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## Increasing Police Utility through Organizational Design

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### ***Summary***

Research by social scientists over the past decade provides strong evidence that American policies concerning police organizational designs have served in many instances to restrict the social usefulness, or utility, of local police operations. Substantial changes in police organizational designs are unlikely to occur unless policymakers have relatively comprehensive and complete models. To satisfy policy officials, a model must be (1) easily understood by laypersons, (2) logically related to definitions of problems acceptable to policymakers, (3) sufficiently defined to provide guidelines for systemic, incremental changes, and (4) adequate to facilitate simple, but accurate, assessment of the impact of changes consistent with the model. This paper is in pursuit of such an alternative model for improving police utility.

INCREASING POLICE UTILITY THROUGH  
ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

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## INTRODUCTION

During the last decade the application of social science research methods and logic, primarily on the part of the American academic community, in assessing the justice area have produced a remarkable amount of data<sup>1</sup>. This data has been, or can be interpreted as having significant implications for changes in justice related public policies. Although no reputable scholar would be so risqué, possibly irresponsible, as to assume information of sufficient completeness for definitive conclusions about any area of social science, the data accumulated to date provides strong evidence that American policies concerning police organizational designs have served in many instances to restrict the social usefulness, or utility, of local police operations.

My experience in the police field leads me to conclude policy making officials will not be inclined to initiate substantial changes in present policies concerning police organizational designs unless they have relatively comprehensive and complete models. To satisfy policy officials a model must be (1) easily understood by laypersons, (2) logically related to definitions of problems acceptable to policy makers, (3) sufficiently defined to provide guidelines for systemic, incremental changes,<sup>2</sup> and (4) adequate to facilitate simple, albeit accurate, assessment of the impact of changes consistent with the model. Un-

fortunately, it seems to me, there has not been enough effort to developing and disseminating such models. This paper is in pursuit of an alternative model for improving police utility.

#### PROBLEMS: POLICING MYOPIA

Resolution of the issue of actual police effectiveness or ineffectiveness is not critical to the development of models to increase the social utility of the police. What is critical is a recognition of currently existing conditions that hamper the maximization police potential. The existence of three conditions--clearly, if not completely, identified in the literature related to police organizations--restrict the social utility of police.

First, in spite of evidence to the contrary (Whitehouse, 1973; Yaden and Associates, 1974; Misner and Hoffman, 1967; Webster, 1973; Roberg, 1976; Berca, 1970) police are widely viewed--at least for purposes of organization--as being primarily in the "criminal apprehension" business. This perspective of the police role eliminates many of the organizational options available to the police for responding to client needs and contributing to the welfare of society.

Second, despite inadequacies in Bureaucratic (Merton, et al, 1967; Argyris, 1957; Ansell, 1971; Ostrom, et al, 1973; Tullock, 1965; Bordus and Reiss, 1966) theory, it is still the rigidly applied model for arranging and managing police organizations (Wilson and McLaren, 1975; Eastman

and Eastman, 1969). Such inflexible reliance on Classical Organizational Theory is felt by many to contribute to problems in (1) police and community relations, (2) police employee job satisfaction, and (3) police effectiveness and efficiency (Angell, 1971).

Third, even though the literature is replete with information concerning the inability of police by themselves to have a truly significant impact on delinquency and crime (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967; Wilson, 1974), police officials and agencies neglect association with other units and individuals outside the police fraternity. Such an independent attitude results in the local police being, in many instances, a highly autonomous arm of government.

Although these conditions have been previously reported by several authors, their relationships to the utility of police as a social instrument has not received adequate attention. Hence, it may be useful to summarize briefly the aspects of these conditions which are understood, but overlooked by policy officials involved in developing organizational designs that will increase the social utility of police.

### Police Role

Organizational arrangements for the police should be based on a clear, rational definition of the police role. Unfortunately the literature concerning the police role in

American society can be more appropriately classified as colorful journalism than meaningful definition. A role definition of utilitarian rather than ornamental value must be based on rational consideration of precedence, public expectations, and significant elements of existing social structures.

The dictionary definition of "police" as an organization indicates "...the department of government concerned primarily with maintenance of public order, safety, and health and enforcement of laws." The maintenance of public order, safety, and health can be accomplished with a variety of strategies. Traditionally, many strategies have been utilized by the police. The police have provided around-the-clock response to citizen requests for assistance in the areas of order maintenance, safety, and health, and where assistance to the public was not available from other sources, police have usually performed emergency services (Whitehouse, 1973). At one time or another in history, police officers have cleaned streets, performed fire watch services, dispensed poor relief, advised the public of the time and weather conditions, woke travelers, activated street lights, supervised probationers, and delivered all varieties of legal papers and messages (Foskick, 1920). Of course, the strategies of intelligence gathering, investigation and criminal apprehension have been used by police, but should these strategies be considered key components of the police role definition?

