
Conflicting Values in Community Policing

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Police reformers in the early 21st century place great importance on the development of police-community partnerships, but they have not recognized the deep obstacles that these relationships face. This study argues that the central problems of working in partnership involve conflict over values: Different organizations advance different social values, and when the partners who cling to them try to collaborate, conflict flares up at the point of contact. I draw on several case studies to describe how these conflicts surface and potentially undermine partnerships, and I analyze the strategies that police agencies have developed to respond to them. This analysis reveals that community policing has fundamental (and probably desirable) implications for police practice because it forces police to attend to many neglected dimensions of their mandate. The article thereby offers a new interpretation of community policing's implications for practice and a new interpretation of its value as a reform movement.

Community policing is the order of the day. Having become official federal policy with the passage of the 1994 Crime Bill, it remains the dominant model of police reform today (Hickman & Reaves 2001). One of this movement's boldest and most difficult aims—arguably its core ideal—is to build meaningful partnerships for improving public safety. Conventional wisdom holds that most police departments work autonomously, trying to isolate themselves from “politics” and monopolize the task of crime control. But community policing exhorts city police departments to forswear their autonomy and collaborate with practically everyone: community groups and institutions, property owners, agencies of city government, other police and security forces, elected officials, businesses, and so on (e.g., Eck 1990:9;

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Friedman 1994). Community policing is hardly alone in this aim. It is an instance of a broad trend in public policy that criticizes autonomous government agencies, calling on them to work closely with civil society, forge public/private partnerships, and work more intimately with each other (Kettl 1996).

Reforms of this kind must contend with an important feature of modern society. Any complex society involves differentiation in terms of roles and values (Durkheim 1960; Walzer 1984), so every social institution pursues priorities separate from and potentially in conflict with the others. Consequently, interorganizational partnerships bring together institutions committed to potentially incompatible priorities. The practitioners who manage these relationships will find themselves in contested normative terrain, pressured by conflicting social aims that had formerly been institutionally segregated. To be responsive to each institution, they must be centrally concerned with resolving the tensions among those conflicting values. Understanding the nature of that challenge and articulating the ways in which it can be legitimately managed is a central issue facing scholarship and practice in community policing, as well as in interorganizational relations more generally.

In this article, I draw on eleven case studies of community policing to show that some police-community partnerships do confront significant value conflicts of the sort just described. In the process, I offer a more concrete portrait of the practical challenge raised by conflicting values, and I describe and analyze strategies that practitioners have devised to respond to it. Such research is a necessary first step toward understanding how practitioners can properly manage this central challenge of community policing and toward fully identifying the implications that community policing will have.

Partnerships and Value Pluralism

Police and their would-be partners do not always value the same, or even compatible, things, and there are often good (though not immutable) reasons for this. Neighborhood groups bespeak a commitment to quality-of-life in specific residential areas; landlords to the exchange and (perhaps) improvement of residential properties; service agencies to the welfare of their clients; and the courts to doing justice and the protection of individual rights. These values may have some overlap with the complicated mix of aims that shape the police mandate, but they are not identical to them. When the partners who cling to them try to work in collaboration with the police, conflict may flare up at the point of contact. This conflict may not be dramatic and overt. It may produce mutual incomprehension as often as visible fights about core values, and it may also lead to reluctant, plodding, or

insincere agreements.¹ Even these less-dramatic problems, however, can undermine partnerships.

Social theorists have long held that different social institutions are committed to different social values and processes (Durkheim 1960; Walzer 1984) and that they cannot be combined arbitrarily. For example, Eugene Litwak and Lydia Hylton (1961) argued that society locates different social functions in different organizations precisely because the values they promote cannot be reconciled with one another—only by segregating them can we pursue all of them simultaneously. Without this segregation, the members of organizations would be overwhelmed with competing concerns and would be unable to make good decisions about what to do.² Most commonly, they might ignore some considerations altogether (Litwak and Hylton give the example of police-run newspapers in totalitarian states, which tend to sacrifice free expression to security concerns), so failure to segregate values would mean certain death for some of them. In this view, institutional fragmentation is not an accident of history but a desirable principle for institutional design (Walzer 1984).³

¹ This view of what it means to be guided by different sets of values has achieved prominence in the study of “frames” that individuals use to view the world—normative lenses that determine not only what ends are valuable but also what counts as a fact and how to interpret it. Metaphors play an especially important role in frames, providing the link between fact and value, as when a policymaker sees the problem with social services as one of “fragmentation”—a value-laden metaphor that implies a clear solution (Schön 1979). See especially, Schön & Rein 1994; Gamson & Modigliani 1989.

² Philosopher Elijah Millgram has recently offered a normative justification for this intuition, arguing that our decision-making resources become swamped when we face too many competing concerns. “Arbitrary desires and goals will too infrequently be amenable to deliberative commensuration,” he writes, so some mechanism must be developed to “ensure that the competing considerations we face are not simply drawn at random from the space of possible desires and goals.” Millgram suggests that social structure may sometimes play this role: “If the machinery of practical reasoning is effective only for a relatively narrow range of inputs, we can safeguard the unity of agency that depends on successful practical reasoning by making it likely that practical reasoning by and large receives inputs on which it is likely to be effective. While there are steps the individual can take toward this end, [there are also] social dimensions of the solution to this problem. . . . Social structure must arrange matters for those who live in it so that they are presented with manageable choices, both with regard to the number of considerations involved in any particular choice and to the ability of the agent to square considerations of particular kinds with one another” (Millgram 1997:166–67). Note that Millgram’s argument is a normative point about social design, not an empirical hypothesis about the forms that social structure is likely to take. Arguing out of a normative concern for safeguarding autonomous deliberation by individuals, he offers reasons why we should prefer (and try to create) social structures that limit the issues an individual will need to consider at one time (e.g., an institutionally fragmented structure of the sort described in the text).

³ This line of thinking has implicitly informed many students of management, who regularly insist that organizations need to have clear and simple missions in order to succeed (e.g., Selznick 1957; Drucker 1990; Moore 1995). For example, James Q. Wilson has argued that “a good executive realizes that workers can make subtle, precise, realistic judgments, but only if those judgments refer to a related, coherent set of behaviors. People cannot easily keep in mind many quite different things or strike reasonable balances among competing tasks. People want to know what is expected of them; they do not want to be told, in answer to this question, ‘on the one hand this, on the other hand that.’” Consequently, Wilson concludes, competing aims should be assigned to separate organi-

If institutional segregation serves in part to protect the members of organizations from intractable value conflict, then an important challenge confronts reforms such as community policing. At root, these reforms aim to reduce institutional segregation by building partnerships and improving coordination across organizational lines. (This goal is quite explicit in some cities, where reform is described as an effort to “break down the walls of bureaucracy.”) But when the walls that separate conflicting values are breached—when police are asked not only to promote their own traditional aims but also to act in ways that will be endorsed by other organizations committed to different values—practitioners may find themselves caught amid the demands of conflicting values. To succeed, reformers must develop some legitimate means of coping with the value conflict that institutional segregation previously buffered. As Pierre Bourdieu put it, greater contact among social institutions creates a demand for new practices that can “integrat[e] the necessities of different orders” (1990:73). Consequently, the development of partnerships may have important and unanticipated consequences for institutional values.

Value Conflict in Police Research

Against this background, parts of the community policing literature can be viewed as a debate about whether such reforms are possible at all. Although most studies of community policing do not address the problem of value conflict directly,⁴ some of them have suggested that police and community priorities can conflict in significant and damaging ways (Podolefsky 1984;

zational structures: “The wise executive will devolve the slighted tasks onto another agency, or to a wholly new organization created for the purpose” (1989:370–71).

Of course, organizations may sometimes be more complicated than this schematic picture suggests. They may incorporate multiple ideologies and employ dissident members, or they may be internally segmented in ways that I describe later in this article. But most organizations have dominant organizational characters and official policies that enforce the demands of a few core values. As Phillip Selznick put it, “Organizations, like individuals, strive for a unified pattern of response. This integration will define in advance the general attitudes of personnel to specific problems as they arise. This means that there will be pressure within the organization, from below as well as from above, for unity in outlook” (1949:181). The trouble is that reforms like community policing make this aspiration for “unity in outlook” very difficult, and that aspiration may need to be tempered in the ways I suggest.

