



Perspectives on Policing



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Implementing Community Policing: The Administrative Problem

By George L. Kelling and William J. Bratton

The current generation of police leadership, tuned to changes in American society, technology, and economics, is revising the strategy of municipal policing. Whether identified as community or problem-oriented policing, the current changes represent nothing less than a strategic shift in the basic "business" of policing. As dedicated as they are, as supported by research, as responsive to neighborhood demands for change, this generation of reformers finds regeneration and strategic repositioning as difficult as has any other. Why is it that innovators of every generation have so much difficulty shifting the strategies of their organizations and professions?

For police executives, three sources of resistance seem to be foremost in their minds and conversations: unions, detectives, and mid-management. This paper will deal with mid-management. We have repeatedly heard top police executives say with frustration, "If only it wasn't for mid-management," or "If only I could wipe out lieutenants, I could really change this department." The experience with team policing during the 1970's seemed to confirm this impression empirically. Sherman et al. conclude in their case studies of team policing: "Mid-management of the departments [studied], seeing team policing as a threat to their power, subverted and, in some cases, actively sabotaged the plans."¹

Yet, there are problems with this formulation. Review of the literature on mid-management presents a more complicated picture. On the one hand, many articles, especially those in journals of a semipopular nature, portray mid-managers as a dying breed in organizations, especially in those organizations that are being downsized or in which their services or products are information-based. Certainly, many organizations are portrayed as top-heavy, especially at mid-managerial levels. This is not just a "pop" view; Peter Drucker states it strongly.

Community policing represents a new future for American law enforcement, changing the way our Nation's police respond to the communities they serve. This report, one in a series entitled *Perspectives on Policing*, is based on discussions held in the Executive Session on Policing sponsored by NIJ at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

The Executive Session on Policing has been developed as part of the Kennedy School's Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management and is funded by the National Institute of Justice and private sources that include the Charles Stewart Mott and Guggenheim Foundations. The success of the police mission now and in the years ahead is the common goal of those who have participated in the Executive Session. Helping to achieve that goal is the purpose of these reports.

The Executive Session on Policing has brought together police chiefs, mayors, scholars, and many others in periodic meetings to focus on modern strategies that produce better results. The rapid growth of these strategies shows the willingness of American police executives to test new approaches to crime, disorder, drugs, and fear in their communities.

Michael J. Russell

Acting Director
National Institute of Justice
U.S. Department of Justice

Mark H. Moore

Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

[M]iddle managements today tend to be overstaffed to the point of obesity. . . . This slows the decision process to a crawl and makes the organization increasingly incapable

of adapting to change. Far too few people, even in high positions with imposing titles, are exposed to the challenge of producing results.²

Mid-management ranks are bloated in many police departments: some have many captains and lieutenants without commands but serving as aides, often doing relatively menial work that could be carried out by a secretary or administrative assistant.

It does not follow from this, however, that mid-managers—captains and lieutenants—are a hindrance to innovation per se. Having too many mid-managers is a different issue from suggesting that mid-managers are inherently resistant to change. Indeed, many people who study organizations, especially in the private sector, identify the locus of innovation precisely in mid-management. Probably the work of Rosabeth Moss Kanter is most noteworthy in this regard. She argues that middle managers are essential to the process of innovation, and argues even more strongly that creativity can originate only in middle management.³ Perhaps the experience of mid-management in organizational change in the private sector is instructive as we consider the current changes in policing. The role of mid-management in change—which for reasons that will become apparent, we call the *administrative problem*—is a generic issue in innovation and the strategic repositioning of organizations.

Defining the administrative problem

Considering the circumstances within which early 20th-century police reformers like August Vollmer and O. W. Wilson found themselves, the law enforcement strategy they constructed had much to commend it. Those circumstances included extensive political corruption of police agencies, widespread financial corruption of police officers and departments, extensive police abuses of their authority, and large-scale inefficiencies. To counter these circumstances, reformers redefined the basic strategy of American policing. They narrowed police functioning to criminal law enforcement. They centralized police organizations, standardized and routinized the official functioning of police, and measured their success by arrests and clearances and the newly created Uniform Crime Reports.

“... in New York City, patrol officers were constrained from making low-level drug arrests because administrators feared they would be corrupted.”

Over time, this strategy became consistent, coherent, integrated, marketable, and dominated the police field. This strategy has shaped both how police are thought about and how they think about themselves. It has been so potent that for a generation, questioning it was tantamount to uttering “fighting words.” To suggest that the police role was more complex was heard as

tantamount to demeaning police, reinventing political meddling and financial corruption into policing, suggesting that police were social workers, and pandering to criminals.⁴ Real policing was law enforcement, crime fighting.

The business of policing in this strategy had two elements. The first element, crime fighting, was conducted through preventive patrol, interception patrol, rapid response to calls for service, and criminal investigations. The intent of preventive patrol was to create a feeling of police omnipresence in a community; the intent of interception patrol and rapid response was to intercept crimes in progress; and the intent of criminal investigation was to investigate crimes. In each of the latter two activities, the goal was to arrest offenders and feed them into the criminal justice system.

Controlling officers was the second element of the strategy. At first, this assertion seems strange—control of officers should be a means of improving police performance, not an end in itself. Yet, one has to put oneself in the position of the reformers. For them, political meddling, corruption, and abuse were so rampant in policing that it was impossible to direct effectively efforts to any desired goal; therefore, control was in the forefront of all their innovations.⁵ Concern for means overshadowed ends. Control became the strategy. Thus, it is no surprise that even as recently as the 1970's in New York City, patrol officers were constrained from making low-level drug arrests because administrators feared they would be corrupted. As Herman Goldstein observes: “It is a sad commentary on the state of policing in this country that the need to control corrupt practices stands in the way of more effective policing.”⁶

Much could be written about the fact that control of officers was central to the reform strategy: its wisdom, its efficacy, the extent to which it interfered with good policing activity, how the public came to judge police departments as it does, and other issues. Our purpose here, however, is simply to argue that the basic business of police organizations was two-fold: law enforcement and control of officers.