Apparently the public does not think so. At any rate, neither the requests for police assistance nor the amount of time police devote to various kinds of work support a conclusion that the police are expected by the public to devote the majority of their resources or efforts to criminal apprehension (Reiss, 1971; Misner and Hoffman, 1967; Webster, 1973; Yaden and Associates, 1974). Over one-half of the requests for assistance and police dispatches are for service rather than apprehension-oriented actions. Consistently, over one-half of the police work time is invested in activities that are not directly related to criminal identification or apprehension. As Clark and Sykes (1974: 462) indicate, the vast majority of what police personnel do must be categorized as omnibus service.

Americans assume a right to request services from the police, and they expect responsiveness to their needs and desires. People with problems seem to turn to the police when they do not know of anyone else who will help them (Galvin, Angell, and O'Neill, 1969). Citizens understand police have the responsibility and sufficient authority to help people who are in trouble or who have problems, hence they call police. When police fail to respond, the callers tend to conclude the police are not adequately performing their duties.

The fact that public service strategies may, in many instances, be more effective than intelligence gathering

gathering and apprehensions in reducing delinquency and is almost universally overlooked in the literature and by policy officials in decisions about police organizational design. Many scholars have concluded that certain types of crime result largely from mental stress, attitudes toward social and economic inequalities, interpersonal conflicts, and perceptions of unfair treatment and discrimination (Merton, 1938; Gibbons, 1968; Bloch and Geis, 1970; Sutherland and Cressey, 1970; Traub and Little, 1975; Clark, 1970; Quinney, 1975). If these conclusions are accurate and many crimes are committed because people perceive deviant behavior as their only rational option, or because their personal feeling of abuse and hopelessness have become so intense that immediate action, legal or not, to alleviate the situation is a more compelling stimulus for behavior than the threat of arrest or criminal justice agency retaliations, a role definition that confines the police, psychologically or otherwise, to apprehension-oriented strategies is surely dysfunctional. If the primary responsibility of the police is to prevent crime (Wilson and McLaron, 1974), should not the role definition of police be adequate to facilitate truly preventive police strategies?

Perhaps a role definition which prioritizes criminal apprehension can be justified because it affords society protection and an opportunity for rehabilitation of delinquents and criminals. The data concerning incarcerated does not support such a conclusion. ~~Usually~~ <sup>Frequently</sup> only the poor



and uneducated are apprehended and remain incarcerated (Wright, 1973). Fewer than three percent of those who commit criminally deviate acts are ultimately convicted of the acts they perpretrate.<sup>4</sup> Those who are processed through court and correctional agencies frequently return to society on worse financial and mental condition than before they were arrested (Glasser, 1964; Kassebaum, et al, 1971; Martenson, 1975). Dependency on criminal behavior often seēms to be the result of an arrest and conviction (President's Commission, 1967). It should be clear to any objective scholar that arrest and subsequent processing by so-called criminal "justice" agencies is frequently a socially damaging and counterproductive process which serves to perpetutate the agencies rather than improve society.

Since the preceeding information has received wide distribution, one would assume it would have impacted public policies related to the police. However, such is not the case. Most policy officials and many scholars of police organization, perhaps unknowingly at times, support policies and practices based on the notion that criminal apprehension is the guts of the police role. Such support is reflected in their concern for police officers spending too much time performing "non-police" functions. Police officials express their commitment to a crook-catching role when they wishfully long to concentrate on doing the "basic" police job. Support for apprehension-oriented policing is reflected in a police dispatch policy which prioritizes incidents defined as criminal over non-criminal situations

that are imminent threats to human life. The average police agency, where 25 to 40% of the organizational resources are devoted to specialized investigative and apprehension endeavors, is a structural result of policies based on an apprehension-orientated concept of the police role (Angell, Hagedorn and Eggers, 1975).

It seems likely the problem is not so much that police do not realize the ineffectiveness of policies based on an apprehension-oriented role, as it is that they do not see available options which they perceive as being any more effective than the methods they currently use (American Bar Association, 1972; Committee for Economic Development, 1972; Task force on Police, 1968; National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968). Further, there are neither incentives nor rewards (for using the alternatives which equal those attached to their current practices). Therefore, in spite of the value of service strategies and the availability of welfare, mental health, educational, and other human service agencies which the police could use to enhance their social utility, police will continue to rely on their time-tested practices until they perceive substantial support in the form of shifts in the attitudes of public officials toward the police role and related changes in public policy.

The shifts must accommodate policies which will be psychological and materially rewarding for police agencies and officers who experiment with the alternatives to arrest. Such policies will facilitate structural modifications in the

organization of police which might further stimulate the performance of non-arrest functions. Therefore, changes in police organizational designs to enhance the social utility of the police await acceptance of a broader, more humanistic definition of the role of the police by policy makers.

### Bureaucratic Theory

Police agencies throughout the United States have been arranged in accordance with the tenets of Classical Bureaucratic theory ((Wilson and McLaren, 1972). Policy making officials find in this theory an easy-to-memorize, normative model for police organization and management. Consistent with Bureaucratic Theory a greater<sup>5</sup> proportion of police officials rely on an authoritarian leadership style than any other style (Grant, Galvin, and Hagedorn, 1975: 354). The consequences of the such heavy reliance on Classical theory is succinctly summarized by Elinor Ostrom (1973: 31):

The empirical findings...provide evidence that simple reliance on bureaucratic structure in the management of large-scale police departments has produced pathological consequences which manifest inefficiencies, corruption, inequities, and unresponsiveness.