⁴ Much of the literature has tried to evaluate the impacts of community policing on crime and fear, and although such studies offer vital insights for policy, they say little about the nature of value conflicts or of the ways in which police might cope with them. Moreover, implementation research about community policing often suggests that obstacles to cooperation are not especially deep—that reform is undermined mainly by such situational factors as incompetence, bad timing, or weak efforts, or by fairly simple administrative problems such as lack of beat integrity (e.g., Eck 1990; Friedman 1994). Finally, some of the recent research about community policing has articulated more substantial obstacles to cooperation. Although that research offers important insight about other facets of community policing, much of it has not directly examined the problem of value conflict (Grinc 1998; Skogan & Hartnett 1997:110–37).

Lovig & Skogan 1995; Manning 1988, 1993; Meares & Kahan 1998; Winship & Berrien 1999). That research falls roughly into two groups.

On one hand, some scholars draw pessimistic conclusions from the idea that police and community values may conflict. Most radically, Peter Manning has suggested that community policing is fundamentally flawed partly because police and community values are incompatible (Manning 1988, 1993). More moderately, a few researchers imply that although some community organizations may be viable police partners, others are unlikely to develop strong relationships with police because their goals are incompatible with the police mission (Lovig & Skogan 1995; Podolefsky 1984). Whatever their explicit conclusions, none of these studies directly investigate how police might cope with value conflict, and for that reason they tend to suggest that the problem is intractable.

In contrast with this relatively pessimistic perspective, a few researchers have acknowledged the significance of value conflict but have suggested that police can sometimes overcome it by developing innovative new police practices. Many of these studies focus on conflicts about the use of authority. As I discuss later in this article, police and many community members often call for aggressive enforcement for the sake of crime control, but other community members may view aggressive enforcement as harassment. Tracy Meares and Dan Kahan have acknowledged the force of this dilemma, but they suggest that police can sometimes escape it by using innovative enforcement approaches that reduce lawbreaking by changing its social meaning, since these “social norm” approaches may be more acceptable to the community than more conventional enforcement strategies (Meares & Kahan 1998:818–19). (For example, Meares and Kahan discuss reverse stings, which focus on the consumers rather than on the suppliers of drugs and prostitution and thereby create a different image of the nature of these offenses.) Similarly, in a study of Boston’s Ten-Point Coalition, Christopher Winship and Jenny Berrien suggested that the Boston Police Department was able to maintain support from black churches and the African-American community during a strong anti-gang enforcement initiative by acting within boundaries of fairness and respect that they had negotiated with church leaders. So long as police respected those constraints, church leaders offered their public support for police tactics, creating an “umbrella of legitimacy” that sustained police-community relations. Winship and Berrien do not describe what exactly the boundaries of fairness and respect involved, but they note that police were expected to “focus on the truly bad youths,” to deal with those youths “in a fair and just way,” and to refrain from using “indiscriminate and abusive methods” (1999:67).

These optimistic accounts of police-community cooperation indicate that the goal of crime control does not inflexibly dictate the methods that police will use and also that some of the available methods may not inflame community concerns about harassment as much as others. Although liberty and order may be in *tension* with one another in the sense that *many* police strategies for crime control undermine liberty, they do not conflict inescapably. Police may be able to resolve the conflicts that erupt in their community partnerships by developing new strategies that are compatible with multiple values.

In order for this perspective to offer a robust alternative to the pessimistic view of value conflict in community policing, it is necessary to develop it further in several ways. First, as Bernard Harcourt (2000) has argued, existing studies have not thoroughly investigated how specific police practices are interpreted and evaluated by others, so claims that those practices will secure community support remain plausible but somewhat speculative. Researchers need to look more closely at the views of community partners and analyze the values that can be understood to underlie their evaluations of police practices.

Second, and again following Harcourt (2000), existing studies of innovative police practices have focused mainly on their crime-control effects, but other important normative issues also need to be examined. The norm-focused strategies described by Meares and Kahan may reduce crime and secure community support, but they would still be problematic if they ran afoul of important values such as liberty and due process or if they distorted our ideals of appropriate law enforcement and interpersonal relations in other ways (Harcourt 2000; Thacher 2001b). If norm-focused strategies do have unfortunate side effects like these, then the cooperation they have made possible should be described as co-optation rather than a partnership in order to indicate that police have abandoned essential institutional values in order to secure outside support (Selznick 1949, 1957).⁵ To examine this possibility, scholars need to undertake a more systematic analysis of the accommodations that police make in order to sustain community partnerships in specific cases, and they need to identify the values that those accommodations implicate.⁶ An analysis of that kind is perhaps the most effective way to investi-

⁵ Put differently, the concept of a “partnership” is a normative concept that implies *legitimate* cooperation among institutions. To the extent that this cooperation requires the police to revise organizational structures, rules, methods, and policies, that revision must take place in a principled way that does not sacrifice core institutional values (Selznick 1992:338). Consequently, to know whether an example of cooperation represents a true partnership or nefarious co-optation, it is necessary to analyze the full range of values it implicates in the manner described in the text.

⁶ As discussed later, this kind of portrait of community policing reform—a portrait that identifies the values that underlie reform—is what Ronald Dworkin (1986) calls a “constructive interpretation” of practice.

gate the implications that community policing has had for the police mandate and, in the process, a way to support more reasoned debate among police and their legitimate overseers about whether it is a desirable kind of reform (Flyvbjerg 2001).

Finally, although the literature described previously has suggested a few ways in which police may cope with value conflict, it has not systematically analyzed the strategies that police have developed to deal with this problem. As a result, our understanding of those strategies is likely to be too thin and incomplete to offer usable advice for practice. In particular, the idea that police simply “choose” tactics that promote both their own aims and their partners’ probably reflects an overly simple view of organizational dynamics. For example, in the Boston case, the idea of fighting crime within the bounds of fairness and respect is a complicated notion. Most simply, it raises a number of unanswered organizational questions. What organizational routines did the Boston Police Department modify in order to ensure that officers committed to aggressive crime control would act within those bounds? How were such systems as organizational structure, training, and accountability used to shape officer behavior? In short, *how* does a police agency institutionalize a commitment to fairness and respect without undermining aggressive crime control? More subtly, the Boston story raises questions about how police could act successfully on two sets of values that many police agencies have seen as antagonistic (Wilson 1972; Skolnick 1975) and which therefore might confound efforts to sustain organizational focus. To tell officers “enforce the law, but don’t enforce it too strictly” may make perfect sense to most officers. But it could also amount to a mixed message of the sort that organizations often try to avoid—a dysfunctional directive of “on the one hand this, on the other hand that” that can lead to paralysis and bad decisionmaking (Wilson 1989:371). What type of organizational environment, personal temperament, or mode of practical reasoning supports the police who arrive at this sort of compromise?

Toward a Conception of Partnership Practice

Answering these questions gets to the heart of the challenge that conflicting values raise for community partnerships, and a tentative answer to them can serve to summarize the argument that follows. To reach the point at which they can even try to develop strong enforcement strategies that avoid concerns about harassment (for example), police need to keep both sets of values in their minds and on the organizational agenda despite the apparent incongruities between them. Doing that requires a particular temperament that is best captured by Isaiah Berlin’s (1978) distinction between the hedgehog and the fox—between

those who attend consistently to a single value and those who pursue many values. The idea comes from the Greek poet Archilochus, who wrote, “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing,” and Berlin argues that this comparison suggests “one of the deepest differences which divide writers and thinkers, and, it may be, human beings in general.”

For there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system, less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think, or feel—a single, universal, organizing principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance—and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related by no moral or esthetic principle. (Berlin 1978:3)

This temperament is especially important in the context of inter-organizational partnerships because they raise the problem of conflicting values so often. It may be described at a very general level in terms of Berlin’s idea of a fox, but it is necessary to flesh out that conception with greater institutional detail. In this article, I pursue that task by looking out into the community policing field at current practice. On the basis of that evidence, I argue that some police practitioners and organizations have developed ways to attend to competing values in the manner of Berlin’s fox—particularly by using metaphors that describe relationships among values, thereby making it possible to attend to each, and by carving out insulated organizational spaces within which dissident values can grow. This finding raises the question of whether such strategies of practice are appropriate (an organization of foxes may be a good partner because it can adapt to many values, but it may do a poor job defending any particular value for the same reason), and I investigate that question in the conclusion.

