

Edited by  
**Jack R. Greene**



# **Managing Police Work**

## **Issues and Analysis**

Perspectives in Criminal Justice 4

MANAGING POLICE WORK

Perspectives in Criminal Justice 4

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# **Managing Police Work Issues and Analysis**

Edited by  
**Jack R. Greene**

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## INTRODUCTION

*Jack R. Greene*

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The police and police work have been subjects of academic interest and public debate for the past twenty years. As the most visible aspect of society's reaction to crime and lawlessness, American law enforcement emerged in the late 1960s as a major social and political institution shaping public expectations about crime causation and government's response. Much of policing's new-found political and social power was directly related to the urban strife of the late 1960s and the various governmental reports which examined social unrest and the police response. Social control through law enforcement, as a consequence, was thrust into public view and scrutinized more carefully by citizens and academics alike. During this same period the police occupation increased in social status, prestige, and professional standing vis-à-vis other occupations in the work force, as well as gaining improvement in the police work environment. Police administration also became a dominant issue of the period. Conceived by earlier reformers such as Vollmer, Fosdick, and Smith and practiced by reform administrators such as Parker in Los Angeles and Wilson in Chicago, the administrative era paved the way for current concerns with police productivity and efficiency.

The 1980s portend a more "conservative" era for public law enforcement. Tight social and fiscal policies have already pitted the interests of due process and justice against those of efficiency and effectiveness. As concerns for improving police productivity continue to rise in the face of diminishing public resources, the focus on law enforcement has shifted from one of understanding the substance of what the police actually do to a consideration of the management of the process. Thus, law enforcement viewed as a crime control bureaucracy has gained considerable appeal in popular ideology and in the literature on police administration.

**Editor's Note:** *I am particularly indebted to Professors John H. McNamara and Peter K. Manning for their able assistance in reviewing and commenting on various manuscripts included in this volume. Their comments, critiques, and advice are greatly appreciated.*



Despite considerable attention devoted to the police, they remain an enigma, simultaneously representing tangible and symbolic political and social expressions. Part of the puzzle in understanding the police is related to conceptualizing their role in a democratic society and how that role is to be put into practice. Whether the police role is primarily concerned with crime and its control or whether it includes other functions has been an issue in the forefront of debate. And whether the pressing issues in law enforcement are related more to administration, professionalization, work environment, or the quality of citizen-police interactions are issues yet unresolved.

The chapters in this volume reflect some of these major concerns in public law enforcement. Policing is viewed from the vantage points of role definition, internal administration, and interpersonal life from within and without the police organization. Each has implications for how the police and the public define the law enforcement role, how police agencies are managed and evaluated, and how the police interact with each other and with the citizenry. Within this broadly defined context the major issues examined in this volume include defining and measuring the police role (Chapters 1 and 2); planning for police personnel, professionalism, and the quality of police-citizen interaction (Chapters 3 through 5); and communication within the police organization (Chapters 6 and 7).

In defining and measuring the police role the first two chapters explore how the police mandate is constructed, operationalized, and assessed. Each one is critical of either current definitions of the police mandate or attempts to measure compliance with it.

Wycoff (Chapter 1), after reviewing much of the literature on police crime-effectiveness, concludes that the results of such inquiry are often inconsistent and contradictory; she attributes such findings to conceptual, methodological, and measurement problems and reviews the problems and pitfalls of crime-effectiveness research. Wycoff indicates that rarely is crime-effectiveness the object of conceptualization and research; rather, conclusions about it are often inferred from studies designed to explore other issues (for example, deterrence, police expenditures and crime rate, or program evaluations). She further suggests that much of the research on police crime-effectiveness is severely restricted to considerations of the relationships between input and output and is plagued with measurement problems.

By specifying a model for assessing police crime-effectiveness, Wycoff considers the immediate and ultimate goals of crime-related activities and

the organizational and environmental factors that affect these goals. She shifts the analytical question from whether or not the police *are* crime-effective to a more critical analysis of how effective the police *can be*. Wycoff reviews the problems inherent in cross-sectional and time-series analyses of police crime-effectiveness and in the aggregated crime data associated with many of these studies. She calls for better conceptualized study focused on a limited number of agencies as a method for improving the understanding of the police and their effect on crime.