The reasons for such consequences have been identified by numerous authors (Argyris, 1957; Bordua and Reiss, 1967; Frederick, 1967; Gardner, 1969; Blumberg and Neiderhoffer, 1970). Recent criticisms of the rigid application of Bureaucratic theory in the police field have focused on

the negative impact of such arrangements on police responsiveness to the public and police-community relations (Angell, 1971; Ostrom, 1973). It is claimed that the Bureaucratic nature of police organizations creates pressure for and movement toward centralization of local police. Such centralization raises the level of decisions and the policy making authority (Kotler, 1969). The higher the level responsible for policy decisions in a police organization, the greater the number of citizens who precluded from influencing the establishment and nature of police operational policies. As a result policies become less relevant to the needs and values of individual neighborhoods and groups. In fact, policies which are in conflict with neglect community needs, priorities, and prevailing community values are the rule rather than the exception in some heterogeneous jurisdictions.

The tension between police and citizens may also be increased by police compliance with the principle of Bureaucracy that employees remain impersonal and detached in handling the problems of clients. Such an approach is best reflected in Jack Webb's portrayal of a Los Angeles police sergeant, Joe Friday, who constantly reminded clients, "Just the facts, ma'am!" The shortcoming of this approach for police lies in the fact that emotions, feeling, and attitudes are often as much a part of the human problems of police clients as are the "facts" concerning responsibility.

Failure to deal with the human elements surrounding a problem leaves police clientele as dissatisfied as does failure of the police to place responsibility for the clients' problem.

Adherence to Bureaucratic Theory is also charged with contributing to intra-organizational problems concerning employee relations and motivation which seem to reduce organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Angell, 1971). For example, when the organization is viewed by managers as a machine, employees are treated as replaceable cogs. A quote by Bendix (1962) indicates that even the father of Bureaucratic Theory, Max Weber, was distressed by the prospect of this aspect of Bureaucracy when he reflected:

...It is horrible to think that the world could one day be filled with nothing but these little cogs, little men clinging to little jobs and striving toward bigger ones--a state of affairs which is to be seen once more, as in Egyptian records playing an ever-increasing part in the spirit of our present administrative system, and especially of its bureaucracy, is enough to drive one to despair. It is as if in politics we were deliberately to become men who need "order" and nothing but order, who become nervous and cowardly if for one moment this order waivers, and helpless if in it. That the world should know men but these, it is in such an evolution that we are already caught up and the great question is therefore not how we can promote and hasten it, but what can we oppose to this machinery in order to keep a portion on mankind free from this parcelling out of the soul, from this supreme mastery of bureaucratic way of life.

If Weber, surrounded by an authoritarian culture, found this aspect of Bureaucratic Theory distastful, certainly present day employees who have matured in a participatory, democratic culture, have cause to find it

offensive. Increasingly, police employees rebel against being treated as interchangeable parts in a machine-like system (Bopp, 1971). Their efforts to obtain recognition of personal worth hampers the operation of police organizations.

Divisions of labor to provide a hierarchy for communications and control of police operations, and the classical perspective concerning the relative value of positions created by such divisions also exasperate employees. City managers and police executives often can no more do an effective operational police job than can operational personnel perform technical management functions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to objectively demonstrate that one category of jobs is more important to the effective operation of a police organization than another, yet the status and salary of a position in a police organization is almost always related to the location of the position on the organizational hierarchy. Managers with few exceptions receive more than operational employees. Hence, police officers are forced by their desire to share in the "better things of life" to devote as much time in seeking promotion to supervisory and managerial positions as they do to performing their job related functions.<sup>9</sup> Although the damage which this situation causes to police organizations has not been adequately assessed, one can speculate that it has been considerable.

The horizontal labor divisions of bureaucratic theory create specializations--the basis for conflicts that have

a dampening impact on efforts to maximize police productivity and utility. In spite of the fact that specialists are seldom demonstrably more productive than general-service patrol officers (Rand, 1975), they have been accorded greater esteem than patrol officers. Even though in recent years, patrol officers have become the most highly educated personnel in police agencies, frequently having more formal education than specialists, in highly bureaucratized police organizations patrol officers serve as nursemaids to the higher status investigators, traffic officers, and juvenile personnel. As with vertical divisions of labor, the total consequences of this situation has not been identified. However, among the reasonable conclusions to be drawn is patrol officers tend to shunt responsibility to specialists and initiate organizational disruptive activities to demonstrate their dissatisfaction.

In the final analysis, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a police agency is dependent to a considerable extent on the willingness of citizens and police employees to accept the legitimacy of the activities of the agency. It seems reasonable to conclude that adherence to Bureaucratic tenets results in police organizations that are unresponsive to citizen needs and priorities and in conflict with the existing social norms. This situation may cause a withdrawal of legitimacy from police by both citizens and police employees. Reductions in legitimacy create

decreases in the power of police to be useful and effective social instrumentalities. Hence policy shifts directed at facilitating the development of police structures that will be more compatible with prevailing social norms has potential for increasing the effectiveness and value of police organizations.