Early reformers confronted three sets of problems as they attempted to shift the strategy of policing to law enforcement: entrepreneurial, tactical, and administrative.⁷ In this respect, they were similar to entrepreneurs and owners/executives in commerce. They had to define their *core services* in a changing environment, the *engineering services* required to produce their services, and the *administrative mechanisms* to ensure production. For police reformers:

- 1) entrepreneurial problems included redefining core police services and ensuring that an adequate market or demand for such services existed;
- 2) engineering problems included devising the tactics and technologies that were required to provide those services; and
- 3) administrative problems included creating the organizational structure and managerial processes required to develop, maintain, and monitor the organization's activities.

For each of these problems, police reformers such as Vollmer and Wilson devised solutions.

The entrepreneurial solution

The entrepreneurial solution was discussed above. The reformers emphasized crime fighting and control of officers as their core services and systematically marketed them as their core competencies. Allying themselves with progressive reformers, police leaders adroitly steered public attention towards what they perceived as a major crime wave, police corruption, and political interference. They accomplished this reorientation of the public to the new business of policing through advertising, public relations, public education, local and national commissions (e.g., Wickersham⁸), and police surveys (assessments of local police departments by recognized national experts like Vollmer and Bruce Smith).⁹

The tactical solution

The tactical solutions of the reformers initially centered on patrol and criminal investigation. At first, patrol was modified by the rather simple move of abandoning foot patrol for cars (during the 1930's and 1940's). Primary justifications for putting police into automobiles were to match the speed and mobility of criminals in cars and to increase the sense of the prowess of the officer, equipped as the officer would be with a powerful car. Later, reformers developed the more sophisticated tactics of preventive patrol, rapid response to calls for service, and interception patrol.

Additionally, criminal investigation came into its own during the reform era. Previously, criminal investigation units and detectives had unsavory reputations. Recruited from the private sector until the early 20th century, detectives and detective units and agencies (the Bureau of Investigation—the predecessor of the FBI) were noted for corruption and unprofessional behavior. J. Edgar Hoover's strategy for eradicating corruption from the Bureau of Investigation and converting it into the highly respected and professional FBI became the model for local police chiefs and helped reshape the public view of local police department detectives as well.

Detectives began to look and act like professionals. They worked regular hours, controlled their own schedule, saw people by appointment, "took over" crime scenes, controlled esoteric information, and in other ways operated with professional prerogatives. Additionally, detectives became the "stuff" of movies, radio, and later, television. As a consequence, they became the leading edge in the law enforcement strategy. Their prestige and external and internal clout soared. The successful cop? A detective. The failed cop? An unpromoted patrol officer.

The administrative solution

The administrative problem for the reformers consisted of the need to establish the structural and administrative mechanisms required to produce the desired services. The administrative solution was large-scale adoption of the ideas of Frederick Taylor, the renowned early 20th-century organizational theorist. Known as scientific (or classical) management, Taylor's work focused on improving productivity by rationalizing both production efforts (human work) and management. His concepts and practices have become well known. They include: time and motion studies; routinization and simplification of work tasks; division of work tasks; and administrative control mechanisms,

which include unity of command, layers of command, close supervision, span of control, and linking productivity to reward systems.

The undertakings of reformers to rationalize the productive work (tactics and technologies) of patrol officers are now well known: narrowing the official responsibility of patrol to law enforcement; reducing, even attempting to eliminate, patrol officer discretion; and developing routinized patrol tactics (preventive patrol and rapid response to calls).

The reformers' rationalization of administration—their attempts to solve the administrative problem—as well as the attempts by the current generation of reformers are the central concerns of this paper. Consider the situation of a chief of police during the early decades of this century. Generally a political appointee, the chief served at the pleasure of the mayor. Tenure or contracts for chiefs were unheard of. Police districts were contiguous with wards and ward leaders made most of the police appointments, administrative and operational. The links between ward leaders and police were so close during this political era of policing that historians like Fogelson have dubbed police "adjuncts" of urban political parties (machines).¹⁰

In these circumstances, police reformers needed to accomplish two things to gain control over their departments. The first was to sever *all levels* within police departments from undue external influences. This was accomplished largely by adopting the political agenda of progressive reformers: centralization of urban services (taking control away from ward leaders); election of councilpersons-at-large (weakening neighborhood-based ward politicians); strengthening mayors and creating city management forms of government; creating civil service (hiring, retaining, promoting, and terminating personnel on the basis of merit); removing control of police chiefs from politicians; and developing mechanisms to protect the tenure of police chiefs. Elements of this agenda were achieved with varying degrees of success; however, the overall results were so successful that by 1977, Herman Goldstein appropriately pointed out that many, if not most, police departments had achieved such degrees of autonomy that they were virtually unaccountable to local government.¹¹

The second task for police reformers was to extend the reach of police chiefs into the department itself. That is, police executives had to implement and maintain over time their strategy by socializing and managing personnel; devising a range of specialized tactical functions; establishing new relations to the external environment; maintaining equipment, including a fleet of automobiles and later telephone, radio, and computer equipment; controlling financial functions, including recordkeeping, allocating resources, and reporting; and developing the means of reporting on the achievements of their new strategy.

