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Police officers as change agents in police reform

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The organization of police departments along hierarchical, classic management lines makes it difficult for departmental leadership to tackle commonly-experienced internal problems, so as to improve performance and enhance morale. The main reason for this fact is that top-down reform invites resistances from rank-and-file officers who feel that their views have been disregarded. By contrast, interventions can gain considerable credibility if officers are enlisted as change agents, encouraging them to get involved in the design and implementation of change. This approach not only reduces opposition to innovation but results in congruent change by harnessing the experience of officers who are targets of reform. As a case in point, we review a pioneering effort to reduce the use of excessive force in a metropolitan police department which was successfully implemented by a group of patrol officers, prominently including problem officers.

Keywords: police reform; decentralization; compstat; excessive force; organizational democracy

The pragmatic virtues of organizational democracy

The most common arguments for organizational democracy do not generally lie in the abstract realm of rarified idealism but have to do with the bread-and-butter premise that participatory involvement may be the best way of getting an organization's job done. This particularly a view held in the US, where pragmatic considerations tend to be heavily valued.

Thirteen years ago, I tried to summarize the perspective for a group of prison administrators in Scotland. I told the Scottish wardens that

> [As we have defined it,] the goal has fit most neatly under a heading such as human resource management. The premise of this approach is that people work more effectively when they are involved in making decisions that govern their work, and that organizations are more effective when they deploy the intelligence, wisdom and judgment of all their members—particularly those in the front line of the organization. A second premise is that involvement brings a sense of ownership, and buys loyalty, dedication and commitment . . . [A] recent version of this argument sees organizational democracy as the only means to achieve quality of products or services. (Toch 1994: 65)

In retrospect, it might have been silly of me to discuss the issue of democratization in relation to prison governance. And it might be just as silly for me to make a case for participatory involvement in policing if we did not have a wealth of documented experience showing that rank-and-file initiatives in community policing have generated a great deal of exemplary quality service.

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The subject for this paper is probably a bit more esoteric. I shall be arguing that police departments could be well advised to encourage participatory involvement as *a vehicle for organizational reform*. My argument is based on the premise that some features of the average police organization are, or have become, dysfunctional. Attributes of police organizations that come particularly to mind in support of this contention are the following:

1. The paramilitary arrangement of police work is in practice mostly a fiction, which can occasionally be mobilized and sprung on officers, creating resentments.
2. The monitoring of officer behavior and the disciplinary responses to infractions, reliably provoke displeasure about perceived inequities.
3. Where police administrators formulate policy decisions without advance consultation, this frequently invites resistance to implementation.
4. Police work has often been described as stressful, but police officers universally nominate administrators as their principal source of stress.
5. Police managers tend to be promoted from the ranks, but a cultural divide separates the administration of police departments from the rank and file.
6. The responsiveness of police leaders to external constituencies can be interpreted as insensitivity to the concerns of their subordinates.
7. A code of conduct can evolve in the locker room that appears to tolerate transgressions and discourages 'snitching' on peers.
8. Other agencies in the criminal justice system can come to be regarded as sources of obstruction rather than partners.
9. Quality police work (other than arrests) is imperfectly recorded and in practice is rarely rewarded.

Most importantly, from my perspective about the process of reform,

10. The specification of problems to which police officers are asked to respond, and the analyses on which these specifications are based, are generally not tasks that are shared within the organization, despite the advertised emphasis in police departments on educational attainment in the recruitment of officers.

Some of the above-cited observations are in practice interrelated, because any grievances of police officers can generalize beyond their origin, or transfer from one source of resentment to another. And once an officer becomes completely alienated he is unlikely to encounter a great deal that pleases him at work, and the task of rekindling his allegiance and enthusiasm can become formidable (Toch 2002).

What does it mean to be a 'paramilitary' organization?

Police officers across the world are issued uniforms, which define their function and advertise their authority, and serve to distinguish the officers from mere mortals or 'civilians.' The uniform serves as a symbol of demarcation, differentiating the ingroup from the outgroup, the empowered from the disempowered, and the service deliverers from the clients or targets of their services. The blue of the uniform (wherever the uniform is blue) is the 'color of law' under which the officers act.

The uniform is finally a deterrent message, an invitation for the more cautious or guilt-ridden citizens to be wary, and a prescription for respectful social distance.