### Police Autonomy

For at least the last half century advocates of governmental reform have pointed to fragmentation of police agencies as a problem which reduces police efficiency and effectiveness (Fosdick, 1920; Committee for Economic Development, 1972; Wickersham Commission, 1931; Presidents' Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). As described in the previous section, recent research and observations lend support to a conclusion that consolidation of police line operations not only fails to reduce the cost of police operations, it also reduces police responsiveness to community needs and priorities (Ostrom and Parks, 1973). However, the research cannot be interpreted as supporting the total rejection of all forms of consolidation of police functions. Police independence from superordinate and complementary governmental operations creates problems best addressed by improved interfaces achievable only through merger of some functions performed by police agencies with similar or related functions of other agencies.<sup>6</sup> Additional information may clarify this conclusion.

Despite the importance of police responsive to the needs



and priorities of local communities, excessive responsiveness of police to local control hampers police service to the broader public interest<sup>7</sup>. Under the present organizational arrangements police independence from the communities they serve is equaled only by their autonomy from their superordinate and complementary units of government. Not only do they fail to reflect local priorities, they are not organized to ensure sensitivity and responsiveness to the broader policies and priorities of government. Further, they are not structured to obtain maximum support from or contribute to other governmental operations<sup>8</sup>.

More specifically, most local governments have specialized units responsible for training, planning, data processing, personnel and legal functions; however, police agencies usually maintain their own specialized units to perform these functions exclusively for the police agency. This arrangement results not only in police duplicating much of the work performed by the staff units of the superordinate government, police far too often perform in ways that conflict with the policies of the rest of government. In addition, police agencies are at times the least informed about the broad problems and priorities of local government.

Planning by local governments usually does not include consideration of the impact of the plans on the police simply because the police have their own independent planning operations. At times, police legal advisors issue opinions

to police managers and officers without considering the preferences of the local government's legal officials. Police agencies and officials frequently do not have an opportunity to provide governmental planners and policy officials with important information concerning such things as the location of street lights, building codes, street designs, and they are prevented from influencing a variety of decisions in areas with potential for preventing crime and contributing to the public welfare.

The result is a lack of broad control by the government over police, wasted resources on intra-governmental conflicts, and unnecessary expenditures because of a lack of communication and cooperation between police and other units of the same government. The ultimate effectiveness of overall government is reduced. In some instances even opportunities for efficiencies of scale in such areas as electronic communication, crime laboratories, and data processing are lost.

The adoption of public policies which would facilitate citizen influence of police field operations does not in any significant way hamper the development of policies which would facilitate the overall effectiveness of government while reducing its cost. However, the organizational arrangements necessitated by such policies must be considerably different than those currently existing in local government.

## IMPLICATIONS: POLICIES AND DESIGN MODEL

If the preceding description is a reasonable, albeit oversimplified, definition of the most significant conditions hampering maximization of police utility, substantial shifts in policies and changes in police organizational designs will be needed to facilitate the establishment of more viable police. An alternative model should contain four key components. First, a policy statement concerning the responsibilities of the police which includes a recognition of the human service orientation of the police role. Second, the present systemic classification of the police should be expanded from "criminal justice" to "human service". Third, a collegial, community-oriented organizational design which includes integrated police and other human service functions should be adopted for police line operations. Fourth, staff service units of local governments should be reorganized with responsibility for performing staff services for the police as well as the other governmental units they already serve.

### Police Role Policy

If policy makers and administrators were to establish policies which legitimize police performance of human service-type functions, it would free police from a formal role definition which restricts them, psychologically if not legally, primarily to conducting criminal investigations and initiating arrests. Such a shift is reasonable since the public expects, and the police are in a better position

than any other governmental agency to provide, a broad range of public safety and human services to the public (Bard and Berkowity, 1967; Silverman, 1970; Brostoff, 1975).

The following premises about police responsibilities were developed as part of the police-sheriff consolidation study in Multnomah County, Oregon, as parameters for the statement of a role for police operations (Angell, Hagedorn, and Eggers, 1974). The parameters are, in my estimation, appropriate for policy statements concerning the police role in other jurisdictions.

1. The maintenance of order clearly does not obligate or authorize the police to regiment society. In our society, the police are expected to protect the right of citizens to behave in individualistic, even socially deviant ways if such individualism and deviance do not injure others or deprive others of the right to just treatment.
2. Police organizations are in a unique position to support other governmental and private agencies with information about citizen problems and needs which should be addressed.
3. Police are required to enforce the criminal code, but they are not specifically directed to arrest every person who violates a law. Therefore, police officers can legitimately exercise discretion if it results in the enforcement of laws.
4. Police should strive to assist citizens in developing communities that are livable places where people do not have to be afraid of being abused, attacked, placed in jeopardy of injury, or denied fair treatment. Police methods should stress cooperation with the public based on trust rather than fear, and they must emphasize prevention rather than suppression. Police should be concerned about obtaining voluntary rather than forced compliance with the laws. The authority and effectiveness of police depend on public approval of police existence, actions, and behavior, and in general, on the police ability to secure and maintain public respect.