In some respects, their responsibility was akin to that of late 19th-century owner-managers in industry who, confronted with the need to extend their reach into their increasingly large enterprises, "literally invented the methods and systems of administrative coordination and, in the process, gave definition to a wide range of functions such as finance, collection, service, marketing, distribution, pricing, sales, training, and labor management."¹² That is, police reformers, like owner-managers of burgeoning industrial enterprises some decades earlier, created

a mid-management infrastructure, the purpose of which was to ensure the implementation and maintenance of the reform strategy. Creating functional organizations, as opposed to the geographically based organizations of early policing, chiefs delegated to a mid-managerial group specific authority over functions that included training, analyzing and planning, accounting, reporting, allocating personnel, scheduling, and other functions. Over time, the skills required to manage these functions became increasingly complex, resulting in a management group that had many of the skills of professional managers in the corporate world: planning, fiscal and budgeting analysis, marketing, research, and education.

Police chiefs extracted from their own executive functions, authority, and skill the elements that could be rationalized. Chiefs delegated these functions to mid-managers—captains and lieutenants who oversaw administrative units and patrol operations on a day-to-day and shift-to-shift basis. Administratively, captains generally head departments and units such as planning and the police academy.

In operations, captains serve usually as district/precinct/area commanders and commanders of special units. Responsible to inspectors/assistant chiefs/majors, captains in patrol direct activities in a geographical area. Responsibilities of these captains include the establishment of district priorities; supervision of operations; relations with community and neighborhood groups; coordination with other patrol districts and police units; direction of assignments, scheduling, instructions, procedures, and communications; preparation of the district budget; and the preliminary handling of citizen complaints against officers. Generally, captains work business hours and days. In special units, captains have similar duties, but usually have citywide responsibility for a function, such as handling juveniles, rather than for a geographical area.

Lieutenants work directly under captains. Often designated as “desk officers” in patrol units, lieutenants are responsible for the shift-to-shift operation of a district or function. As such, most lieutenants work shifts. During shifts, lieutenants are responsible for equipment; proper preparation of all reports; review of field investigations; maintenance of logs; transmission of all orders; supervision of sergeants; investigation of complaints; and other administrative duties. Typically, lieutenants “sign off” on all reports and district records. As such, they are the guarantors of line performance. But under the reformers, captains and lieutenants also gained control of the *practice, knowledge, and skill base* of the occupation. This requires some explanation.

As part of the law enforcement strategy, reformers moved to simplify and routinize the work of patrol officers, the service base of the occupation. This was accomplished in policing, as it was in industry, by attempting to reduce the discretion of line personnel, those providing the service of the organization. To accomplish this, the essence or the craft of the work had to be understood and then distilled by engineers and planners (mid-managers). Once understood and distilled, the productive efforts of workers could be reduced to relatively simple and repetitive tasks. In this way, both skill and knowledge about productivity were concentrated in the managerial domain.¹³ Sparrow et al. capture this:

Police officers, for all their field’s talk about professionalism, are treated not like professionals but like factory workers. The duties and methods of their jobs are presumed to have been well worked out. Someone else has already done the thinking; only their faithful adherence to procedure and their willingness to show up for work are required. Their superiors, for the most part, merely supervise and discipline.¹⁴

The concentration of expertise, the practice skill, was located in the leadership of line operating units (patrol and special units) and staff units like planning and the training academy. Mid-managers would thus define the problems that police would address and the methods that police would use to manage them.

The task of police officers was simply nondiscretionary law enforcement. If someone breaks the law, he or she is arrested. If laws are not broken, nobody need fear the police. Some training in procedure was required but, as Bittner has noted, all a police officer really needed in this view of police work was a little common sense and the “manly virtue” of being able to overcome resistance.¹⁵

Thus, the solution to the administrative problem in police departments was the establishment of a powerful mid-management group that: 1) extended the reach of chiefs throughout police departments and 2) became the locus of the practice and skill base of the occupation. As such, mid-managers became *the leading edge in the establishment of centralized control over police departments’ internal environment and organizational operations*.

In the following section of this paper, we will examine the way in which mid-management’s role in the establishment of centralized control over the police organization plays itself out in contemporary efforts at police reform. We will begin by reviewing three 1970’s efforts funded by the Police Foundation in Dallas, Texas; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Kansas City, Missouri. Projects in these three cities consumed at least one-third of the Police Foundation’s original \$30 million endowment from the Ford Foundation. The work in Dallas is largely forgotten. Cincinnati is recalled as the final major test of team policing. The work in Kansas City is considered pathbreaking in policing. Following this, we will examine more recent attempts to strategically reposition police departments in Baltimore County, Maryland; Madison, Wisconsin; Houston, Texas; Reno, Nevada; and the New York City Transit Police Department.

Three cases: Dallas, Cincinnati, and Kansas City

Dallas. Although the Police Foundation had given a few small grants, the centerpiece of its strategy was the Major Cities Program. The central idea of this program was to identify police departments that had an unusual potential for change and to help them overhaul thoroughly and radically their organization and operations. They, then, would become national models for the profession. The Dallas Police Department (DPD) was to be the first Major City.

Given the assumptions of such an approach, no city could compare with Dallas. The vision of its chief, Frank Dyson, was revolutionary. In today’s organizational language, his vision of

policing and his attempts at reform would be understood as a strategic repositioning of the Dallas Police Department. The very nature of the business of the organization would change: official recognition would be given to all police activities; authority would devolve to operational levels of the department; community needs would determine operational priorities; police would be accountable to the community; management and personnel processes and physical structures would be altered to facilitate such devolution of authority and community priority-setting; and police would develop close relations with other community institutions.

The model for instituting these reforms emphasized careful planning, creating systems to support such a strategy (e.g., recruitment, preservice and inservice training), developing a management infrastructure to maintain and monitor the strategy, and changing the definitions of organizational, unit, and individual performance.