The uniform also concretizes the definition of police organizations as 'para-military,' with whatever the word implies by way of connotations and baggage. The prefix *para* tells us that professions to which it is appended are substitutes for or auxiliary to other professions. Although a military-handmaiden role is not usually assigned to police departments (as is, say, the paralegal role in law) the police are somehow expected to emulate the military. 'Para' means 'closely related to.' If we have two sets of organizations, this obligates one to share key attributes of the other.

However, which 'military' attributes would one expect to be adopted by police departments? Putting aside a literal warfare analogue (as favored by Theodore Roosevelt as police commissioner), features that readily come to mind are standard hyper-bureaucratic military organizational attributes—those of formal rank, formal hierarchy, and a chain of unquestioned and unquestioning command. Such is the shape of police organizations enshrined in tables of organization and motivational sermons. These features are, however, hard to reconcile with militant unions and civil service rules. In practice, moreover, these austere attributes become attenuated. They do not, for instance, accommodate prevalent live-and-let-live collusions between front-line supervisors and their subordinates. They do not accommodate many of the standard carefree arrangements of policing. They do not provide for individuals who work mostly on their own between radio calls, or groups that operate in the field on a virtual freelance basis, disengaged from any chain of command.

An insightful, experienced officer who entered the force after service in the military has observed in this connection that

> Even as a rookie patrolman, I was very aware that my sergeant did not run my police squad. How could he possibly? He was responsible for up to a dozen officers scattered over roughly one-fifth of fifty-plus square miles of densely populated, urban area where heavy traffic induced time separation to exacerbate the separation by space. With the sergeant's time and space disconnection from us, the day-to-day direction of my squad, from both a social and working perspective, was in the hands of the peer group, influenced rather loosely but ever so powerfully by the most dominant peer leaders—some "good," and others, "not so good." (Murphy 2006)

Given the uninhibited routines of policing, tensions are bound to arise where the chain-of-command model is disinterred or reinstituted. Where attempts are made to reassert abrogated leadership or to monitor autonomous activities, such efforts can be resented. Resentment can, for instance, be acute at organizational crisis points, where decisions have proved controversial or judgments problematic. Such junctures can raise concerns such as 'which side are they [the politicians who run this organization] on?' Among disaffected officers, the command structure may be suspected of serving some foreign interest, at the expense of the rank and file. Where productivity concerns have become an issue, for instance, officers may envisage themselves at the end of a stressful transmission belt in a numerical pressure game (never to be alluded to as one of 'quotas'), in which a public-relations-oriented demand for penny-ante arrests is passed on from one layer of the hierarchy to the next.

There are obviously junctures in any officer's life that require his or her participation in quasi-military rituals, such as roll calls and performance reviews. Most such junctures are bureaucratic routines that are regarded with good-humored equanimity. However, some demands can come to be seen as gratuitous hurdles (or proliferating red tape), and may come across as petty and demeaning. At extremes, there are organizational routines that send emasculating messages about the range and scope of the officers' role or responsibilities. One such juncture is that of 'stress training' in recruit academies. The timing of infantilizing treatment at entry into the system is arguably unfortunate, but so is the pairing of boot camp routines with academic components in training. It is hard to see how an organization can inculcate its officers with a readiness to exercise wise and informed discretion when the officers are being barked at, marched about, and treated like recalcitrant children.

Playing cops-and-robbers with cops

Because police officers in practice engage in considerable discretionary behavior, their supervisors have had to grapple with the question, 'Can we really trust those bums to be honest and law-abiding, dispassionate and evenhanded, punctilious and dedicated?' The response to this question has often been cautious and guarded, and laced with translucent suspicions. This dilemma is as old as the police profession, and its resolution has often been messy, undignified, and discordant. Actions inspired by mistrust tend to breed resentment, which fuels obduracy and resistance. Resistance reinforces suspicion, which incites intrusive monitoring moves, which breed resentment. And so the cycle continues, and can spin out of control.

During the era of 'police reform' at the turn of the last century, police leaders were obsessed with the question of whether officers were assiduously attending to their obligations while they were out of sight. Early technology provided the supervisors with some capability for periodically communicating with their officers in the field. The officers were correspondingly challenged to work around or to circumvent these intrusions into their familiar routines. A 'cat-and-mouse' game between supervisors and their subordinates ensued (Walker 1977: 13). The details of this contest have undergone transformation over time, keeping pace with progress in information technology. However, mutual suspicion and mistrust have contributed to the development of divergent officer and supervisor cultures, which have been eloquently described by some students of policing (e.g., Reuss-Ianni 1983).