The establishment of policy regarding local police role within parameters such as the preceding should facilitate a prevention oriented human service philosophical perspective for local police operations. These boundaries will facilitate the expansion of the range of options for police operations thereby permitting police to assist with the provision of non-criminal services, act as spokespersons for communities or individuals needing such advocacy, 'serve as referral agents for other governmental groups, and in general maximize the socially useful functions police perform.<sup>9</sup> Such a philosophical perspective is not new to democratic countries, rather it is infrequently stated and even less frequently relied upon for direction in developing police organizational designs, priorities, and service delivery procedures.

#### Police as Human Service System Component.

Local governments provide a number of human services to assist members of the public with problems ranging from complaints against agencies of government to financial aid and mental health. If the agencies providing these services are successful, many of the problems underlying criminal behavior and delinquency could be alleviated before deviate behavior occurs. However, the strategies of human service agencies have not received adequate testing simply because there is no mechanism for getting the people with problems to the appropriate human service agency (Silverman, 1970). Since as earlier documented, police is the unit of government that contacts people with such problems most frequently, it seems reasonable that police officers should constantly be making referrals. However such is not the case.

The police see themselves as crime fighters, who handle crime by identifying criminals and making referrals to legal agencies. They view referrals to human service agencies as low status social work.<sup>10</sup> In fact, no adequate link, neither philosophical nor organizational, exists to legitimize police referrals to human service agencies in a manner such as police how refer matters to courts. Closer organizational linkages between police and human service agencies are needed to influence a shift in police thinking to a broader role perspective.

Presently the major obstacle to establishing linkages and strengthening the relationship between police and human service agencies is the traditional definition of police as the major component of the "criminal justice system" while human service agencies are classified as components of the "human service system". In spite of the utility of general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) in scientific research, the police-human service system situation illustrates a major problem with the application of systems theory. Once a system's component parts are identified and the system definition is accorded widespread acceptance, the definition itself serves as a mind shackle that hampers consideration of relationships between components of one system and components of another. In essence, the definition stifles the development of new, perhaps more meaningful, relationships between components of separate systems. In the instance at hand, one method of increasing the ultimate potential for developing the police is to modify the traditional classification of police as a component of the criminal justice system. If the police were to be viewed as the key component in the

human service system substantial new avenues for improving the utility of police operations would become apparent.<sup>11</sup>

The definition of police as a human service rather than a criminal justice agency would create pressure for changing officer attitudes and philosophy from an apprehension to a service orientation. The disposition of violators of the ~~g~~riminal code could be considered by police officers in light of the long-range social good. The definition would serve to legitimize police performance of public services, which might serve to reduce citizen frustrations and interpersonal conflicts and subsequently reduce some types of crime. Acceptance of human service responsibilities by police agencies should facilitate the development of more effective crime prevention activities by police.<sup>12</sup>

Police who come to view their primary emphasis as the provision of human services may see their involvement in domestic and other interpersonal disputes as an opportunity to prevent interpersonal deviancy such as assaults and homicides.<sup>13</sup> Economic problems and discrimination could, through the efforts of the police, receive governmental attention before these problems stimulate robberies and burglaries. People with educational or mental deficiencies could receive sympathetic police assistance and referrals to assistance before they feel it necessary to resort to criminal deviance.

A human service classification of the police would facilitate ~~the~~ establishment of police as the gate keeping component of the human service system. Currently, some authorities believe the biggest weakness of the human service system is the absence of

a comprehensive coordinating or "gatekeeping" agency which can refer citizens in need to the appropriate service agency (Silverman, 1970; Brostaff, 1975). Police are currently available to respond to citizen requests at any time; citizens are already inclined to seek emergency assistance from the police department; and police officers are already generally familiar with first aid methods for handling variety of human problems existing in their communities. Police agencies are also in a relatively unique position of not only of having access to many private service groups and officials, they are also able to communicate directly with field level personnel of governmental agencies. Therefore, police are the logical gatekeepers for the human service functions of government.<sup>14</sup>

The classification of police as human service agencies should complement, rather than detract from, their effectiveness in law enforcement. As stated in the previously suggested role parameters, while most police agencies are legally obligated to "enforce" the criminal laws, physical arrest is only one strategy for law enforcement.<sup>15</sup> Verbal warnings, direct assistance, and referrals to other social service agencies are all legitimate methods of ensuring compliance with the law. As a human service system component, the legitimacy of police using alternative enforcement actions tailored to the situation should be re-enforced. In some instances, it will still be necessary for police officers to make referrals to the criminal justice system (e.g., prosecutors, courts, and probation and parole agencies) to protect other members of society or where incarceration appears essential to rehabilitation. On the other



hand, police agencies may find it necessary to go even further than simple referrals to other human service units and provide direct services. Some departments have already accepted responsibility for the provision of social services. For example, the Police Sunshine Unit in Portland, Oregon, provides emergency, temporary relief to people in need.<sup>16</sup>

#### Human Service Police Model

Along with classification of police as a component of the human service system, the effectiveness of a police operation might be enhanced by a reorganization of police and human service agencies into decentralized, community-oriented human service police teams.<sup>17</sup> In addition to sworn police officers such teams might be organized to include nurses, nutritionists or home economists, family counselors, welfare or public assistance experts, lawyers, and other individuals specialized in counseling people on such things as veterans' assistance, welfare programs, community action programs and human rights laws.