Planning for these activities was conducted by the Office of Program Administration (OPA). This office was headed by a confidante of Chief Dyson who was widely viewed in the department as a police renegade. The staff of OPA was made up mainly of newly hired civilians. The dominant view of those involved in planning for the implementation of the effort was that the plan, while worthy and innovative, threatened the vested interests of major segments of DPD. For example, detectives were to be decentralized, and the rank of lieutenant was to be eliminated. OPA responded to the anticipated resistance by developing an official policy of maximum secrecy during the planning stages. To facilitate this secrecy, OPA offices were moved out of police headquarters to a relatively inaccessible location. (Other reasons existed for moving—shortage of space, for example—but inaccessibility was a major goal of OPA.)

Mid-managers generally were described by key personnel in OPA as “perchers”—persons who merely filled organizational slots, without contributing to the organization. They, especially lieutenants, were viewed as the primary source of resistance to the effort to change.

Elements of the plan were implemented, primarily those having to do with improving the personnel processes of the DPD. But before a single operational element of the strategy was in place, Dyson was fired, the operational thrusts of the effort were abandoned, and the planning unit that was charged with designing the implementation plan was renounced and liquidated. Essentially, the overthrow resulted from a coalition among detectives, the media, and the Dallas Police Association, which at that time was dominated by detectives. The detectives opposed the plan because of decentralization. The news media, especially the print press, were exasperated by the continuing attempts to maintain the plan in virtually total secrecy. Broad-based opposition arose to minority recruitment. The DPA sided with the detectives, not surprising since detectives dominated its leadership. Fiscal improprieties within OPA were alleged. No champions arose to defend the plan. City officials began to fear for the city’s image.

Cincinnati. Cincinnati was the second Major City effort of the Police Foundation. Cincinnati had a reputation both of high integrity and for being one of the more progressive police departments in the United States during the 1950’s and 1960’s. It also was quite militaristic; for example, officers saluted their

superiors. Stanley Schrotel was considered one of the country’s premier reform chiefs during his tenure in the 1960’s and early 1970’s. Like many departments at the time, the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) was enjoying a period of expanding resources.

The major goal of the project was to increase the sensitivity and responsiveness of police to the communities they served. This was to be accomplished largely through the decentralization of police services. This effort, called team policing, encouraged officers to identify special needs of the community and to devise police responses to those needs. This gave sergeants and officers responsibility for determining the content and method of their work. Patrol officers were to work interactively among themselves and with their supervisors to formulate policing tactics for their neighborhoods.

“ . . . before a single operational element of the strategy was in place, [the police chief] was fired . . . and the planning unit . . . was renounced and liquidated.”

The experimental phase of the effort was mounted by a task force in selected areas of the city. The planning phase for the experiment lasted for 2 years. The implementation of the experiment proceeded smoothly. The officers involved adopted the program enthusiastically, and top management provided the necessary organizational support. Over time, however, upper and mid-management began to intrude on team responsibility. Allocation of personnel to teams had to be made by mid-management. Authority for team leaders to assign officers to dress in plain clothes for surveillance or investigative work was withdrawn in the name of uniform dress standards. Management also adopted a program of management by objectives (MBO). This effort:

... became a means through which headquarters imposed standardized demands for increasingly rigid levels of measurable activity. [Team policing] officers found their MBO plans were continually returned until they included all CPD priorities. Perhaps inadvertently, MBO helped to destroy the autonomy of team policing and to recentralize control of the police.¹⁶

Despite these difficulties, team policing was found to be more effective than traditional policing in a variety of dimensions: crime reduction, clearances, fear reduction, and citizen satisfaction. CPD was sufficiently satisfied with the results of the experiment to expand team policing departmentwide in 1975. The Police Foundation extended its evaluation to monitor the expansion. Convinced that CPD had learned to conduct team policing, management bypassed the careful planning that characterized the experimental phase—all that was necessary was to direct the other districts to operate as the experimental district had been operating.

By the end of 1975, the evaluation team concluded that while some of the form of team policing still existed, little of substance remained. The evaluators believed that the effort had suffered lack of support from both top and mid-management, the latter due in part to the fact that middle-level managers had never been fully drawn into the program, and they tended to view it as a threat to their traditional authority.

Kansas City. Chief Clarence Kelley, later to become director of the FBI, had wanted Kansas City to receive one of the Police Foundation's Major City grants. Somewhat jaded by the Dallas experience, the foundation's board of directors was backing away from the Major City concept. Kansas City was turned down as a Major City, but the Foundation offered assistance in the development of specific projects.

The hub of Kansas City's approach to projects was the 300 new officers that had been authorized and funded by government. Kelley wanted to allocate them in ways that maximized their impact on crime. The top command staff was convened with several consultants invited by both the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) and the foundation to determine how to use the personnel. Two ideas surfaced: use the new officers as backup in the current allocation scheme to achieve shorter response times and add the new officer group to the total officer pool and reduce beat size.

Kelley was dissatisfied with these ideas. With advice from the lead consultant, Robert Wasserman, he decided to create task forces in each of the three districts and the special operations unit. These task forces, made up of all ranks in the units, were to determine what special problems existed in their domain and devise tactics to deal with those problems. The Police Foundation would fund the evaluations. The special operations unit, for example, decided it wanted to experiment with forms of interception patrol: location-oriented patrol (LOP) and perpetrator-oriented patrol (POP). The unit devised its plans, received approval for operations from the KCPD command staff and for evaluation funds from the Police Foundation, implemented its efforts in a quasi-experimental design, maintained the project for the required time, terminated the project, and then returned to business as usual. The Central and Northeast Districts went through similar processes.

The South Patrol District responded to the chief's mandate somewhat more literally than the other districts. Carefully analyzing its own problems, it determined that the most serious problem in the district was juvenile behavior around the schools. Two points of view developed. The first was that preventive patrol and rapid response to calls for service were so important that the new officers had to be used to patrol and respond to calls, regardless of the seriousness of the juvenile problem. The other was that officers should be sequestered to deal specifically with the identified problem.