The infamous cup of coffee

Inspired by allegations of political corruption, early police leaders subordinated their concern with indolence to an obsession with dishonesty. Their anxiety about deviations from 'integrity' by officers has retained its salience over time. The attention has focused throughout the period on a wide spectrum of misbehaviors ranging from accepting discounts for lunches (or stray cups of coffee), to participation in robberies or thefts. Police policy manuals covering the subject frequently discuss it in totalistic fashion, and include wholesale injunctions warning officers that they may be embarking on a slippery slope, in which accepting a cup of coffee can be the seductive prelude to serious transgressions. Where police departments buy into this 'Broken Windows' view of corruption, some of the edicts

they issue (such as 'thou shalt never accept discounts at lunch counters') are bound to inspire limited credibility in the locker room, which can compromise the entire campaign.

Officers not only are able to discriminate between inconsequential minutiae and serious unprofessional behavior, but they also can be put off when the difference is obfuscated by generic proscriptions and promiscuous interventions. Officers can be further put off when interventions cast their nets too widely, resort to stings, entrapment, or other uses of deception, and treat targeted officers (as the cop saying goes) 'like criminals.' Such actions can mobilize solidarity in the locker room and generate support for peers who are subjects of corruption-related allegations.

Most officers do not condone egregious lapses of integrity, nor will most officers object to the sanctioning of colleagues who have seriously transgressed. Klockars et al. (2000) conducted a comprehensive study in which they used a wide range of vignettes of officer misconduct, and they report that

> The more serious the officers considered a behavior to be, the more likely they were to believe that more severe discipline was appropriate, and the more willing they were to report a colleague for engaging in that behavior. (p. 1)

In relation to less substantial transgressions covered in the vignettes, officers sometimes felt that the penalties they anticipated were overly harsh, and most of the officers indicated that they 'would not report a police colleague who had engaged in behavior described in the four scenarios considered the least serious' (p. 6). This pinpointed reluctance-to-inform is far from an all-encompassing 'Code of Silence,' and it is not a stance designed to protect crooked cops. If there are misapprehensions about the scope of locker-room resistances, police managers may resort to needlessly intrusive interventions that serve to antagonize potential informants. The result may be to exacerbate conflicting feelings such as those reported in another study (Weisburd et al. 2000), which found that

> Some of the strongest and most varied opinions expressed by respondents concerned the difficult question of whether officers should report other officers' misconduct. Responses on this subject suggest the possibility of a large gap between attitudes and behavior. That is, even though officers do not believe in protecting wrongdoers, they often do not turn them in. (p. 3)

The alternative officers have to the unthinkable option of finking can be silent disapproval. However, if direct questions are subsequently raised (such as in the course of internal investigations), they may feel free to reveal the truth. The much-maligned Code of Silence calls for loyalty to the group, but it does not prescribe perjury to protect brutal or dishonest men who commit egregious offenses.

Does decentralization increase the prevalence of misconduct?

An interesting issue touched upon in the study cited above was the question of whether decentralization enhances the risk of rank-and-file misconduct. In other words, when the cat is back at headquarters, would the mice act irresponsibly? The authors of the study (Weisburd et al. 2000) report that the officers they surveyed felt 'that a close relationship with the community, such as that resulting from

community-oriented policing did not increase the risk of police corruption' (p. 7), and the authors go on to indicate that many of the officers 'said that community policing reduced the number of incidents involving excessive force, and . . . [many] thought that it decreased the seriousness of incidents' (p. 8).

These beliefs counter an assumption that is sometimes made by critics of police reform, which is that the decentralization of police organizations and the expansion of neighborhood autonomy create a breeding ground for unlawful conduct and unlicensed behavior. It may even be tempting for some police executives to buy into this cautionary view of opponents because it raises questions about a strategy they may suspect is a passing fad and because it reinforces a command-and-control conception of management.

The concern about dangers of democratization, however, goes beyond worrying about what brutal or corrupt officers may do when they are afforded expanded discretion. This concern also reflects a lack of trust in local citizens and their capacity to pursue the common good. The dangers envisaged are those of collusions in which (1) citizens are snowed or buffaloed by irresponsible officers; or (2) officers are snookered by citizens into supporting illegitimate or parochial concerns. Occasionally, stories appear in the press suggesting that scenarios such as these may have unfolded. Officers may be described eagerly sundowning marginal miscreants, earning encomia from residents and complaints from the ACLU. Such resolutions of sectarian demand and legalistic restraint, of course, are not limited to local neighborhoods in decentralized police departments. These are precisely the sort of dilemmas experienced on a daily basis by police executives, who have to respond to a variety of constituencies, and deal with the consequences of their responses. One of the unappreciated side benefits of decentralization in policing may be that it provides community-oriented officers with a scaled-down managerial role—allowing them to negotiate the force field within which their organization must operate. The question is, should officers as managers be expected to be less honest and evenhanded than executives who face comparable situations?