The organization of a team to serve a specific community or neighborhood should be such as to facilitate citizen influence on the policies and operations of the team. The geographic area of a team should encompass a community area with common socio-economic characteristics. This will facilitate community consensus on priorities, policies, and procedures for team operation. The specific membership composition of each team should be determined by the characteristics, problems, and needs of the specific community served by the team. A match of team and community should enhance the team's ability to service the needs of its citizens. Team size should be within the limits

of face-to-face communications. This limitation on size will enhance the free-flow of information and facilitate operational efficiency.

Team members might be chosen to ensure people with complementary skills, appropriate for the needs and problems of the community served. Generalist-specialists team members--that is, each member should have a general background in human services but at the same time have highly developed skills in a specific discipline--should ensure the most effective team operations (Bard: 1969). Teams so organized could have a variety of experts among their members to provide consultation and functional supervision for the team. This arrangement would give each team the capability of expeditiously handling all varieties of human problems coming to its attention.

In order to prevent some of the traditional problems of decentralized police operations, teams should be required to observe ethical, legal and financial standards established for the guidance of all teams. Such standards might be developed in cooperation with the jurisdiction legislature. However, within broadly defined limits, internal team management could be the responsibility of the team members. Team objectives, priorities, and procedures should be the joint responsibility of team members and community residents to ensure that team services its community's needs. Even the specific work assignments and schedules of team members could be within the authority of the team rather than a central management responsibility.

Teams should be evaluated by the extent to which each achieves its own objectives rather than, as is the case in traditional police organizational arrangements, the extent to which police officers follow jurisdiction wide rules or standard operating procedures.<sup>18</sup>

Such a decentralized human service police team arrangement is consistent with the philosophical orientation of the previously outlined police role parameters. The model should facilitate police human service personnel cooperation on the problems and preferences of individual neighborhoods and people. By increasing police contact with both citizens and other human service professionals this model should shift police ideology toward crime prevention and social service areas. The decentralization of operational policy development should increase police flexibility and responsiveness to community and citizen needs and preferences.

Contrary to the arguments of some people, the most beneficial decentralization of governmental services does arise from turning control of the police and other human services over to individuals, boards, or commissions (Waskow, 1969; Freund, 1969). Such an approach to control has been notably unsuccessful in the past (Reiss, 1970). Sound decentralization seems to be connected with community participation in priority identification and service delivery procedure development within a broader system which facilitates a degree of central policy control and coordination over all decentralized teams which will ensure a reasonably consistent quality of team efforts throughout an

entire jurisdiction. Such centralized arrangement for coordination serves to check abuses such as discrimination by police in one community against outsiders and to prevent dysfunctional, fragmented, disjointed approaches that are common under some other decentralized organizational arrangements.

### Staff Service Organization<sup>19</sup>

The problems of inadequate interface of police operations with the other parts of government can be addressed by a reorganization of police staff services. Police staff functions fall into two categories--"administrative staff activities" and "support staff activities." Administrative staff activities are those which directly involve policy development and implementation such as planning, training, personnel, internal affairs, inspections, financial administration, public information and legal services. Support staff activities are mechanistically performed functions such as communication, record keeping, data processing, criminalistics, evidence and property control, detention, identification and photography. facility and equipment maintenance, and property acquisition which support line operations. In contrast to the decentralized organization of team operations both categories of police staff services be centralized. However, the specific level of centralization, a factor critical to maximizing the effectiveness of the operations, should not be the same for both administrative and support staff functions.

Since administrative activities involve broad, but local, policy matters, these activities should be integrated with the

administrative units of the local government immediately superordinate to the police (e.g., police planning should be integrated with city planning, police training should be a part of a city inspectional unit, etc.)<sup>20</sup>

Such an arrangement will serve to reduce unnecessary duplications, hence the cost of local government. It should increase channels of communication between the police and their superordinate government, thereby improving the exchange of information and the effectiveness of overall government. The impact of planned police activities on other units of government and vice versa can be more adequately assessed. Crime prevention and other governmental responsibilities can be approached from a more comprehensive perspective. Decisions about street lighting, road design and building codes can be sounder as a result of police participation in the planning processes. Effective coordination and support of both decentralized human service police teams and the broader government should be possible under this organizational arrangement.

Support staff activities for the human service police teams can be standardized and efficiently performed in a routinized fashion. Since these functions require extensive capital investment, "economies of scale" can be realized by consolidation of the functions to serve a maximum number of agencies consistent with the limits of technology and time. Using this approach, a communications center that serves several agencies should be less expensive than several independent communications centers for individual organizations. A crime laboratory

independent of any one police department and serving many justice-type agencies should be able to provide a wider range of services and perform higher quality work than several laboratories, each attached to an individual police force.