A debate emerged about the value of preventive patrol. Influenced by Wasserman, and later by one of the authors of this paper (Kelling), the South Patrol Task Force decided to address the issue of the value of preventive patrol by conducting an experiment in preventive patrol before moving on to the problem of juveniles around the schools. Like the other KCPD units, the South Patrol District devised its plans, received approval for operations from the KCPD command staff and for evaluation

funds from the Police Foundation, implemented its efforts in an experimental design, maintained the project for the required time, terminated the project, and then returned to business as usual.

What do we learn from these three cases? In Dallas, Frank Dyson had a vision of a new police strategy. Mid-management was perceived as the enemy in repositioning the department. While this need not have been a self-fulfilling prophecy, no credible internal champions developed inside the department to defend the efforts or to provide alternate interpretations of the motives or goals of the innovators. The effort was dead before it got started.

In Cincinnati, team policing was misinterpreted as a tactical innovation rather than as a strategic repositioning. Some middle-management resistance was noted during the maintenance phase of the experiment; it was not sufficient, however, to derail the effort. Despite these early warnings, no special efforts were made to capture, orient, or train mid-management before departmentwide implementation of team policing. Team policing waned and died.

In Kansas City, a series of projects was planned and implemented to improve the functioning of the department. Middle managers were involved in planning all of the experiments and, with some problems, successfully implemented, maintained, and terminated the projects. Lest the achievements seem modest, it should be recalled that the projects were hardly simple or easy to administer. The patrol experiment, the first successful experiment conducted in policing, was extremely complicated, and was held in place for a full year.

Simultaneously, the department fielded a quasi-experiment in special operations, a peer review project to control use of force, and several other projects. These projects were developed and maintained through working collaborations between mid-managers (most often district commanders), their key aides, working task forces, outside consultants, and representatives of the KCPD planning unit. Moreover, although it did hire some Police Foundation consulting and evaluation staff, the department went on, independent of the foundation, to conduct with funds from the National Institute of Justice the first major research into rapid response to calls for service.

Stepping back somewhat, this capacity for project implementation in Kansas City ought not to have been surprising. Police departments have extensive experience managing projects. The President of the United States comes to town? The police department sets in motion a massive project to insure his protection, reroute traffic, and manage large masses of citizens, some of whom may be demonstrating, while simultaneously maintaining business as usual. Business robberies increase before Christmas? The police department sets in place a special holiday antirobbery effort. Drug dealing becomes an aggravated problem in a neighborhood? A drug unit conducts a targeted effort.

In other words, managing special projects is a core competency of the current police strategy. And whether the competency is at the service of traditional police issues, such as controlling drug

dealing in a neighborhood, or at the service of creative experimentation, mid-management has shown remarkable ability to implement and manage projects.

These experiences suggest that attempts to strategically reposition an organization without bringing mid-management along, in fact defining mid-management as the enemy as was done in Dallas, is done at great risk. No champions develop. It follows that CEO's alone do not reposition an organization. Even when involved, mid-management has the potential to mildly subvert a project, as occurred in Cincinnati.

This does not mean, however, that mid-management is inherently anti-innovation. As the experience in Kansas City suggests, when innovative projects are conducted that are congruent with the then-current strategy of the organization, and when mid-managers are brought into the planning and implementation efforts, they can perform successfully, if motivated to do so. Indeed, mid-managers demonstrate considerable creativity and resourcefulness in *project* or *tactical* innovations. The critical issue is whether mid-management can play an equally positive role in *strategic* innovation.

Community policing, mid-management, and the administrative problem

Repositioning through problem solving: Baltimore County. Captain Fred Kestler was responsible for taking the Baltimore County Police Department's successful experimentation with problem solving and implementing it departmentwide. BCPD's successful experimentation is detailed elsewhere,¹⁷ but under the leadership of Chief Neil Behan, the county police pioneered in problem-solving methodology.

Chief Behan has summarized his management philosophy: "My management style is to direct people toward an idea and let them develop the how-to. One, they can do it better than I can do it, and two, then they have ownership. The ownership's got to happen, and if they're just following orders it's not going to happen, or only with great difficulty."¹⁸

Under this philosophy, Chief Behan used the resources created by 45 new positions to create three special 15-person COPE units (Citizen-Oriented Police Enforcement), one for each of the department's three districts. Headed by lieutenants and freed from many administrative and operational restrictions—they could establish their own schedules and did not have to respond to calls for service—their task was to fight fear. The units' early results were mixed: a few success stories, a lot of time spent surveying, and a nettlesome tendency to return to traditional tactics.

With encouragement from Gary Hayes, then director of the Police Executive Research Forum, and Herman Goldstein, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School, COPE adopted, with Chief Behan's blessing, a problem-solving methodology. The units produced a respectable number of successful interventions to reduce fear and crime in neighborhoods, although with some unsuccessful experiences. Generally, however, the efforts were well thought of in both the department and the community.

One of the major problems was the deteriorating relationship with regular patrol units. From the patrol units' point of view, the COPE units had all the "perks" without being responsible for the press of constant calls for service. For Chief Behan, already nervous about the idea of special units, the answer was to adopt the COPE methodology departmentwide. Captain Fred Kestler, formerly one of the lieutenants in charge of a COPE unit, was given the responsibility of implementing "precinct problem solving" throughout patrol in one of Baltimore County's three districts. The experiences there would frame the implementation of the COPE methodology throughout the county. These efforts are now underway.

