurement, and see in the development of more effective measurement systems an opportunity to direct and lead their departments. By embracing accountability, they will discover that their own ability to make claims on their organization's performance will increase rather than decrease. By negotiating the terms of their accountability, they will be able to educate their overseers and shape their future mandate for policing. And by developing new systems of measurement that rely much more on: 1) surveys of the community, their clients, and their employees; and 2) on both the ad hoc and systematic evaluations of initiatives they take in dealing with community nominated problems; they will be able to accelerate progress towards the implementation of community and problem-solving policing.

But perhaps the most important performance evaluation task that must be accomplished in this time of change is the development of some system that can successfully track the progress that is being made in re-positioning police departments as they are going through the important processes of change that are now occurring. Only if chiefs develop a road map of the key investments they plan to make, and indicate some milestones on which they can be judged will the "authorizing environment" front them the capital and the discretion they need to make the necessary changes.

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