Decentralized and centralized data-driven policing

Police departments frequently take pride in the capacity they have evolved to consider updated information about problems in their communities in planning their activities on a day-by-day basis. This capacity is not unrelated to a decentralized perspective because the problems to which any police department must respond vary from one part of town to the next. Disaggregated statistics therefore have to be collected, and familiarity with local conditions becomes an asset in interpreting the data and planning appropriate action.

This advantage of decentralized planning was highlighted in a 2002 Annual Report of the Seattle Police Department, which focused on a restructuring move that was described as follows by Seattle Chief Gil Kerlikowske:

> The most important shift has been to decentralize command and control at the headquarters level and place additional responsibility and decision-making at the precinct level. There are five distinct geographical precincts within the city, each commanded and led by a veteran police captain. These captains know the special character of their precincts and the people they command better than anyone else in the organization. By providing them limited additional resources but far greater control

> over their piece of the city, we have increased accountability and the speed at which operational decisions are made. (Seattle Police Department 2002: 2)

The Seattle Report noted that as a result of the decentralization, the precinct commanders had been accorded 'a significant increase in responsibility to become acting 'chiefs of police' for their respective areas' (p. 24). One of those involved in the move was Captain Fred Hill, who commanded Seattle's East Precinct. In describing the East Precinct, Captain Hill wrote, 'we have old money, new money, little money, ultra-left wing politics, ultra-right wing politics, people living in high rises and people living in houseboats . . . and everything in between' (p. 32). Among specific attributes, according to the Report,

> The East Precinct is predominantly residential. As the smallest precinct geographically, it has far less space than the others, and consequently it has much high-density urban housing. . . . The East Precinct also serves the largest number of Seattle schools in the smallest physical area . . . Captain Hill sees the large and diverse student community as a primary constituency of the Precinct. The Precinct provides School Resource Officers to work actively with the schools. . . . This is an example of neighborhood-based policing at the individual school level, where officers get to know the students and the issues at a school so well that often they can avert problems before they start. . . . One of Capt. Hill's goals for the future is to provide more officers to work directly with schools (p. 32).

Local data can be supplied to precinct commanders such as Captain Hill to help them to further delineate the problems in their precincts. Precinct commanders can share such data with their subordinates, including rank-and-file officers. Data-driven policing, however, started out being conceived of as a centralized process, directed from a digital war room in which large maps displayed the latest crime statistics in living color for the edification (or alarm) of top management and technically savvy staff members. By way of response to any given set of data, the managers in charge of the areas in which mapped incidents appeared aggregated would be summoned for review sessions. The outcome of such sessions tended to be a resolve to intensify targeted enforcement activities. This resolve would be subsequently communicated to rank-and-file officers, who were instructed to do the targeted enforcing.

The paradigm in its top-down form (called Compstat, after a computer program) was credited with contributing to hefty crime reductions in New York City. The model consequently became popular, and many departments claimed to have emulated the idea or replicated it. Because slippages occur between resolves and implementation steps, it is hard to say how many Compstat-equivalents were actually instituted. And it is even harder to know how much the average Compstat offspring resembled the UrCompstat model, or differed from it.

Reforming compstat

It would be nice to assume that transmutations had in fact occurred, because the original Compstat regime deviated from most organization-management prescriptions. The process did not encourage participation, teamwork, feedback, or creative thinking, and—especially at its inception—relied on threats or intimidation to motivate compliance (Swope 1999). Fortunately, the proliferation of Compstats

provided an opportunity to experiment with refinements, and especially modifications of the process that could improve the way human resources were deployed. Ideally, one could eventually envisage a Compstat model that would harness the thinking of the entire police chain of command, very much including that of rank-and-file officers now enlisted in the process without serious consultation. Such reform at the front lines would make data-driven enforcement (or other) activities more mindful and meaningful.

This possibility was recognized in some localities years before Compstat was invented. Ron Oznowicz, a veteran officer running for mayor of Oakland, thus recalled that

> Many years ago we had personnel assigned, civilian and police, to place colored pins in huge maps to indicate how crime patterns were emerging. The cop was there to make "sense" of it. They could see where the car thieves were located by the dumping grounds of the stolen cars. They could see that most burglaries were committed within four blocks of certain thieves. They could see robberies with similar patterns. Any beat cop could visit Crime Analysis and see what was happening. (Oznowicz 2006).