In contrast to the crime-focused perspective discussed in Chapter 1, Vanagunas (Chapter 2) contends that too much emphasis in municipal law enforcement has been placed on the crime-related activities of the police, irrespective of whether they have been conceptualized or measured poorly. He argues that urban police agencies need to adopt a social planning perspective the components of which include (1) the abandonment of current preoccupations with proactive police planning focused on crime in favor of an approach stressing the provision of reactive police services; (2) the identification of the actual users of police services—the urban poor—as opposed to viewing police services as indivisible among the community; (3) the adoption of a human service organizational perspective in which crime prevention and reduction are viewed as by-products of police efforts to serve an identifiable clientele, rather than viewing police service as a by-product of crime-oriented efforts; and (4) the development of a model of police responsibility emphasizing individual police officer accountability rather than aggregate assessments of police agency effectiveness.

A central theme in Vanagunas's presentation is the self-defeating nature of defining police services as collective goods, indivisible among the community. He writes, "by trying to gratify the whimsical demands of the abstract public, police have a tendency to ignore the demands of the actual users of their services." By concentrating on service delivery to a visible public, he suggests that individual and organizational accountability are enhanced, that police management is facilitated, and that budgeting for police services is made more congruent with municipal needs.

Wycoff's and Vanagunas's considerations of the police role at the institutional level give way to personnel issues at the level of the organization. Cordner, Greene, and Bynum (Chapter 3) consider police agency capability in planning for and acquiring police personnel. They analyze a national sample of police agencies that report a significant amount of human resource data collection effort and numerous planning activities related to personnel acquisition and use.

Despite agency self-reports of significant data collection and planning efforts, the authors conclude that much of the information collected is internal to police operations, ignoring much of the external environment that profoundly affects personnel issues (for example, role definition, labor supply, or economic trends), and that the planning activity undertaken is similarly internally focused on matters of personnel evaluation in conjunction with current agency crises.

In their analysis, Cordner et al. examine a number of factors thought to influence police human resource planning. They find that the greater the union contract constraints, the less the data collection effort expended by police agencies, whereas improvement in economic conditions and increased competition for employees were associated with increased data collection. Similarly, the factors positively associated with human resource planning activities were recent changes in allocated positions and competition for applicants, while equal employment opportunity pressure was negatively associated with such activities. Their findings also suggest that agencies are differentially affected by these factors. State police agencies, for example, reported that human resource planning activity was unaffected by civil service control but strongly and negatively affected by union constraint; city police agencies report negligible union constraint but strong and positive civil service control; and, county-level agencies report a negative relationship between human resource planning and both union constraint and civil service control.

Finally, Cordner et al. specify a model of the factors affecting police human resource planning and data collection efforts and the effects of these activities on the agency's ability to attract and obtain desired personnel. They conclude that while much effort was reported, rarely were planning activities or data collection efforts systematically related to considerations of organizational goals or individual officer role.

Menke, White, and Carey (Chapter 4) extend our consideration of police personnel by examining police professionalism, the ideology of professionalization, and the implications of providing the police with a professional mantle. Beginning with an analysis of the rise of the professional ethic among the police, Menke et al. apply the criteria characterizing professions to law enforcement and conclude that the police fall short on most dimensions: they lack an exclusively identifiable body of knowledge for training, education, and practice; the particularistic applications of law enforcement preclude the realization of social values embodied in policing; the police cannot legitimately possess the autonomy attributed to profes-

sions due to "public trust" distinctions; operational discretion is deviant and oriented toward the protection of self-interest; the police subculture acts not as a professional community but rather as a foil against organizational and public control; police motivation and commitment are individualistic and antithetical to professional service ideals; and bureaucratic rather than collegial interests guide police behavior.

Determining that the police meet few of the criteria of professional standing, Menke et al. consider the implications of the police embracing an ideology of professionalism. They argue that the continuing police claim to the status of a profession has altered the debate over crime and the legitimate governmental response from one that emphasizes crime as a sociopolitical problem and protects citizen freedom from government's intervention to one that emphasizes the technical-bureaucratic aspects of crime control. If the police are granted the professional mantle, these authors argue that social and political processes are further mystified and that the cloak of professional secrecy, if legitimated for the police, would further reduce civic responsibility for, and control of, the police.