Repositioning through experimental decentralization: Madison and Houston. W. Edward Deming's approach to attaining quality in the production of goods and services is central to Chief David Couper's approach to repositioning the strategy of the Madison Police Department.¹⁹ Chief Couper depends on quality leadership, organizational decentralization, creation of a work environment that encourages creativity and that ensures high levels of job satisfaction, a "customer" orientation, developing close linkages to neighborhoods and communities, and use of problem solving as defined by Herman Goldstein.²⁰

After a multirank task force planned details of quality policing, the Experimental Police District (EPD) was created under command of Captain Ted Balistrieri and Lieutenant Mike Masterson. Each allowed himself to be nominated for his position and was then selected by the officers who volunteered to work in EPD.

The chief provided the guiding vision of EPD. The planning task force initially shaped the policies and practices of EPD; however, within those loose guidelines, EPD was free to innovate. The innovations were wide-ranging and included the extensive use of problem solving; encouragement of more collegial relations between officers and ranks; modified rollcalls (rollcalls became district conferences about problems and tactics); and modified reporting procedures (while the rest of the department retained the former procedures).

While EPD experimented with quality policing, the rest of the organization performed, for the most part, as usual. At times, business as usual conflicted with quality policing. Non-EPD police saw EPD as draining resources away from the total organization and providing special privileges to organizational favorites. Some non-EPD lieutenants were bothered by what they perceived as inconsistency in handling calls for service, complaints, disciplinary procedures, and other procedural matters. Opponents of decentralization, especially lieutenants, rallied around these complaints. The strongest opposition to the EPD came from detectives, who claimed that investigations done by decentralized investigators were simply not up to the caliber of those conducted by centralized detectives.

Nonetheless, EPD is now institutionalized. Although plans for additional police stations have been curbed because of Madison's financial circumstances, plans for administrative and operational decentralization of the rest of the department are now proceeding.

In Houston, former Chief Lee Brown had been a strong advocate of what he termed the "philosophy" of community polic-

ing. Building on formal experiments in fear reduction and the planning activities of multirank “executive sessions” (meetings oriented around substantive and administrative issues associated with community policing), Houston’s approach was similar to Madison’s: innovate in one district, learn from successes and failures, and then go citywide. Operationalization of community policing in Houston’s target area, Westside, was left to mid-managers.

Then-Deputy Chief Elizabeth Watson and Captain William Young were the second management team to head Westside. The first team either could not or would not move the district in the directions Chief Brown wanted. Watson and Young inherited what they believed to be a highly resistant group of sergeants and lieutenants who would not come on board with the plans—the major obstacle to innovation.

Closer analysis by Watson and Young revealed that most sergeants and lieutenants simply did not know what was expected of them. They knew what had been expected in their old roles, but had little idea of their new roles and responsibilities. The

“Houston’s approach was similar to Madison’s: innovate in one district, learn from successes and failures, and then go citywide.”

field operations commander, Tom Koby (now chief in Boulder, Colorado), designed a cascading training program. Each rank would be charged with defining the responsibilities of, and a training program for, the rank immediately below its own. Captains would define the role of lieutenants and prepare training for them; in turn, lieutenants would do the same for sergeants. Note that defining the problem and devising solutions were not pushed up to higher level command or aside to staff units, but rather were pushed *down* to the ranks involved for identification and solution.

The Westside district continued to implement the community policing philosophy. Elizabeth Watson was promoted to Houston’s chief of police when Lee Brown became commissioner of the New York City Police Department. Captain Young was reassigned to the second district to be decentralized under the long-range plan. Political and financial uncertainties threatened the move to community policing in Houston, however. When a new mayor was elected in 1992, Chief Watson was replaced by Sam Nuchia. Watson then became chief of police in Austin, Texas.

Repositioning in response to crisis: Reno, Nevada, and the New York City Transit Police Department. Frustrated with the performance of the Reno Police Department (RPD), citizens of the Nevada city twice rejected attempts to override a state-wide tax cap. From the point of view of the RPD, the situation was acute: by 1987, the police department had shrunk from 305 to 225 officers, while the city’s population had increased from 103,000 to 123,000. Calls were up substantially. Surveys indi-

cated that citizens believed the police were efficient, nonetheless held them in relatively low esteem.

Believing that repositioning the department to community policing was essential if RPD was to thrive, Chief Robert Bradshaw planned and implemented citywide Community-Oriented Policing Plus (COP+), a community/problem-oriented approach to policing. While involving many levels of personnel in planning for the effort and providing extensive training, the most dramatic change was organizational. From its previous functional organization, Chief Bradshaw reorganized the department geographically, dividing the city into three areas, each with three subdivisions. After a week’s retreat, during which broad discussions were held about the nature of community policing and the plans for organizational change, these captains were given complete responsibility for their areas, including the option of calling in a tactical unit if required, and reported directly to Chief Bradshaw rather than through a chain of command.

To ensure that activities were coordinated among the three areas and that RPD did not Balkanize into three departments, the chief, the three area captains, and the remaining command staff had daily meetings. Each captain would present major problems in his or her area to the group, and the group would consult about possible solutions in light of the department’s new strategy.

The three area captains, although they worked much harder than they had previously, became champions of the changes. Not only did surveys indicate that Reno’s citizens noted positive changes in RPD, the voters also overrode the State’s tax restraints to increase their financial support of RPD. Although Chief Bradshaw resigned in 1991, the department continues to operate out of this new strategy and structure.

In New York, the Transit Police Department (TPD) polices the city’s subway system. When TPD required a new chief in April of 1990, the department was moribund. The reasons for this are complicated. Primarily, however, the condition sprang from political indecision about whether TPD should be merged with the New York City Police Department (NYPD). This debate had gone on for years without resolution.

The consequence of the indecision was a department in limbo, without champions. Radios were inadequate. Officers in the subways, even when patrolling alone, were regularly out of radio contact. Vehicles were decrepit and available in insufficient numbers to respond to emergencies or to back up officers who worked alone. The physical facilities, district stations, were woefully inadequate—an insult to officers. Morale was low. The department had lost its pride, lack of which showed in the demeanor and dress of officers. Sector team policing, a major attempt to decentralize authority that was modeled on team policing, lagged and, with a few exceptions, existed in name only.