The Study

To explore these ideas, I analyze eleven case studies of one category of police partnerships; namely, community partnerships (as opposed to interorganizational partnerships, business partnerships, or political partnerships, each of which probably raises distinctive value conflicts associated with the institutional domains they involve). These cases are drawn from two sets of studies prepared by the Program in Criminal Justice at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. The cases in the first set (Seattle, WA, Las Vegas, NV, Chicago, IL, Norfolk, VA, and St. Petersburg, FL) were written by Harvey Simon and John Buntin for the Pew Charitable Trusts, and each of these cases describes the

evolution of two reputedly successful police-community partnerships in a single city. Those in the second set (Lowell, MA, Riverside, CA, Albany, NY, Knoxville, TN, Fremont, CA, and Portland, OR) were written by me for the Urban Institute as part of its evaluation of Title I of the federal crime bill, and these cases describe the implementation of community policing in each city, including the development of partnerships. The illustrations presented here are drawn entirely from this second set of cases because of my greater familiarity with the evidence that underlies them, but I analyzed all eleven cases to develop the concepts and categories outlined here (cf. Thacher 1999 for a more complete analysis that draws from all 11 cases).

To develop each case study, researchers gathered information through interviews, observations, and document review. Interviews were conducted with two to three dozen key figures in each city's community policing effort (including police at all levels of the organization and important outside partners); in all, about 350 ninety-minute interviews were conducted, and I conducted approximately 200 of them myself. Observation focused on patrol activities, management meetings, and community meetings at each site; in all, approximately 150 hours of observation was conducted, about half by me. Finally, document review focused on official documents provided by each police department (including grant applications, annual reports, strategic plans, budgets, and general orders or bulletins relevant to community policing), and researchers thoroughly searched local newspapers for articles relevant to community policing. Overall, the site visits were guided by a rough protocol that left room for serendipity; the overriding aim of the visits was to understand how each department tried to develop community partnerships and what challenges arose along the way. After each visit, the researchers wrote up descriptive case studies of agency reforms. Everyone quoted (and many interviewees who were not quoted) was given multiple opportunities to comment on and correct inaccuracies in those cases, so although the interviewees may not agree with the interpretations offered here, they have confirmed that the descriptive accounts of the events that those interpretations and conclusions are based on comport with their own understandings.

My analysis of these data focused on the conflicts that erupted in police-community partnerships, and I aimed primarily to develop an interpretation of what these conflicts were about. As I reviewed all the case study material, I sought to identify every example in which the police and community groups came into conflict, and I tried to identify the common themes that those conflicts seemed to share (Ragin 1994; Weiss 1994). Because the community policing literature has not systematically focused on the nature of police-community conflicts, this analysis was mostly

inductive (though after coming to my own understanding of what these conflicts were about, I searched the policing literature to find parallels, and I report those parallels here where appropriate). This article focuses on the two most common types of conflicts identified in that analysis—conflicts over what the shared goal of “public safety” should mean, and conflicts over how much authority police should use. I do not claim that these are the only conflicts that arose in these partnerships, much less in all police partnerships; but I do claim that they effectively capture the values at stake in the examples of conflict described here, and I argue that case by showing how they fit the details of those examples. To do that, I present case study descriptions and extensive quotations that illustrate the kinds of events and quotations that informed my interpretations. I have chosen these examples to illustrate the conflicts I am describing as clearly as possible, but I arrived at my list of the conflicts themselves because they captured a wide range of examples in the cases. In any case, I have tried not to select idiosyncratic examples; each example of conflict presented here is very similar to several others in the other cases. The skeptical reader may refer to the longer, descriptive accounts of community policing in these cities that have been published elsewhere.⁷

As I reviewed the conflicts that arose in these cases, I also sought to identify and distinguish the ways in which police responded to them. Like the analysis of the conflicts themselves, this analysis of police responses to conflict was interpretive. Conceiving of those responses as a particular social practice, I have developed what Ronald Dworkin would call a “constructive” interpretation of them—an interpretation that “proposes value for the practice by describing some scheme of interests or goals or principles the practice can be taken to serve or express or exemplify” (1986:52). Such an interpretation must fit the details of that practice and show its point or purpose in terms of a (contestable) normative ideal. Again, my analysis here was mostly inductive. As I reviewed all of the evidence in my eleven case studies that described the ways in which police responded to each conflict, I tried to identify recurrent patterns in those responses. Sometimes the strategies used by police in these cases seemed to exemplify strategies described in the broader literature about organizations and management; for example, police agencies like Lowell and Portland that created special units to focus on community concerns about “soft crime” effectively rediscovered a

⁷ The six cases written by me are available from the National Institute of Justice, and the other five cases are available from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. Interested readers can compare those descriptive accounts of community policing in each city with the interpretations offered here. Moreover, since I have forgone the sociological custom of disguising place names, some readers may be able to draw on their own background knowledge about some of these cities to check my accounts against their own understanding.

strategy for managing “precarious values” that Phillip Selznick (1957) described nearly five decades ago. In other cases, the strategies police used to manage conflicting values did not seem to reflect any extant idea in the literature about policing or organizations (e.g., the use of metaphors to synthesize competing values,⁸ and the selection of fox-like personnel who appeared to be less paralyzed by value conflict than others were), so the concepts that those literatures offered needed to be supplemented. As I tried to understand what all of these specific strategies had in common, I found Berlin’s conception of the fox as a particular way of acting and thinking to be useful as an overriding metaphor. As I argue in the conclusion, that notion fits the details of what the police described here do (that is, it draws out the commonalities among the more specific strategies for managing value conflict identified throughout the article), and it shows the point or purpose of their actions in terms of a particular vision of practical reasoning—one that downplays the demand for a single overarching value.

The cases analyzed here were selected to embody a wide range of experience in terms of geography, community organization, and the community policing efforts themselves—how far they have advanced, what aims have guided them, and what skills their practitioners bring.⁹ Because the cases were selected for their diversity, they are not a representative sample of U.S. police agencies. Their diversity is a strength, however, in the sense that examining cases with as many differences as possible allows one to identify a greater range of conceptual variation (Glaser & Strauss 1967: ch. 3)—here, variation in the types of value conflicts that arise in police-community partnerships and in the strategies used to manage them. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of these cases makes it impossible to “generalize” my arguments about the nature of policing practice in these cities to policing at large in any conventional way. My goal, however, is not generalization of that sort but theoretical development. I argue that the illustrative events described here are best interpreted as outbreaks of particular value conflicts and as particular strategies for managing those conflicts, and therefore that scholarship should avail itself of those ideas to make sense of some aspects of community policing practice. In short, I hope to stretch existing ideas

⁸ Although I am not aware of management research that analyzes this specific strategy—i.e., research that shows how practitioners introduce new metaphors in order to resolve value conflicts—related ideas have appeared in the literature. In particular, some research that falls under the broad umbrella of “the new institutionalism” in organizational analysis analyzes how organizational myths and particular ways of framing reality can shape organizational behavior. That insight, in turn, suggests that reframing and the introduction of new myths may be able to alleviate conflict. In this spirit, Donald Schön and Martin Rein (1994) have described the ways in which some practitioners have resolved their conflicts by reframing them.

⁹ For a fuller description of sampling methodology, see Moore & Thacher 2000: Appendix I.

about community policing in order to make sense of the experiences that these cases represent (Burawoy 1998).

In the sections that follow, I pursue that aim by offering an interpretation of two central conflicts that arose in these cases and by analyzing the responses that police made to those conflicts. In the next section, I begin with the tensions over what aspects of “safety” deserve most attention, in which the “hard crime” perspective of police conflicts with the “soft crime” concerns of the community.

Two Concepts of Safety

It is often said that the police and the community make natural partners because both want to improve public safety. In practice, however, the two sides often have different ideas about what exactly that goal means. Police, for their part, tend to have a professionalized definition of “public safety” centered on serious crime as defined by the criminal law (Manning 1977). Community groups, however, tend to care more about less-serious safety problems that arise more frequently and visibly, variously called “soft crime” or “disorder”: The rowdy teenagers on their street, the small-time drug dealers they walk past—even the dog that barks incessantly and the cars that don’t stop at the stop sign. These concerns, in turn, bleed inseparably into larger issues of quality-of-life such as physical decay, bad street lights, and even the lack of youth recreation. “Like it or not,” two prominent policing scholars explain, “the public defines broadly what it thinks of as public order, and holds the police responsible for maintaining order” (Wilson & Kelling 1989:49). Part of “holding them responsible” involves withdrawing support and cooperation, so that when police want to maintain strong community ties, they often find that they must increase their attention to the disorder problems that they have traditionally viewed as distractions.