Therefore, support staff activities for the police can be organized on a county, regional or state level to serve a broad range of agencies. For example, a communications center might provide services for police and other agencies such as fire, mental health, emergency medical, animal control, and street maintenance agencies. A crime laboratory might serve police, prosecutors, courts, consumer protection agencies, and public defenders. The precise level of centralization of a support staff unit should be based on considerations of technological limitations, variations in the support staff requirements of user agencies, limitations on the ability to effectively control the operations on the ability to effectively control the operations, and time constraints on service performance.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Over the past decade considerable data, which can be interpreted as having significant implications for changes to enhance the social utility of police, has been accumulated by social scientists. However, in the absence of any alternative policy and organizational models based on the data, public policy makers have not attempted to any substantial degree to use the available information as a basis of organizational policies for increasing police utility. This paper is directed towards the

development of the characteristics of one such model.

The model would be based on a substantial redefinition of the police role by policy makers. The definition would broaden the role of police from criminal apprehension to a public service orientation. Consistent with this broader role, the systematic classification of the police as a component of the criminal justice system would be modified. Efforts would be made to establish police as a component of the human service system.

These perspectives should have a substantial impact on police attitudes about their responsibilities. They should serve to legitimize (1) police provision of a broader range of human services, (2) police performance of more effective crime prevention functions, and (3) police interface with other social service agencies. Police and other human service agencies can be legitimately organized in a complementary fashion to better address human needs which cause some types of crime.

In further expanding the capacity of police to address human needs, the police and other human service workers might be organized into community-based teams. The inclusion of other human service professionals in the same community-based team with police should facilitate more effective follow-up of police response in those situations where such follow-up by human service agents will solve problems and reduce the need for further police attention. The human service police team should result in cooperation between citizens, police officers, and social service professionals to identify and address community priorities and needs. Some of the pathological conditions of police organizations which result in ineffectiveness,

inefficiencies and corruption might be eliminated.

The merger of police administrative staff units with the superordinate government's administrative service is an effort to reduce duplication and costs and improve the coordination of decentralized human service police teams. This design should serve to keep police operations more consistent with the overall policies and procedures of local government without preventing community policy options. Changes throughout the government could be based on broader information and hence might be more rational. Since plans will be more comprehensive, the probability of their successful implementation will be increased.

Finally, support staff functions could be consolidated on a county, regional or state level. They could be established to provide services to both police and non-police agencies. Dispatching could be provided not only for the police, but also for other agencies such as fire, mental health, and even street maintenance agencies. Citizens could receive practically any type of emergency service from government simply by calling a single number. Crime laboratory services could be organized as readily available to the police, prosecutor, public defender, and similar agencies. This would facilitate increased quantity and quality of criminalistics work. Large-scale purchasing and maintenance of police equipment by a regional operation should also provide additional economies of scale. Since the support staff activities can be performed by civilians, rather than sworn police officers, the personnel cost of performing these duties can be substantially reduced.

This model contains characteristics of which only a few out of a wide range of untapped options with promise for making police



a more viable and socially useful instrument. At a period in time when policy officials and some scholars are in a reactionary mode because of the slow progress in improving police, perhaps if nothing else, this model will serve to illustrate the existence of potentially worthwhile organizational arrangements and strategies.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Although reports from several such police related projects have received wide spread dissemination in recent times (Kelling et al, 1974; Reiss, 1971; Greenwood and Petersilia, 1975; Ostrom, et al, 1973) some equally significant reports such as those of Grant, Galvin, and Hagedorn (1976) and Ostrom, Parks and Whitaker (1976) have not yet been widely distributed. Both of these latter studies provide valuable baseline data concerning police operations.
2. The notion of incrementalism in policy making has been developed by Lindblom (1968). He has observed that seldom does a public policy result in drastic changes in what currently exists; rather new policies normally result in simple, or incremental, modifications of the existing situation or practices followed by a period of settling and assessment before another policy decision causing a change is made. This process is one reason why a comprehensive model which will provide a broad framework for public policies and related administrative decisions is needed.
3. James Q. Wilson (1974: 81-82) has repainted the popular perspective among academics concerning the problem in this area. He points out that "The average citizen thinks of the police as an organization primarily concerned with preventing crime and catching criminals. ... this public conception is misleading. The majority of calls received by the police are for services that have little to do with crime..." Wilson's first statement is correct, when asked to prioritize what police should be doing the majority of citizens ranks both "prevent crime" and apprehend criminals" high with prevention of crime being preferred to apprehension of criminals. However, it seems to me, the academicians who assume that provision of emergency services are unrelated to crime prevention as does Wilson are wrong. The provision should be viewed as organizational activities performed to achieve the ultimate goal of crime prevention rather than as a major independent goal of police organizations.
4. Wallerstein and Wyle (1947) has<sup>2</sup> conducted research which supports the conclusion that nearly the entire population has committed criminal acts normally considered serious. In a sample of 1698 New York residents 91% admitted they had committed at least one of 49 offenses listed on a questionnaire. This finding is consistent with less formal polls that I have conducted in police officer training programs and college level courses over the past few years.

Obviously few citizens are ever identified and even fewer ever convicted.