Public accountability has been a major issue in police claims to professional status. Revelations of police misconduct have been widespread in recent times, leading to federal and state investigations of major big-city police departments, scandals involving corruption and abuse of police power, and attempts to exercise greater civic oversight of police conduct. In pursuing the professionalism issue from the perspective of citizen complaints against the police, Decker and Wagner (Chapter 5) examine the variable race in "Metro City" and its association with the types of allegations made against the police, how those complaints are resolved, and whether the complainant was arrested or injured prior to filing the complaint. Exploring the discrimination hypothesis, Decker and Wagner consider whether racial differences in evaluations of police conduct are related to differences in experiences with the police and whether minorities are disproportionately affected by police practices.

Analyzing 583 closed cases of complaints against the police for 1971 and 1973 in a metropolitan city, these authors find that the majority of complaints were filed by blacks; complaints against white officers were the most likely kind, slightly exceeding their representation in the police department studied; and, blacks were more likely to file complaints against white officers than were whites against black officers. Interestingly, Decker and Wagner find no differences in the kind of complaint (physical

or verbal abuse) between racial groups, refuting the contention that blacks are more likely to be victims of racial slurs. This study also finds no differences based on race in how citizen complaints were resolved. This was largely explained by the fact that relatively few of the complaints against the police were sustained, regardless of race.

Injuries sustained by the complainant were not found to differ proportionately by race; yet 61 percent of all complainants and 71 percent of black complainants were injured in the incident prior to the complaint. Black complainants were arrested more often in the incident preceding the complaint than were their white counterparts. The authors consider these findings in relation to their potential effect on the black community's attitudes toward the police. Decker and Wagner conclude that there is, indeed, empirical evidence supporting the idea that low rates of complaints being sustained against the police and high arrests and injuries for black complainants negatively influence black attitudes and assessments. They also suggest that the analysis of "Metro City" citizen complaints supports the idea that minorities are negatively affected by police practices.

The last two chapters in this volume focus, albeit in differing ways, on interpersonal communication within police organizations. Swanson and Territo (Chapter 6) explore internal communications by examining police management's leadership and interpersonal communication style. Of particular concern in this study is the relationship between two measures of leadership and communications—the Managerial Grid<sup>®</sup> and the Johari Window.

Swanson and Territo consider the Managerial Grid, developed in the early 1940s, as a measure of the manager's *orientation* toward employees and work production. In an analysis of 104 police supervisors, these authors find that the dominant responses were those preferred by the human relations orientation implied in the Grid—namely, a high concern for employees or a balancing of employee and production interests. Thus, through the use of the Grid it might be concluded that police managers espouse the "liberal" orientation toward employees and stress the interpersonal aspects of organizational life. Such self-assessments, however, are inconsistent with long-standing definitions of rigid bureaucracy associated with policing and with notions of command and control in police agencies. And, of course, these assessments are not behaviorally anchored.

Shifting from the attitudes expressed by police managers in the Managerial Grid, Swanson and Territo consider the Johari Window, a measure-

ment technique that examines *communications preference*. Using this method, the authors review the results of a sample of 247 police managers completing the Johari Window instrument and compare these findings with various ideal-type managerial styles. They determine that, behaviorally, this sample of police managers is most associated with a leadership-communications style that emphasizes the candid and open expression of feelings, knowledge, and information but that downplays feedback, or the process of actively soliciting information held by subordinates. Such a behaviorally oriented evaluation of police managerial leadership and communication is more consistent with past descriptions of interpersonal interaction in highly structured bureaucracies.

Swanson and Territo relate the patterns of leadership obtained through the use of the Managerial Grid with those obtained through the assessment of interpersonal communications and discuss five models of leadership and communication style applicable to the police.

Examining the issue of communications from the perspective of the individual police officer, Dunning and Hochstedler (Chapter 7) conduct a secondary analysis of police officer evaluations of internal communications and job satisfaction. Prefacing their study, Dunning and Hochstedler point to the incongruence between police ethnographic studies, which suggest that information sharing in police agencies is selective and unrelated to officer job satisfaction, and the findings of motivational and organizational theory, which suggest that there is a strong relationship between communications and job satisfaction. To explore these relationships, the authors examine a sample of 822 Dallas police officers completing a survey measuring these and related issues. In regrouping the items originally used in the questionnaire, Dunning and Hochstedler develop measures (1) of police officer evaluations of opportunities for communication, (2) actual communication activities, and (3) individual officer satisfaction with horizontal and vertical communications within the agency. These communications indices are then used to evaluate officer job satisfaction, including such values as personal sense of achievement and recognition obtained from work, assessments of existing promotional policy, the adequacy of salary, and officer attitudes toward immediate supervisors.