Partnerships and the Concern for Soft Crime

Robert Grebert, the former Deputy Chief in Albany, encountered the differences between these two views of public safety in the form of surprise—his own surprise at what community groups asked for when his department began to listen to them: “You’re in law enforcement for twenty years and you go and say, ‘OK, folks, what’s the problem in your neighborhood?’ In law enforcement, what do you expect to hear? Burglary, robbery, rape, murder. That’s not what we were hearing. What we were hearing was, ‘The kids are out with the boom box all night,’ and ‘The dope dealers are on the corner.’”

If police cling to their priorities, they risk becoming irrelevant to the community, and so they threaten to undermine po-

tential partnerships. In Albany, for example, it is not that no community groups wanted to work in partnership with the police in the years before community policing or that police did not want to have better relationships with the community; on the contrary, the city's mayor tried to cultivate a relationship with the city's new neighborhood groups in the early 1980s, and for many years the Police Department maintained substations and permanent foot patrol officers designed to "bring police closer to the community." But these abstract affinities foundered when police lacked enthusiasm for the concrete concerns communities brought them. For example, according to community activist Harold Rubin, a longtime leader in Albany's Center Square Association, illegal parking was a central concern of neighborhood residents during this mayor-led effort to build community partnerships. Although he tried to talk with police about better parking enforcement, officers seemed far from enthusiastic. "Lots of times cops won't do things if they don't want to," Rubin observes. "Years and years ago, there was a motorcycle parked on the sidewalk. And so I told the cop about this and said, 'There's a motorcycle over here.' He turned to me and said, 'Are you trying to tell me how to do my job?' . . . He didn't want to write the ticket for the damn thing. . . . Police officers do not like to write tickets—that's beneath them." Officers did attend meetings with Center Square, but only rarely, in response to occasional epidemics of serious crime.

Like many other agencies, the Albany Police Department eventually began to accommodate community concerns. Today, the Center Square group has a strong relationship with local foot patrol officers—precisely, Rubin says, because officers have broadened their interests.

The program is different now. The community policeman is prepared to deal with everything. . . . One of the problems we have in the neighborhood is these cars blocking crosswalks. And you know, first of all, if you're driving, and you want to make a right turn on red, you can't see the cars [approaching] because the cars are blocking the crosswalk. Or you have the people walking who are handicapped or blind. All of a sudden they come to a corner and there's a car there. [The community police officer] says he agrees with that. And he said when he sees the cars blocking crosswalks, he'll ticket them. Because he realizes the problem of handicapped people trying to cross the street. He's willing to do that—he agrees with that.

Unlike some Albany neighborhoods, Center Square had its own foot patrol officer with beat integrity and a long-term assignment well before community policing took off in the city during the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, until the Police Department and City Hall began stressing the theme of quality-of-life, valorizing specific types of order maintenance (loud boom boxes, public drink-

ing, illegal parking, and so on), viable community partnerships did not spring up in the neighborhood, as Rubin suggests. Other police and community leaders give accounts similar to Rubin's (with the notable exception of Albany's predominantly black neighborhoods, as discussed later), and very similar dynamics played out in several of the other cases.

It may appear that Albany responded to the conflict between the two concepts of safety by abandoning one of them altogether, but the story is somewhat more complicated than that. Albany and other agencies that institutionalized a new concern for soft crime did not do so by abandoning the old concern with hard crime but by finding organizational or intellectual ways to combine the two.

“Broken Windows” as a Unifying Metaphor

In several cases, departmental leadership tried to defuse the competition between the two concepts of safety by creating an intellectual connection between them. Albany itself is a case in point that drew extensively on the “broken windows” theory (Wilson & Kelling 1982) in training sessions, roll calls, and mentoring to convince officers that order maintenance *is* crime control.¹⁰ Today, many Albany police feel that it makes sense to target these low-level offenses in order to get at their underlying goal of reducing serious crime, and they recite something like the broken windows argument in support of this view. As explained by Commander William Bowen, who oversaw the department's training division during the early months of community policing,

What we tried to do was to show the rank and file, the officers on the lowest level, that it was a partnership with the community to make life better [when we were] talking about quality of life issues. You know, many times the officer would think . . . “That bag of garbage out on the street on a night that it doesn't belong out there, that's not a big deal.” And we tried to show them that that was a big deal when it came to the overall philosophy of quality of life. That is, if a place looks bad, it's going to get bad—the broken window theory and that kind of thing.

Using a different logic, many officers argue that enforcing misdemeanor laws can have a more direct relationship to the control of serious crime, since offenders stopped on minor violations often turn out to have such signs of serious criminality as illegal drugs, illegally concealed weapons, or outstanding warrants (cf. Kelling & Coles 1997). As Chief Tuffey puts it,

¹⁰ Wilson and Kelling (1982) have argued that low-level disorder (such as a single broken window) sends a message that a neighborhood is out of control and, in the process, attracts more serious crime to the area. Consequently, police can forestall serious crime by engaging in proactive order maintenance.

If you go through a red light, they want to stop you and see who you are. They don't have to give you a ticket . . . but stop and see why David Thacher is driving through that red light. . . . You're there in the front seat and the woman is driving, [but] who's to say that . . . you're not holding a gun on Mrs. Jones, or your wife, or your girlfriend? . . . Maybe that's why that woman went through [the light] there. I don't know that until I stop the car. Maybe it's an old person who is disoriented and lost, has Alzheimer's or diabetes or whatever it may well be. These are all the issues that they never [checked] before—it was a no-no.

Finally, one Albany officer argues that by citing people for minor violations, police alert the courts to a potential pattern. If police fail to write these citations, the officer argues, a first offense for robbery may look like a forgivable aberration, when in fact it is the culmination of years of unrecorded petty crime.

These ideas are obviously not original, and the arguments that Albany managers use to support them are often very loose. (One manager argued that it is important to take calls for bike thefts because a murderer might steal a bike to get away.) Moreover, I suggest later that appeals that reinforce the aggressive side of policing can run afoul of other community values, particularly in neighborhoods where concerns about police harassment have been prominent. The point here is not that the equation between hard crime and soft crime is accurate as criminological theory or that it resolves every source of police-community conflict. It is that the equation represents a way of expanding the conception of police work to accommodate priorities that some community members bring to partnerships—priorities that might otherwise be seen as inconsistent with those of the police. Faced with community demands for order maintenance together with officer resistance to the idea that such work was important, managers like Bowen and Tuffey reinterpreted the new value in terms of an existing one. They showed how the community's concern for soft crime might make sense to officers concerned about hard crime, drawing on one of the field's ideas in good currency to do so. Albany police insist that the strategy was effective, and it does seem plausible to think that when "disorder maintenance" is defined as a way to look for guns and fugitives, many police will accept it readily. On that account, what some community leaders view as an end in itself becomes a means to a different end that police value more highly.

The Divided Organization

The broken windows metaphor synthesizes police and community values in the minds of individual officers, each of whom comes to look at the police role in a way that is responsive to both sets of priorities. It is a strategy used to win over an entire

organization to a concern for disorder. Many agencies, however, found that wholesale organizational change in this area is difficult, and they at least began their community policing efforts by creating separate special units—institutionalizing the new value in a distinct organizational structure. These units partly insulated their officers from pressures to conform to the old norms—evaluations based on arrests for serious crimes, camaraderie based on stories of “hot chases,” a workload generated through emergency calls—leaving them free to pursue the new ones without distraction.