5. It is widely recognized by employees in police bureaucracies that upward mobility is dependent upon the amount of time one can devote to studying for examinations. The career histories of police executives who have progressed most rapidly up the management hierarchy reflect considerable time spent in such organizational units as training and planning, where it is possible to spend considerable time preparing for promotional examinations. In some police agencies the periods before promotional examinations are marked by a slow down in police activities as police officers use on-duty time to cram for the examinations.
6. This conclusion seems to be supported by those who most seriously question the value of consolidation of police line operations (See Ostrom, Parks and Whitaker, 1974).
7. This problem is thoroughly reviewed by Albert J. Reiss, Jr. (1971: 207-212), who concludes decentralization of police operations and establishment of neighborhood control is probably not in the public interest. However, Reiss fails to consider the possibility of implementing structural arrangements to provide for checks and balances of local control.
8. An illustration of this situation can be found in an article by Fontaine Hagedorn and me (1976) argues for a restructuring of the planning, training and inspection functions of police and local governments to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness of police as an arm of local government.
9. Clark and Sykes (1974) content a shift in police functions toward such non-law-enforcement services will change the symbolism surrounding local police agencies "...a little from one of conservatism to a less status-quo orientation." They feel it might facilitate increased professionalism among police personnel. They also contend, and I agree, such shifts will not occur in the immediate future. However, I believe establishing policies to facilitate such change is an essential prerequisite to organizational design changes to increase police utility.
10. Some authors claim the current police perspective of their role is merely the reflection of the society. Arthur Niederhoffer (1969) points out, "The power structure and the ideology of the community, ...at the same time direct and set the boundaries to the sphere of police action." One has only to consider the mass media portrayal of the police role in nightly television dramas to understand

why police might perceive widespread support for their ideology. However, it seems clear to me the police perspective of their role is more the result of police leadership and peer pressure than the power structure or ideology of the community.

11. Such a conclusion is not a radical departure from the direction which human service and some police agencies have been moving for years. Jim Munro (1976) quotes from an article written a number of years ago by Pfiffner and Oslrind:

"What would happen if we were to take the functions of safety and welfare and group them much as we group the various services of the city that now come under the rubric of public works...I am suggesting...that firefighting, law enforcement, probation, parole, health, and physical health, might be organized on some departmental basis wherein individuals could move freely back and forth from one occupation to another..."

Multnomah County, Oregon (1974), has prepared a proposal for the integration of the Division of Public Safety with the Department of Human Services. Police and human service employees would be members of the same community-based teams.

12. Although crime prevention has been considered a primary police goal since the Peelian Reform in the 1920's, it was left to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration in the late 1960's to determine that techniques other than conspicuous police patrol and threats of arrest has potential for preventing crime. The National Crime Prevention Institute (NCPI) was established at the University of Louisville to expand police activities in crime prevention; however, NCPI has cautiously avoided any extensive consideration of use of behavioral sciences in developing crime prevention strategies.
13. My experience in the police field causes me to believe that police have contact with most perpetrators or victims of homicides several times before the homicide occurs. Most of these original contacts are related to some sort of interpersonal conflicts. An informal survey of homicides in Dayton, Ohio, provided evidence that over 50% of the homicide victims had been involved in previous interpersonal conflicts requiring police attention.

14. Even though this arrangement has substantial support in some quarters and in the literature concerning conflict management and crises intervention, it contains largely unrecognized problems concerning the appropriate limits for police authority in carrying out referral functions. For example, should, or can under the United States Constitution, police be empowered to require citizens to use available social services. Egon Bittner's (1967) discussion of police discretion in emergency apprehension of mentally ill persons illustrates some of the problems in this area.
15. The notion that police should use alternatives to arrest and to obtain compliance with the law was present as early as the Peelian Reform. Radelet (1973: 4-5) presents the original "principles" of British policing and discusses the police use of discretion. Also see Goldstein (1963)
16. The Portland Sunshine Unit has existed for over 40 years as a specialized branch of the Police Bureau. It is responsible for distributing food, financial support, fuel, and shelter to citizens who need emergency assistance (Angell, Hagedorn and Egger: 1974).
17. Multnomah County, Oregon, has prepared plans (Multnomah County: 1974) for such a decentralization and integration of the Sheriff's Division into the Department of Human Services. A discussion of government's movement in this direction and proposals related to it are contained in the Staff Report: Police Consolidation Project (Angell, Hagedorn and Egger: 1974). Treger, Thomson and Jaeck (1974) report on an experiment with a police social work team in DuPage County, Illinois; however, this project did not integrate social workers and police officers in a single organizational unit. Rather the police cooperated with social workers by making referrals.
18. Many of the features and their precise relationship to the problems identified are discussed in an earlier paper concerning the Democratic Police Model (Angell: 1971)
19. I am indebted to Ostrom, Parks, and Whitaker of the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University, for providing information on which this component of the Model is founded. See Ostrom, Parks and Whitaker (1976).
20. One of the few large jurisdictions to experiment with this arrangement is Seattle, Washington. A description of the organization of planning, inspections and training at the city level to facilitate the Chief Municipal executive's ability to improve police is presented in a monograph by Fontaine Hagedorn and myself (1976).

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