The reform process of Compstat could be participatory in nature. Through the use of task forces, Compstat could be redesigned by those who knew it best, and who had to live with its less-than-felicitous edicts and problem definitions. These problematic junctures will inevitably be experienced in any top-down sequence, such as Compstat. This is the case because consequences of decisions can rarely be anticipated in 'war rooms,' and because statistical compilations provide imperfect guides for action in the field. In real wars, the extrapolations of command staff are frequently (and belatedly) refuted by experiences in the trenches, where men can be ordered to assault impregnable fortifications. The front-line experiences of the survivors of such charges can obviously provide useful feedback, if attended to.

Interpolating street wisdom

Any top-down process can benefit from feedback loops that serve to ensure that expectations conform to reality—especially at the key juncture where the organization's rubber hits the road. The ultimate source of feedback can thus be that of personnel involved with the targets or consumers of services. It is patrol officers who encounter the wide range of full-blooded incidents, and the protagonists who are involved in the incidents represented in war room maps. In the course of doing their work, the officers become the repositories of considerable first-hand information. Officers can and do draw their own personal inferences from this reservoir of information. This street wisdom is admittedly different in kind from the ruminations inspired by the data recorded in war room maps. Street knowledge is stubbornly particularistic. It centers heavily on specific problem locations and individual events. It invites disdain because it sounds anecdotal, and appears oblivious to questions about the reliability of potentially unrepresentative experiences.

The limitations of street wisdom, however, can be readily compensated for. If officers are to be invited to relay their views, they could first be offered the opportunity to compare notes with each other, to pool their experiences or review records relating to their experiences, and pose questions about the patterning of the incident attributes they had observed. If one did this carefully and systematically, the

analysis would approximate that prescribed by problem-oriented policing (Goldstein 1990). This approach envisaged a reconfiguration of police goals and objectives, a concern with the communalities among incidents that help us to understand and address their causes. By focusing on patterns of incidents, the approach compensates for the unreliability (and sterility) of offense-incident-based thinking or planning. At the other end of the spectrum, problem-oriented thinking offers an intervening level of analysis for managers planning strategies in war rooms, adding flesh and concreteness to statistically based ruminations, helping to bridge from the sand box to the trenches.

Implementing participatory reform

A variety of means can be used to promote the study of problems and initiate proposals for change. Such vehicles can range from task forces that are assigned specific topics to examine, to groups that have broader mandates, and more freedom to study and explore. To consider comprehensive reforms, 'parallel organizations' can be created that are both bureaucratically informal and relatively autonomous (French and Bell 1999).

As a vehicle of empowerment, 'units' can be fielded which exercise specialized skills or pursue special interests in areas relevant to the organization's mission. The Seattle Department's 2005 Report lists a number of enterprises that fit this general description. The Department had thus instituted a Force Options Research Group, described as 'an internal study group that evaluates and makes recommendations on less lethal options for use by Departmental officers' (Seattle Police Department 2005: 18). In the field of domestic violence, 'the Department has developed specialized expertise in the areas of stalking, elder abuse, custodial interference, and abuse in the homeless and sexual minority communities' (p. 22). Some of the units involve teaming of officers with members of the community. A Victim Support Team (VST) program thus 'works directly with citizen volunteers . . . [who] provide crisis intervention, and emergency resources referrals to domestic violence victims' (ibid.).

The most direct way of facilitating rank-and-file input is by being hospitable to proposals for change from front-line personnel, and being willing to implement their proposals. Seattle's 2005 Report provides a case in point of some historical interest:

> In 1987, former Seattle Police Officer Paul Grady was sitting in his patrol car, stuck on traffic, in the congested downtown city core. As he watched bicycle messengers weave back and forth through traffic to get to their destination, he had an idea that would revolutionize modern policing. With permission from his commander, he and his partner, Officer Mike Miller, began to patrol downtown Seattle on their own personal mountain bikes. While it took a while for the public to get used to seeing officers on bicycles, the quick but quiet bikes soon proved themselves invaluable in catching criminals in the act of open-air drug buys and other street crimes. . . . One idea almost 20 years ago has now spearheaded the widespread use of bicycle patrols nationwide. (p. 8)

A problem-oriented approach to officer misconduct

As I have noted, an obdurate dilemma that has been challenging the ingenuity of police leaders is how to go about preventing, controlling, and discouraging incidents of police misconduct—including uses of excessive force. The quandary arises from

the fact that much vociferous grousing by officers relates to the way police organizations try to prevent, control, or discourage incidents of misconduct—including uses of excessive force. This is an obdurate dilemma that has been challenging the ingenuity of many police administrators. Monitoring and disciplinary sanctions that are intended to be proportionate, legitimate, and fair often seem to appear to come across as unfair, discriminatory, disrespectful, tinged with favoritism, and politically tainted. Resentments experienced by officers and frustrations experienced by administrators can create insurmountable communication problems.