This strategy is probably the most common way to give soft crime a place in the police workload. Of the departments studied here, all but Knoxville’s created some type of special unit with special responsibility for community relations, and in every case the patrol officers assigned to the new units ended up focusing much of their attention on neighborhood disorder. A good example comes from the Portland Police Bureau, where many local precincts charged with developing community partnerships created their own precinct-level drug units. While they existed, these units had priorities that differed markedly from those of the Bureau’s centralized Drugs and Vice Division (DVD). “Traditionally the way it has worked is DVD handles mid- and upper-level drug dealers,” one precinct manager explained. “They’re the Miami Vice folk. And the precinct drug unit basically did rock houses [i.e., crack cocaine houses] and street-level dealers. So their missions were apples and oranges.” More recently, however, the precinct drug units fell victim to budget cuts, and this manager (like others in the precincts) fought the cuts because he worried that his precinct would no longer be able to respond to the street-level activity that community groups often complained about. “The guys that do the big cases downtown are not gonna want to spend three or four hours searching garbage in a basement of the house for rock crumbs, which our guys did routinely here, because that was their job,” he explained.

Thus in this manager’s mind, the precinct-level units played an essential role in the response to community-nominated problems; without the units, he worried, there would be no consistent outlet in the police workload for the low-level drug crimes that community groups often complain about. Other officers (including one who worked both for a precinct drug unit and for DVD) offered similar accounts of both the roles that the two units played and the importance of the precinct units for dealing with community-nominated problems. Moreover, Portland’s larger Neighborhood Response Teams (NRTs) have played a role analogous to that of the precinct drug units for non-drug crimes. The NRTs have an explicit mandate to act as liaisons with community groups in the city, and in practice this means that their workload has been heavily focused on disorder. (One NRT

sergeant explained that his unit “takes care of all those neighborhood problems, whether it’s juveniles drinking in the park, abandoned cars, motorcycles in the park—you deal with the minor issues.”)

Like Portland, several of the cases revealed the development of new, protected organizational spaces that were designed to respond to newly salient community demands that the rest of the department neglected (such as the demand to do something about drug houses even when they contained little more than rock crumbs). Such reforms led to divided organizations that pursued different values in different organizational sanctuaries. Selznick describes this pattern of *intraorganizational* segregation in his discussion of “precarious values,” suggesting that such values need administrative autonomy (at least at the outset) in order for them to take root (1957:126ff.). That strategy turns the organization as a whole into a fox (in that the organization as a whole pursues multiple and potentially conflicting aims), but it leaves individual officers in the role of the hedgehog; that may be why *intraorganizational* conflict broke out in every case that used it. Even in Lowell, where the Police Department tried to ensure that the new “disorder units” would not take away from emergency response through a massive expansion of new staffing (it expanded the sworn force by about 50% over four years to open new neighborhood units focused mostly on disorder), tensions still flared up between the neighborhood units and the older cruiser force. As in many community-policing agencies, officers in the cruiser force viewed their counterparts in the precinct as engaged in unimportant and sometimes even disruptive work

Partnerships and Institutional Change

These two strategies, each with their characteristic problems, have nevertheless helped these departments to institutionalize a concern for disorder and thereby pave the way for partnerships with communities that care deeply about soft crime. What they have in common is that both expand the range of police values. They seek to elevate concern for order maintenance above its traditionally subordinate place in the mix of police priorities, even though the new emphasis on soft crime may come at the expense of hard crime (as when an agency beefs up “disorder” units by taking officers away from other assignments, or when it encourages officers to spend time looking into soft crime even if it takes them out of service for a potential hot call). In this way, community partnerships demand fundamental institutional change—a change in which values the police will promote. Moreover, change means not only a different mandate but also a more complicated one—a mandate that values multiple goals that po-

tentially compete with each other, since none of these departments abandoned their concern for hard crime.

Harassment and Authority

The broken windows thesis calls for a more lavish use of police authority, arguing that police should intervene in less legally serious transgressions in order to head off more serious crime. It thereby has the potential to exacerbate a tension, always present in policing, between the exercise of authority (often approved or even demanded by the community) and the desires of the community to be left alone (sometimes expressed by the same community members who asked for stronger enforcement). Leaving aside the serious issue of police brutality, this tension arises in many commonplace aspects of policing. James Q. Wilson described it nearly thirty years ago in an essay on police-community relations that focused especially on distrust in the black community: "The harder the police try to catch criminals, the more likely they are to rub the raw sores of community discontent," Wilson wrote.

There are very few strategies by which the police can reduce crime rates . . . but such strategies as they have require them to place a community under close surveillance and thus to multiply the occasions on which citizens are likely to be stopped, questioned, or observed. Inevitably, the great majority of the persons stopped will be innocent of any wrongdoing; inevitably, many of these innocent persons will believe the police are "harassing" them; inevitably, innocent blacks will believe that they are being "harassed" because of their race. Thus, if the law-abiding majority in a black community demand "more police protection," they are likely to be calling for police activity that will increase the frequency of real or perceived police abuses. If, on the other hand, they demand an end to "police harassment," they are likely to be ending police practices that have some (no one knows how much) crime prevention value. (Wilson 1972:63–64)

Community policing holds out the hope of resolving this tension by strengthening police legitimacy through partnerships, trying to generate community support for enforcement before it happens. If concerns about police harassment interfere with the development of partnerships in the first place, however, police must confront those concerns as *part of* the development of partnerships in the way that Boston police did in the Ten-Point Coalition (where church leaders offered their support only after police agreed to observe agreed-upon boundaries of fairness and respect). None of these cases reveals unequivocal success dealing with this difficult issue, and in fact none even describes a large and systematic effort to face it. Most of them do suggest the nature of the problem, and a few even reveal the strategies that

individual practitioners have used to respond to the tension that Wilson describes.

Partnerships and the Charge of Harassment

Knoxville offers one example of how perceptions of harassment can limit an otherwise successful effort to develop community partnerships. The Knoxville Police Department's (KPD's) most visible attempt at community outreach came to fruition late in 1994, when the KPD undertook its first community-wide planning session to produce a "crime control plan" for the city, in which police and residents would jointly identify public safety goals for the city and design initiatives to accomplish them. In the process, the department hoped to drum up community support and activity, and it planned to create a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of some of the most active members of the planning sessions.

This process turned out hundreds of community participants for the annual planning sessions and created a steady group of about three dozen people who attend monthly CAC meetings. It had difficulty expanding the small base of participation among blacks despite extensive efforts by CAC leaders to reach out to minority neighborhoods, however. Many police and community leaders attribute this failure to general feelings of distrust between Knoxville blacks and the KPD, and surveys at the time confirmed that this distrust was substantial (Lyons & Scheb 1998). Thus in Knoxville, widespread difficulty building partnerships among blacks may have had as much to do with general issues of police-community relations as it did with the specific interactions between police and individual would-be partners.

It is always difficult to understand these complex dynamics, but in Knoxville there are reasons to believe the issue of "harassment" lies behind the deep distrust that divides police from much of the city's black community. First, the city has recently experienced three high-profile incidents in which black men died at the hands of police, creating a reaction from the black community in which many accused the police of overusing their authority. One incident came in the fall of 1997, two days before my visit to Knoxville, when police shot a black man named Juan Lorenzo Daniels who had threatened to kill himself. The incident became a *cause célèbre* in the city, turning out some 350 residents to a City Council meeting to protest police actions. According to the KPD, the hostage negotiators who responded spoke with the man for over an hour but opened fire when he lunged at them with a hunting knife. Particularly controversial was the fact that officers reportedly fired four rounds each at the man's chest, a barrage that some community members found excessive. Calls to explain and change the police policy for the use

of force and to hold police more accountable through a civilian review board became widespread.