Dunning and Hochstedler find a moderate to weak association between officer assessments of communications and the various components of job satisfaction, supporting previous findings that police information sharing

and communications are largely unrelated to satisfaction with the police job. Such findings are consistent with ethnographic interpretations and cast doubt on assumptions embedded in police administration practice, which is largely derived from organizational and motivation theory. The nature of the police job, and of police work, obviously affects these communications processes and police officer job satisfaction independently. Consequently, theories of organizational communications will necessarily have to take into account the situational aspects of police work in explaining officer satisfaction with communications and with the job.

Collectively, the chapters in this volume reflect the divergent nature of policing and police administration and the numerous dilemmas confronting public law enforcement. They also force us to think more critically about the assumptions underlying such issues as the police role and the social organization of policing, police administration and the provision of police services, and organizational life from the perspectives of police managers and those doing the business of policing. In a system of criminal justice where the police play such a crucial role, often extending the reach of the state into our daily lives, considerations and analyses of law enforcement, such as the studies which follow, continually remind us of the importance of this social institution and of our responsibility to understand and improve its functioning.

# 1.

## ***EVALUATING THE CRIME-EFFECTIVENESS OF MUNICIPAL POLICE***

*Mary Ann Wycoff*

*Police Foundation*

**After a review** of approximately 40 empirical efforts to determine the relationship between police inputs and crime-related outcomes, it was necessary to conclude that for most of the propositions about the effect of police on crime, the evidence is weak at best and often contradictory (Manning and Wycoff, forthcoming; Wycoff, forthcoming). The results of the review can be summarized in terms of the most commonly examined input or predictor variables, which include expenditures, numbers of personnel, investigations, arrests levels of patrol and deployment strategies, and rapid response.

### **Expenditures**

The relationship between the level of police expenditures and crime rates, clearances, or arrests has been explored by several researchers (Allison, 1972; Carr-Hill and Stern, 1973; Ehrlich, 1973; Greenwood and Wadycki, 1973; Jones, 1974; McPheters and Stronge, 1974; Swimmer, 1974; Wellford, 1974; Pogue, 1975; Skogan, 1976; and Forst, 1976). Allison, Jones, Wellford, and Pogue found either no relationship or only

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very weak relationships between expenditures and the outcome variable. Carr-Hill and Stern, Greenwood and Wadycki, Skogan, and Forst detected positive relationships. Ehrlich, McPheters and Stronge, and Swimmer found negative relationships. The results of this body of research are contradictory and inconclusive.

### **Numbers of Personnel**

Researchers who have used the number of police personnel as a predictor of crime rates, clearances, or arrests include Pressman and Carol (1971), Allison (1972), Carr-Hill and Stern (1973), Greenwood and Wadycki (1973), Wellford (1974), Cloninger (1975), Levine (1975), Mathiesen and Passell (1976), Phillips et al. (1976), Skogan (1976), Decker (1979), and Stahura and Huff (1979). Pressman and Carol, Greenwood and Wadycki, Cloninger, and Stahura and Huff all found positive relationships between the numbers of personnel and the crime rate. Wellford found a negative but small relationship, and Mathiesen and Passell, Phillips et al., and Decker also found negative relationships between personnel and crime rates. Neither Allison nor Levine found any relationship; Carr-Hill and Stern concluded that the effect of police could not be determined from available data. Wellford and Skogan each found positive relationships between numbers of personnel and arrest rates.

As with the research on the effects of expenditures, it can only be concluded that the findings are contradictory and inconclusive.

### **Investigations**

Investigations is a catch-all label, since there is no research on the effect of investigations as such; instead, it typically concerns the effect of some aspect or characteristic of investigations. For example, Nilsson and Sjoberg (1979) found the number of detectives, and hence the workload, to be unrelated to investigative effectiveness. Bloch and Bell (1976) found that the organization of detectives was related to arrest productivity, while Greenwood et al. (1977) found organization to make no difference. Fingerprints and other physical evidence, products of the investigative process, were found to be unrelated to case clearance (see Block and Bell, 1976; Greenberg et al., 1977; Greenwood et al., 1977), although Forst et al. (1977) found that once cases made it to court, the presence of evidence was highly associated with either conviction or a plea of guilty. There is general agreement that investigative work has little to do with the identifi-