These were the chronic problems of TPD. In 1989, however, the department had entered a crisis. Surveys of citizens and subway users pointed to an acute problem for citizens and subway users: ridership was dropping as a consequence of passenger fear of disorderly behavior associated with both farebeating and use by the homeless of the subway stations as surrogate shelters. Estimates of revenues lost from farebeating ranged from \$60 million to \$120 million a year.

Despite these problems, police remained fixed on robbery as their priority: officers preferred it, the union insisted on it, and management oriented its tactics around it. To be sure, special units were assigned to deal with the disorder created by the homeless and farebeating, and at times these special units were quite large. Nonetheless, the basic strategy of TPD remained oriented around robbery.

In some respects, this was not hard to understand: leaders and staff of TPD longed to be “crime fighters” like their above-ground colleagues (or at least to the extent they believed their NYPD colleagues were). For transit police, concentrating on farebeating and disorderly behavior was demeaning. Nonetheless, the leadership of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and the New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA) persisted. When TPD’s chief retired, they sought a chief who would refocus TPD strategy.

After his appointment in April 1990, William Bratton (coauthor of this paper) initiated a series of changes. Cognizant of the need to refocus the department, his first concern nevertheless was to redress the consequences of years of neglect. The fleet of cars was replaced and additional cars added. New personal radios were purchased as a “quick fix” to the communications problem, and financial support was sought, with the full support of MTA and NYCTA, to install a state-of-the-art radio communications capacity. Uniforms were redesigned with the special needs of transit police in mind, and the changeover was initiated. A long-range plan was developed to revamp or reconstruct district stations. Departmental values were reviewed and revised with input from all levels of the department. Use-of-force policies were reviewed and strengthened. Certification was accomplished in 1991.

As part of this process, the department set out a plan of action to establish long-range goals. The main goal was to “take back the subway” for passengers by reducing disorder, farebeating, and robbery. Strengthened district command was supported by problem-solving teams composed of personnel from all levels. District captains were charged with identifying the most critical problems in their districts and adopting tactics that both targeted those problems and enriched the work of line patrol officers.

Within this general definition of the business of TPD, and within its values, district commanders were free to innovate. In District 4, Captain Francis M. O’Hare instituted 4-ACES (the Anti-Crime Enforcement Squad). With officers rotating through this district unit, 4-ACES concentrates on apprehending serious offenders by enforcing laws against farebeaters.²¹ Captain Mike Ansbro, in District 30, developed “Operation Glazier” to fix “broken windows.” As one method of increasing the sense of police presence in the subway in this district, trains stop briefly in stations, the sound system announces that officers are checking the trains, and they do. In District 34, Captain Gerald Donovan introduced the TCOP (Transit Community-Oriented Policing) program (a takeoff on the NYPD’s CPOP—Community Patrol Officer Program), which encourages officers to familiarize themselves with the employees, passengers, and ordinary problems found within the officers’ “own” areas. Officers are expected to identify problems and propose solutions.

Direct communication channels between district captains and the chief help ensure that departmental priorities are maintained

in each district. Promotions above the rank of captain are now linked to performance as a district commander rather than to a staff assignment. All indicators of police activity, save one—felony arrests—are up by substantial amounts. Robberies have declined every month since the new strategy began.

Not only can mid-managers (as earlier shown) demonstrate considerable creativity and resourcefulness in *project* or *tactical* innovations, these experiences in Madison, Houston, Baltimore County, Reno, and the New York City Transit Police Department suggest that mid-managers also are at the heart of *strategic* innovations.

Conclusion: the administrative solution

This paper began by examining the role of mid-management, especially captains and lieutenants, in policing during the past 50 years. Largely that role has been to extend the reach of management into the day-to-day operations of police departments by standardizing and controlling both organizational procedures and officer performance. As such, captains and lieutenants have been the leading edge of the control functions of police departments. They, especially lieutenants, are the guarantors of quality—the buck stops with them. They sign off on shift reports.

Discussion of the role of middle management in strategic innovation of police departments, at least at a casual level, has tended to focus on its resistance to change. We have seen, however, that whether one considers project or strategic innovation, abundant examples of mid-management creativity exist. Abundant examples of mid-management resistance to change exist as well, whether one thinks of the Police Foundation efforts of the 1970’s or of current examples.

Perhaps such resistance to change should not be surprising if we recall that in the past, one of the basic functions of captains and lieutenants—their *raison d’être*—has been to forestall creativity and innovation.

Consider the situation of lieutenants. They are responsible for the activities of patrol officers during a shift. Departmental procedures are in place for responding to calls for service, filing forms, receiving complaints. In the name of new models of policing (formerly called team policing, now called community or problem-oriented policing), officers respond differently to calls, modify reporting procedures, alter practices, and establish new priorities. Officers are encouraged to innovate, to be risk-takers, to be creative.

Yet, lieutenants still perceive themselves as accountable to captains for the maintenance of patrol priorities; to detectives and ultimately to the prosecuting attorney for offense reports; and to communications for the proper response of officers to calls for service. Lieutenants, in the past, were on the leading edge of a prime mid-management responsibility: maintaining control and ensuring that operations functioned according to the book. Now lieutenants, attempting to maintain the standards that have been their reason for being, find themselves cast as the *lagging edge*: a major source of resistance to innovation. Such a characterization of mid-managers in policing is not surprising, given their basic function.

This conflict is not of their own making; mid-managers are victims more than culprits in a process that catches them between conflicting role demands (control your officers so that all former expectations can be met *versus* encourage your officers to be creative and self-initiating). Focusing on mid-managers as a source of resistance may be exactly the wrong approach.