Most important, these incidents arose in the context of more general feelings that police overused their authority. While high-profile incidents may have exacerbated police-community tensions, they did not create them. Police themselves admit that their day-to-day behavior may alienate many Knoxville blacks, and some of them agree that this behavior ought to be changed. As one KPD manager puts it,

The basis for the problem is what's been out there emerging and bubbling: That is, traffic stops that are not supported by reasonable suspicion and probable cause. Disrespect for people. Discourteous behavior by officers. Lack of accountability by the first line supervisors, and this thing called professionalism. I mean those are the real issues. If we took care of those four issues, we wouldn't be here today talking about a shooting where a mentally deranged person is going to try to kill a policeman, or make a policeman kill him—however it comes out.¹¹

Particularly in Knoxville's predominantly black public housing developments, police admit that many residents believe police treat them unfairly—that they are more likely to stop them than whites, that they do not treat them respectfully when they do stop them, and that they may even use excessive force. Police themselves in these areas deny that they break the law or abuse their authority, but one admitted that they “walk that fine line.” Police, feeling that many community members will not respect their authority unless they exercise it, will not, as one officer put it, “go out of their way to be nice,” and they will not hesitate to stop a suspicious person, press an ambiguous answer, or pry into an unclear situation.¹² The suspicious attitude of police is apparently

¹¹ On the community side, an African-American activist in another city explains his past reluctance to participate in police-community partnerships in the same terms: “[I was not] the one most likely to be talking to the police. I think that that's probably a sentiment that you will find throughout the African-American community. . . . Because the police were always viewed—and acted like—an occupying force in black communities. The only time they came in here or you had any interaction with them was when there was a problem. And they've done some terrible things in the community. They were responsible for the death of a guy . . . and generally a kick-ass attitude the police have had. . . . Talking to people any way they want to talk to them; stopping them for any reason they want to stop them.” In explaining his distrust of the police, this activist intertwines high-profile incidents with day-to-day use of authority by officers—the unjustified stops, the disrespectful police attitudes, and the stern use of authority—just as the Knoxville manager quoted in the text suspected.

¹² Consider an example of how this suspicious attitude manifests itself. During one ride-along in a largely black neighborhood, I accompanied an officer to a call that turned out to be a medical emergency. While waiting for EMS, one of the officers in the apartment skeptically looked through a pile of jewelry on a cabinet as if to see whether anything had been stolen. When I discussed this incident later with another officer, he agreed that my interpretation of what the suspicious officer was doing was probably accurate—and also that such “investigations” were inappropriate. (“We were there for medical assistance,” he complained.) But he noted that such behavior was not uncommon in the precinct, and he had recently asked his Lieutenant for a transfer because he felt that this

palpable to many community members, who believe their privacy is being violated and their rights ignored, as evidenced by a 1998 survey that reported that a majority of Knoxville's black community believes that police treat blacks poorly (Lyons & Scheb 1998). The backlash from incidents like the Daniels shooting only puts the police on edge further and strengthens their conviction that they must act firmly. Trust can easily begin to spiral downward.

In interviews about these events, Knoxville's Police Chief did not deny the problems that his department, in common with so many, confronted in this regard, and several months after the Daniels shooting he and the city's mayor acceded to community demands for a civilian review board in order to help build trust that police would exercise their authority properly. How these changes will affect police-community partnerships remains to be seen. The important point here is that through 1998, at least, the KPD's efforts to develop partnerships in Knoxville's black community ran into serious obstacles. For the reasons just described, it appears that those obstacles were at least partly grounded in concerns about police harassment, which reflect dissatisfaction with many aspects of the agency's use of authority.

Dealing with the Charge of Harassment

The Riverside Police Department (RPD) faced many of these problems as well, but it did make some temporary headway with them in the predominantly Latino Casa Blanca neighborhood, which had historically raised the most vocal concerns about police harassment. Part of the problem in Casa Blanca was an entrenched history of conflict in which both the police and the community felt aggrieved, creating the same spiral of distrust that took hold in Knoxville. Then-Lieutenant Jerry Carroll experienced this sense first-hand, and he concluded that the only solution was to "wipe the slate clean." To do that, he and other RPD managers sought to staff the neighborhood with new officers who were willing to "see things in a fresh light," as the RPD's Deputy Chief (who assisted the Chief with assignments) put it. Moreover, Carroll tried to connect with new groups that had not been active in community leadership, such as senior citizens and a group of residents who had contact with a local community center and the Catholic Church. Those groups, Carroll believed, might be more constructive community partners, and he hoped that they would be less critical of police than what he refers to as

style of policing was not for him. Although the Lieutenant tried to dissuade the officer from transferring, the Lieutenant reportedly conceded that the officer had understood the "tone" of policing in the precinct accurately.

the “old guard” in Casa Blanca—the traditional neighborhood leadership that had historically been very critical of police.¹³

However, Riverside did not bypass the “old guard” entirely, and its new partners also raised concerns about police harassment that Carroll’s team eventually tried to address. For example, the RPD traditionally responded to crime waves in Casa Blanca with zero-tolerance crackdowns—heavy enforcement of laws concerning minor offenses in order to reestablish order and arrest those involved in wrongdoing. But Carroll believed this strategy alienated the community: “We could not handle that particular area by going in and using zero tolerance,” he explains. “It had to be done from the inside out.” The change in tactics did seem to register with residents, for on occasions when officers from elsewhere in the RPD had to patrol the neighborhood, complaints about harassment returned, according to officers who worked in the area.

Moreover, Riverside’s Chief at the time, Ken Fortier, developed credibility even with Casa Blanca’s “old guard” by taking their concerns about the use of authority more seriously than his predecessors had. Part of this effort centered on an exhaustive (and for most officers, immensely unpopular) revision of internal affairs and citizen complaint policies and procedures. Part of it also involved a more general sensitivity to the high-profile incidents that the department faced. For example, in the spring of 1993, officers became embroiled in a minor riot after pulling over a car that matched the description of one that had been used in a robbery. Residents had allegedly tried to interfere with officers as they arrested two men in the car, and officers used their batons and a police dog to bring the crowd under control. When residents complained that the police had overreacted, used unnecessary force, and provoked the crowd by behaving unprofessionally, Fortier called for an internal review of the incident. With the results of the investigation in, the Chief insisted that the officers had not used unnecessary force, maintaining that “there is nothing at all right with interfering with an officer who is trying to make a lawful arrest.” But the Chief did begin a review of the RPD’s policy on the use of police dogs, and he disciplined an officer who was found to have made a vulgar remark to the crowd. Although some residents were disappointed with the finding, many apparently felt that it was an improvement over the past. “I think that they’re trying,” one local community member told reporters in response to questions about the incident.

¹³ Many other cities seem to have adopted a similar strategy to deal with concerns about harassment, trying to link up with less critical “communities” in order to bypass those concerns. In many cases, however, the strategy backfired by surfacing destructive conflict within the community (e.g., in both St. Petersburg and Norfolk). Those experiences suggest that the RPD’s efforts to reach out to new community factions in Casa Blanca cannot fully explain the successful partnerships that they eventually created in the neighborhood.

“There’s definitely been a change since Ken Fortier’s been here and I think that’s been appreciated” (Ogul 1993a). In any case, the heavily covered incident did not seem to seriously damage police-community relations, which a few months later were publicly hailed as the best that either side could remember (Ogul 1993b). Moreover, one long-time Riverside resident and community activist who grew up in the neighborhood explains that although he personally did not always see eye-to-eye with Fortier, many in the community respected the Chief:

In the Casa Blanca area he was well respected, because he filled in the gap that has been like a void. The community at large did not feel that they were being listened to before him. And he went out to the community and heard them. . . . There were a few killings over there by the police department—they called that self-defense, of course, but we call it killings any time a person dies. But he went out there and he tried to justify, in person, how the police department runs and what are the criteria [for use of force]. And maybe the explanation wasn’t accepted, but at least he tried. With that he received the respect.

The RPD’s attention to the use of force was recognized by community members like this one, who saw this issue as a central obstacle to better police-community relations.

Within the Police Department, however, the efforts to rein in the use of authority created significant backlash. Carroll’s group was criticized for cozying up to the enemy; the department-wide elimination of crackdowns was extremely unpopular; and Fortier in particular came under fire for treating the “threat” in Casa Blanca so cavalierly. All of these difficulties raise questions about how sustainable the Casa Blanca partnerships could be, particularly in the wake of Chief Fortier’s nearly forced departure from Riverside. Nevertheless, within one subset of the department, and for some period of time, a severe presumption of mistrust for the Police Department subsided in this community, and police and residents were able to work successfully on a wide variety of joint efforts for the first time in memory.

This accomplishment, limited though it is, seems to have to do with the direct way that Fortier and Carroll addressed the substance of the harassment complaints. Many police departments facing complaints about harassment have tried to respond in other ways—by physically getting closer to the community through foot patrol and substations, by making a point of following through on their commitments more consistently, and by finding new opportunities to interact with the “good” members of the community (such as community meetings and athletic leagues). For example, during the 1990s, the new police leadership in Albany faced entrenched mistrust in the black community that centered on concerns about police harassment, but the APD’s main strategy for building partnerships in predominantly

black neighborhoods focused on opening a substation in the neighborhood in order “to bring police closer to the community,” as one top manager put it. As a vocal political minority pointed out at the time, this decision sidestepped the central complaint in these neighborhoods, which centered on the use of authority. At the time the new substation was proposed, some of Albany’s dissident politicians called on the Police Department to enroll the area’s officers in cultural sensitivity training, but city leaders balked. To this day, APD members concede that they have not been successful at developing extensive partnerships in the city’s black community.