An intervention called the Peer Review Panel, instituted in the Oakland (California) Police Department 35 years ago, was designed to remedy this situation. The concept had been formulated by a member of a group of seven patrol officers, and presented to his colleagues for discussion. This action had been preceded by weeks of research by members of the group. It was followed by extensive deliberations and additional research, and culminated in a formal proposal submitted to the Chief of Police for implementation. After a period of operation, the Panel operation was also evaluated by the officers, with help from resident consultants.

The group was part of a project that included four groups of officers that met for two days a week for several months. All meetings ended with recorded summaries. On the day the Panel concept was introduced, the officer who invented the Panel described the inception of his idea as follows:

> And I started making little notes about maybe coming up with trying to work up some sort of system where we can have line patrolmen or the peer group meet in some sort of order review or some sort of review unit where you can analyze the problems that the specific officer might be having on the street when it becomes apparent: Recommendations from superior officers, numerous trips up to Internal Affairs, just numerous violent incidents on the street. This would not be a disciplinary unit or anything like this and it wouldn't really come up with any particular finding pro or con about the officer's action. (Toch and Grant 2005: 166–167)

In a subsequent session, after his group's midnight lunch (the project convened mostly at night) the officer reemphasized what he saw as the goal of his intervention. He said,

> And what you're going to try to do then is review the behavioral patterns of the person and analyze what he is doing and somehow make him, in this process, come up with some self-critique, like we do here. You know, after he reads the report somebody asks the questions, . . . And [the Panel subject] would have to stop and think, "Do I do that very often?". (p. 170)

This statement alludes to continuity between the activities of the group of officers ('like we do here') and those being envisaged for the Panel ('review behavioral patterns' and 'self-critiques'). These pairings were not coincidental, because the Oakland study was premised on the assumption that personal development and organization development could be linked. The participants in the project had been tasked with studying problems of violence between officers and civilians, but most of the participants had been selected (by fellow participants using statistics) because they had been repeatedly enmeshed in conflicts with citizens. For the officers, the subject of inquiry carried personal significance. Having been part of a problem, the

officers were concerned with understanding the nature of the problem and contributing to its solution.

The Oakland legacy

The Action Review Panel may have been a significant reform, but the groups of officers made other contributions to the operation of their department. As was pointed out by Oakland's Chief of Police,

> Possibly more important than the project's impact on police-citizen contacts is the fact that this program has resulted in a series of significant organizational changes which touched such diverse activities as communications, patrol and training. It conditioned departmental procedures for dealing with family and landlord-tenant disputes, and it may eventually bring about a significant change in performance evaluation techniques. (Gain 1975: iv)

I was a direct participant in the Oakland project, though I am not a police officer. The project was entirely officer-based and officer-run. However, the operation did require a measure of coordination, and external support. An NIMH-sponsored group of civilians provided the coordination and support.

The key ingredient of the project was an enlightened Chief of Police, Charles Gain, who empowered the officers, encouraged them in their work, buttressed their efforts and implemented their suggestions for reform. The function of resident academics was to facilitate the research involvements of the officers, and provide them with technical assistance, as needed. We also chaired the initial group of officers, before leadership devolved to the group. Such assignments of functions did not produce hard-and-fast delineations of roles. We became honorary members of the groups, inter-disciplinary relationships developed, and some friendships that have endured the test of time.

It would be nice if I were able to claim that the manifold changes instituted through the Oakland project had survived as handily as have our personal relationships. For the most part, however, they have not. This fact is in retrospect not particularly surprising, because the Oakland department has gone the way of many settings that were once headed by leaders far ahead of their times. In such settings, the successors of the innovative leaders frequently do not share their readiness for risk taking and reform. It has also appeared to me that in some instances wheels have to be reinvented from time to time because organizations have limited staying power. And if such is the case with police reform, it would be delightful if a juncture for the reinvention of participatory strategies were impending.

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