As Drucker points out:

[T]o focus on resistance to change is to misdefine the problem in a way that makes it less, rather than more, tractable. The right way to define the problem so as to make it capable of resolution is as a challenge to create, build, and maintain the innovative organization, the organization for which change is norm rather than exception, and opportunity rather than threat.²²

This conceptualization appropriately shifts the focus from the resistance of mid-managers to the responsibilities of top management—CEO's, chiefs. The question becomes: how should top management behave to ensure that those in the organization who have been the organization's champions for standardization and control—captains and lieutenants—become its leading edge for creativity and innovation? We believe some principles emerge from police experience in innovation to date.

First, the experiences in Kansas City, Cincinnati, Madison, Reno, and Houston suggest that when mid-managers are involved in the process of planning innovations, they are capable of providing instrumental leadership regardless of whether the innovations are programmatic or strategic. Alternatively, whenever mid-managers are kept out of planning or perceived as a source of resistance, they *are* a potentially strong source of resistance. Mid-managers must be included in the planning process.

Second, chiefs have to acknowledge that mid-managers have legitimate vested self-interests that must be served if commitment to change is to be secured. Middle managers have legitimate professional goals. When innovations threaten mid-managers' achievement records and performance indicators, it should be expected that they will be less than enthusiastic about

change. If goals have been predicated on successful control, they must be replaced with goals predicated on creativity. Experiences in all the examples noted above make this abundantly clear. It is the function of the CEO to shape the new goals and to tie professional rewards to them.

Third, when CEO's (chiefs) create a strong vision of the business of the organization, mid-managers (captains and lieutenants) are prepared to pick up the mantle and provide leadership in innovation. The experiences in Madison, Baltimore County, Houston, Reno, and the Transit Police attest to mid-management leadership when a relatively clear mandate is given by the chief, preparatory experiments or efforts are conducted, clear authority to implement is granted, and rewards are linked to performance. All the cases above provide examples of the innovativeness of mid-managers when values and strategy are articulated clearly and when mid-managers are given the space and freedom to innovate within their context. Rosabeth Moss Kanter's work gives similar examples from the private sector.²³

Fourth, mid-managers must believe that they can succeed.²⁴ The vision or new direction of the CEO must be clearly articulated, bolstered unwaveringly, tied to organizational "winners," and supported through resource allocation, administrative action, and emergent policies and procedures. Early milestones of success must be clearly identified, and management must provide feedback about successes and failures.

Fifth, organizations must develop tolerance for failure. This is difficult in the public sector, in which rewards for success are rare but penalties for failure are potentially severe.²⁵ Nevertheless, if managers are to be risk-takers, they must be buoyed by their sense of mission and their commitment to improve service. Respect and rewards should be given for acknowledging failure and backtracking; covering up or perpetuating failures must be perceived as a serious breach of responsibility. Finishes, whether efforts are successful or not, must be as valued as starts.

Finally, given the importance of attempting to develop a system in which innovation and renewal are to be valued, mid-managers will need to add skills not necessarily in their current repertoire, dominated as police organizations have been by the need to control. We will mention just two here.

First, managers must develop team-building skills. Building coalitions, managing task forces, establishing linkages between departments and other units of the organization, and building relationships with consumers of police services will require extraordinary team-building skills. Such skills must be basic in mid-managers.

Second, mid-managers must be real managers, not overseers. The focus of overseers is control. Overseers know best and their purpose is to ensure that their instructions are followed. Managers view their responsibilities differently. Their task is, or ought to be, to develop personnel who will be free to innovate and adapt—break the rules if necessary on behalf of the values of the organization. Thus, the core competency of managers is to make long-term investments in people, their staff. They teach and create an organizational climate in which persons can experiment; but primarily they present themselves as models for persons in their charge. That is, they coach, lead, protect, inspire, understand mistakes, and tolerate failure.

George L. Kelling is a Professor in the College of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University and a Research Fellow in the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. William J. Bratton is Superintendent-in-Chief of the Boston Police Department and former Chief of the New York City Transit Police Department.

Editor of this series is Susan Michaelson, Assistant Director, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

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The idea that mid-managers are spoilers, that they thwart project or strategic innovation, has some basis in fact. Mid-managers improperly directed can significantly impede innovation. Yet, ample evidence exists that when a clear vision of the business of the organization—its purpose or objective—is put forward, when mid-managers are included in planning, when their legitimate self-interests are acknowledged, and when they are properly trained, mid-managers can be the leading edge of innovation and creativity.

Notes

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3. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "The middle manager as innovator," *Harvard Business Review*, July–August 1982: 95–105.
4. For a detailed discussion of these issues, see George L. Kelling and Mark H. Moore, "The evolving strategy of policing," *Perspectives on Policing* 4, Washington, D.C., National Institute of Justice and Harvard University, November 1988.
5. See, for example, George L. Kelling and James K. Stewart, "The evolution of contemporary policing," in *Local Government Police Management*, ed. William A. Geller, Washington, D.C., International City Management Association, 1991: 5–6.
6. Herman Goldstein. "Toward community-oriented policing: Potential, basic requirements, and threshold questions," *Crime & Delinquency* 33, 1 (January 1987): 21.
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8. The National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, established by President Hoover in 1929, was usually called "the Wickersham Commission" after its chairman, former Attorney General George W. Wickersham.
9. See Kelling and Stewart, note 5 above, at p. 8 for a discussion of reformers' use of these techniques.
10. Robert M. Fogelson, *Big-City Police*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1977.
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18. "Fighting fear . . .," n. 17, p. 3.
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20. David C. Couper and Sabine H. Lobitz, *Quality Policing: The Madison Experience*, Washington, D.C., Police Executive Research Forum, 1991.
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23. Kanter, "Middle manager . . .," n. 3 above.
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