What distinguishes Riverside’s efforts in Casa Blanca from approaches like Albany’s is that the RPD addressed the use of authority directly—despite the fact that doing so had real implications for the strategies that police could use to cut crime. Fortier made extensive revisions to internal affairs; he and Carroll eliminated the particularly inflammatory tactic of “crackdowns”; and the Chief revisited other substantive policies about the use of authority, such as when police may use their police dogs for crowd control, under what conditions police should engage in vehicle pursuits, and what steps they needed to go through to execute search warrants. In this way, the Casa Blanca case echoes the events that Winship and Berrien (1999) describe in Boston. In both cases, sustaining a community partnership required greater attention to parsimonious and fair use of authority. The Riverside case gives a detailed picture of the way in which one police department institutionalized that commitment, revealing the organizational dimension of a police style that is apparently similar to the one that supported the Ten-Point Coalition.

Nevertheless, an examination of the way RPD officers perceived their agency’s reforms suggests that such accommodations are not as straightforward as the Boston experience may suggest. Many Riverside officers believed that Fortier and Carroll’s reforms went too far, particularly in the area of citizen complaints, insisting that heightened scrutiny of their actions has led police to withdraw from much community interaction altogether. “In this type of business, we do generate a lot of complaints—you know, unfounded complaints,” one community policing officer explained. “People do not like being told to shut your party down, keep your dog quiet, keep your kids off the neighbor’s lawn. So we generate complaints. And at one time, if we got a complaint, it would just about be found as a founded complaint no matter what we did.” The result, the officer continued, was that officers sought to avoid proactive assignments, and those who took them sometimes did so halfheartedly. From the viewpoint of these officers, the reforms undermined proactive enforcement. They were not a costless choice to emphasize one type of enforcement rather than another. Instead, officers exper-

perienced them as an infringement on their ability to do their jobs in an appropriate way. In fact, reforms to internal affairs were one of a small number that radicalized the police union and led to an all-out assault on Fortier's leadership.

Without a detailed picture of how Boston officers viewed the Ten-Point Coalition, it is not possible to know whether that effort was able to avoid the kinds of problems that have recently arisen in Riverside. If similar problems have arisen in Boston, there are reasons to believe that it will be difficult to sustain the Ten-Point Coalition. On the other hand, if Boston has been able to avoid such problems as these, it would be valuable to undertake more detailed research into the Ten-Point Coalition in order to explain how it was able to forestall officer resistance. Doing that would mean identifying the specific arguments and organizational reforms that were used in Boston to alleviate officer concerns about their department's commitment to effective law enforcement.¹⁴

In the meantime, the Casa Blanca example, at least, does reflect a conflict between order maintenance and liberty of the sort that Wilson describes. In order to build trust in a community where harassment concerns were prominent, Riverside police had to address the source of those concerns in their policies on how freely they will use authority—whether or not they would use “crackdowns,” what principles would guide the use of field interrogation, when physical force could be used, and so on. Police who view crime control as their sole objective will likely see those changes as undesirable constraints. They may be drawn to tangential reforms like ministations or beat integrity to respond to community concerns, but such responses simply misunderstand the nature of those concerns. What distinguished the Riverside managers in Casa Blanca was their ability to broaden their perspective beyond the need for police authority to control crime—to recognize that parsimonious and fair use of authority were important ends in their own right—and to convince a crucial subset of officers to “wipe the slate clean” and do the same. By doing that, Casa Blanca officers could address concerns about harassment directly, paving the way for what may have been the neighborhood's first police-community partnership.

Police departments like Riverside's clearly confront difficult and serious choices. As Wilson put it, “Even under the best of circumstances, . . . there are limits to how much can be done. There is a fundamental, and to a degree inescapable, conflict between strategies designed to cut street crime (saturation patrols,

¹⁴ One possibility is the stress placed in Boston on the “bad apple” theory of criminal offending—the idea that police should focus on “the truly bad youth”—which did not seem to play a prominent role in Riverside. That way of framing the law enforcement task may hold considerable promise for promoting effective crime control as well as parsimonious use of authority.

close surveillance) and those designed to minimize tensions (avoid ‘street stops,’ reduce surveillance, ignore youth groups)” (Wilson 1972:89–90). The question, in an era of renewed emphasis on community partnerships and community relations, is whether existing policies and practices strike the right balance—at least until police develop better ways to be proactive that do not inflame community tensions. Attending to this balance is likely to be especially important for departments that have adopted order-maintenance tactics. All else being equal, more liberal use of police authority—citing people who play their boom boxes too loudly, ticketing drivers who flout traffic rules, breaking up groups that residents complain about—will require more sensitive ways of using that authority if police-community tensions are not to be inflamed.

Conclusion

These two conflicts do not exhaust the disagreements that emerged in these cities’ police-community partnerships. I have discussed other conflicts that arose in these eleven cases elsewhere (Thacher 1999, 2001a), and research that focuses on other police agencies will no doubt identify further value conflicts that police-community partnerships face. In doing so, such research can add to our knowledge about the challenges that partnerships create for practice. Nevertheless, having reviewed the challenges that arose in these cases, I believe that the two conflicts described in this article capture some of the most significant obstacles to police-community cooperation in these cities. Moreover, the strategies police used in these examples may be more general than the specific conflicts that evoked them. If these two arguments are correct, then two interrelated lessons for the study and practice of policing follow.

The Changing Police Mandate

At one level, the fact that these two conflicts are so important suggests the nature of the pressure that community partnerships put on the police mandate. As they develop community partnerships, police will likely feel a need to strike a new balance among these elements of their mandate—especially paying more attention to soft crime relative to hard crime, and engaging in more parsimonious and sensitive use of police authority (even if doing that does limit crime-control efforts to some degree). For police who end up accepting these aims, what is crucial is to understand the aspects of police organization that are relevant to these values. For example, parsimony in the use of authority arises in things like the decision to use police crackdowns, criteria for initiating field interrogations, and the manner in which police use

their authority. By making changes in the relevant organizational systems, police adjust their aims and practices in ways that may make them more agreeable to community sentiment. They thereby make it possible to work in the sort of joint collaboration that partnerships imply—one that makes great demands on mutual agreement about which problems are important and how to tackle them.

The essential point is that which partnerships are viable depends on the values the police subscribe to. The community policing field needs to recognize this relationship between partnerships and basic values more explicitly, for the failure to emphasize it can make reform seem too simple—an apple-pie issue of “getting closer to the community” or a technical issue of effective implementation. That naïveté, in turn, may leave many police departments unprepared for the type of resistance that emerges and incapable of understanding it. The question of community policing is not simply “should police work with communities” but a more substantive and contentious question about the values that police should promote.

In short, the ambition to build community partnerships may lead to substantive shifts in police priorities that are not directly envisioned in the aspiration to work in partnership with the community. In Riverside, for example, the effort to build community partnerships in Casa Blanca unexpectedly called police attention back to the conflict between liberty and order and led them to put more emphasis on the first value. Almost forty years ago, Jerome Skolnick argued that persistent forces within policing lead police to emphasize the “order” side of this dilemma, subordinating ideals of due process, rule of law, and liberty to the competing ideal of crime control. There is no reason to believe that the forces Skolnick identified have subsided. Nevertheless, the aspiration to develop a broad range of community partnerships may create an important counterpressure, since police departments that continue to subordinate liberty to order may face a crisis of legitimacy if they remain unable to sustain partnerships in neighborhoods of color. To be sure, Skolnick argued that public expectations themselves were among the forces that led police to emphasize crime control at the expense of due process. Nevertheless, while Skolnick may be right to say that the community constituted as a “general public” typically cares more about the maintenance of order than about liberty, he may have taken the point too far in concluding that society always gets exactly the sort of policing that it deserves (Skolnick 1975:239–40). That view casts the police in an overly passive light. The nature of the public sentiments that police are exposed to is shaped by the characteristics of the channels that they construct for making those sentiments known (Thacher 2001a; March & Olsen 1995). A police agency that is accountable to the public only through

the electoral process, the appointment of police leadership, and annual budgeting (Skolnick 1975:242) may experience public demands in the way that Sklonick describes. As these cases suggest, however, community leaders in many neighborhoods of color often care deeply about the use of authority, so pressure to build successful partnerships with them may sometimes give new salience to due process ideals. In cities such as Albany and Knoxville, police recognize that they have been least successful in developing partnerships in communities of color. That failure is very significant given the ideology of community policing, and it may call attention back to a search for the source of the problem. It seems to have begun to do that in Knoxville, and it clearly did in Casa Blanca.

Thus as police pursue partnerships to avail themselves of the resources and skills that outside groups control, they simultaneously expose themselves to values that they may have neglected in the past as they tried to maintain a clear organizational focus. Dilemmas such as the conflict between liberty and order reemerge and call for renewed attention as earlier resolutions unravel under the pressure of new forms of community accountability—accountability to a variety of particular groups more localized than “the general public.” Thus the imperative to develop partnerships can resurface dilemmas thought to have been previously resolved, and it puts pressure on police departments to shift their priorities in particular directions. Whether and when departments *should* shift their priorities in these ways is, of course, a significant and difficult question that cannot be thoroughly considered here—each of the examples I have described here could be criticized from a normative perspective. Nevertheless, this article has specified some of the elements of the necessary compromises so that they can be brought out openly in police departments and cities that have embarked on this reform, and so that future normative scholarship can take up these issues (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001).

Embracing Complexity: The Hedgehog and the Fox

At the same time, tension can never be removed from the mix of values held by police and community groups. Different communities think differently about these matters, and indeed the same community may think differently about them on different days. Most community groups in these cases took positions similar to those in the examples described here, but exceptions certainly exist (such as neighborhood groups that wish the police would stick to serious crime and communities that wish police would use more authority even when citizens must endure it themselves). This fragmentation within the community implies that the police, by internalizing values that please some groups,

may alienate others, or that they may find themselves traveling down contradictory paths to simultaneously please partners with opposite desires. The two conflicts described in this article have exactly that sort of relationship to each other: Order maintenance policing almost inevitably involves greater use of authority, so accommodating the community's concept of safety risks exacerbating complaints about harassment.

Even if the community were of one mind, there would be inescapable tension in the police mandate because police cannot accept every priority communities bring them. As an important element of the division of labor, police institutionalize certain goals—such as a concern for serious crime and for bringing criminals to justice—that no other institution does in quite the same way. If they completely abandoned their current mandate, society would lose its ability to pursue an important set of values.

Consequently, police practitioners engaged in partnerships need to combine different and sometimes contradictory values. These cases reveal several strategies that practitioners have used to accomplish that task. Some police managers discovered metaphors that partially *synthesized* distinct values, as in the case of the broken windows thesis that conflates order maintenance and crime control. Others created *divided organizations*, as when several agencies created special units that institutionalized a concern for soft crime side-by-side with a continuing concern for hard crime. Still others searched for *balance* between conflicting ideals, resisting the hedgehog-like urge to presume that all good things must reinforce one another, as in the case of the Casa Blanca managers who reined in the use of authority even though they were aware that those constraints might restrict some types of proactive policing. Like Wilson (1972), these managers saw the central question facing police as how much liberty to trade for how much order; they did not expect that the two values could be completely reconciled with one another (even if they hoped—again like Wilson—that the dilemma might be softened around its edges). Their experience suggests that it may be counterproductive to claim that there is no conflict at all between these two values. On the contrary, to the extent that these managers succeeded, they did so precisely because they recognized that each value describes an important and irreducible part of the police mandate.

These strategies all represent struggles to accommodate multiple and conflicting values. A relatively insulated police agency can avoid them more easily than an agency that cultivates community partnerships. When police open new conduits to groups in the environment, however, they unwittingly create the need for more complex strategies of practice, especially new strategies for responding to conflicting values. For that reason, police who aim to forge effective partnerships must be as comfortable as Ber-

lin's fox with the contradictions inherent in bringing diverse partners together. This analysis suggests that police-community partnerships are most likely to be successful if police cultivate the temperament Berlin describes and if they use the more specific strategies described here that articulate that temperament. In this way, community policing could ultimately have far-reaching implications for police culture, where single-minded focus on crime control at the expense of other values has been bound up with an immensely insular occupational ethos (Westley 1971). If community policing chips away at that insularity, it should not be surprising if it also chips away at the hedgehog-like mentality that has been associated with it.

It cannot be assumed without further argument that any development of this sort should be welcomed. The fox can be inconsistent, hypocritical, and even ineffective—paralyzed by awareness of competing imperatives, and unable to make rational decisions because too many competing considerations are relevant (Millgram 1997). An organization of foxes risks becoming an organization at sea, without a firm commitment to particular values that give an organization the character that sustains it (Selznick 1957). Given these dangers, what justification for such a temperament can there be?

Berlin himself suggests that the answer lies in the need for moral humility in a pluralistic society and in the fact that such humility does not preclude an appropriate resoluteness:

So long as only one ideal is the true goal, it will always seem to men that no means can be too difficult, no price too high, to do whatever is required to realize the ultimate goal. Such certainty is one of the great justifications of fanaticism, compulsion, persecution. . . . If there is only one solution to the puzzle, then the only problems are firstly how to find it, then how to realize it, and finally how to convert others to the solution by persuasion or by force. But if this is not so . . . then the path is open to empiricism, pluralism, toleration, compromise. Toleration is historically the product of the realization of the irreconcilability of dogmatic faiths, and the practical improbability of complete victory of one over the other. Those who wished to survive realized that they had to tolerate error. They gradually came to see the merits of diversity, and so became skeptical about definitive solutions in human affairs. (Berlin 1997:323–24)

Berlin's thoughts may seem far removed from the mundane business of everyday police work, but the fanaticism he describes does unfortunately resonate with some policing experience, particularly the single-mindedness with which police have sometimes pursued the maintenance of order and their own authority at the expense of ideals such as due process (Skolnick 1975; Westley 1971). More positively, the more-sober temperament that Berlin idealizes, as well as the moral humility it involves, echoes many

compelling normative conceptions of the police role that have been put forward by scholars. In particular, it echoes the “tragic view of human nature” that William Ker Muir (1977) defended as the essential component of good policework—one that recognizes the need to use authority but tempers that recognition by treating force as a necessary evil. Moreover, Berlin’s pluralistic conception of values also resonates with the difficult ideal that Skolnick held up for police—one that holds the police to be “as much an institution dedicated to the achievement of legality in society as they are an official social organization designed to control misconduct” in order to militate against the tendency of police to become fanatical in their pursuit of crime control (Skolnick 1975:239). Community policing supports these positive ideals by exposing police more systematically to a diversity of values and by putting a premium on their ability to secure cooperation from the groups that are committed to those values. It thereby has the potential to do more than any other reform agenda to cope with one of the central problems in modern policing—the tendency of police to lose sight of those aspects of their mandate that are not directly related to the control of serious crime (Skolnick 1975; Thacher 2001b).

To be sure, there is a real danger that community policing (like similar reforms in other areas of government) will undermine important purposes served by institutional fragmentation, saddling practitioners with overly complex decisions that they can only make badly. However, that risk seems to have been kept under control in these cases, and, more important, it is balanced by an important benefit: the forces that community partnerships create for organizations to attend to neglected dimensions of their mandate. The strains and tensions of a more open police department, constantly exposed to and pressured by the views of the groups it encounters, can certainly be great, and it may be that the period of community policing will lead to its opposite: Greater calls for police to resist the sometimes parochial demands made on them and to concern themselves with internal professionalization and organizational autonomy once again. An earlier era of police history demonstrates that communities *will* call for these things as well as openness (Fogelson 1977). Nevertheless, the fact that this may be so in the future is not necessarily a reason for police to resist community demands today—it is simply to recognize the complexity of the task that community policing has embarked on and the deep social dilemmas that has surfaced. As these cases suggest, that task is challenging but not insurmountable, and efforts to resolve it may represent the most promising approach that is currently available for combating an enduring challenge in American policing.

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