

A PERSPECTIVE ON POLICE PROFESSIONALIZATION

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In the reform literature on the police, ranging from Hopkins' *Our Lawless Police* and the Wickersham Commission Reports in the 1930s to the Presidential Commissions of the 1960s,¹ the argument has always been made that effective police reform waits upon professionalization. It is implied that better personnel, with better training, will provide better performance of police tasks. The recruitment and training proposals that are offered suggest that criteria such as a college degree are necessary in order to encourage adherence to "high professional standards of law enforcement."² Few have challenged³ the implicit assumption that professionalization is indeed efficacious, despite the fact that clear evidence of better performance has never been offered.

Unfortunately, the reformers' claim is marred by two flaws: first, there are no clear criteria for what would count as better performance of police tasks; and second, we know very little about the behaviors that professionalization has produced or will produce. In other words, no one is presently in a position to accept or reject the professionalization solution. The variety of normative standpoints from which perceptions of the police role stem are not defeasible by the simple assertion of professionalism; if neutral competence is to be the claim, the relevant behaviors must still be specified to enable one to judge their neutrality and their competence. Otherwise, the "better performance of police tasks" will become an unexamined label rather than a description whose validity might be tested against appropriate criteria. It is true, of course, that a specification of behaviors will not itself produce the appropriate criteria; but neither will such criteria evolve from a vacuum. We cannot make adequate policy judgments in the absence of information about the real world possibilities for behavior modification.

In this light, this paper provides a structure for analyzing efforts at professionalizing the police. It does not indicate the criteria according to which the performance of police tasks can be evaluated. Rather, the paper furnishes the more basic footing from which the criteria can be generated. To this end, Part I is a critique of the professionalization model for reform, Part II presents a typology of police roles constructed to illuminate the several dimensions of police professionalization, and Part III suggests some applications of the typology to policy-related research.

I

The thesis of professionalization seems particularly appropriate in the framework of our current crisis of corruption. For professionalization is basically an argument for a certain kind of *control* on police behavior. Certain behaviors are regarded by the public, or some segment of the public, as unacceptable and professionalization is then proposed as a means of controlling police conduct so as to preclude these unacceptable behaviors. This solution is chosen because apparently the reformers are well aware of the phenomenon of police solidarity⁴ which underlies what James Q. Wilson calls the "code of the system" (1963). It is the strength of "the system" that permits resistance to external controls even when the target of reform is behavior which the code of the system would ordinarily reject, such as corruption. William Westley has argued (1970) that the strength of the system eventually undermines opposition to corruption as well; other kinds of unacceptable (to some) behaviors, such as street justice and intimidation practices, are defined by the code of the system as necessary means to the overall goal of law enforcement. Professionalization is seen as a solution to these control problems because it prescribes an externally based but directly competing code and requires personnel who adhere to that new code rather than to the internal controls of the system.

Having defined the nature of the problem to fit their model of control, the professionalists argue in the following way. Given the existence of unacceptable behaviors by officers, it is necessary to impose controls which are external to that group and which act to change the officers' perceptions of what constitutes acceptable behaviors on the job. The process of imposing these controls is the process of professionalization, which produces a set of role perceptions such that their job-related be-

haviors are deemed acceptable or unacceptable by reference to the values and constraints inherent in their professional code. Consequently, the argument concludes, the outcome of professionalization will be acceptable behaviors. While this is only a crude reproduction of the full professionalist argument, the essentials are accurately portrayed: professional controls are imposed to counteract police commitment to unacceptable job-related behaviors with the hopes of establishing a set of acceptable role perceptions and behaviors that the officers will internalize.

Clearly, such a program leaves a number of important questions unanswered. First, the criteria according to which behaviors are to count as acceptable are not self-evident. This is, of course, a version of the problem noted above with respect to the criteria for determining a better performance of police tasks. While it is relatively easy to identify what constitutes negative behavior (e.g., it is unacceptable for police officers to take bribes), it is not so easy to specify the correct behaviors; this is especially true in a context where functional questions going to effectiveness are raised. On matters such as use of weapons, "aggressive patrol," and differential enforcement by neighborhood standards, the acceptable behaviors—not only correct, but effective—are neither obvious nor noncontroversial. This being the case, the assumption that professionalization will lead to acceptable behaviors must be held suspect, if only on grounds of ambiguity. The criteria according to which acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are identified should be established independently of the professionalization argument in order to avoid an obvious circularity.

The second question left unanswered arises at the point of identifying professionalization with a particular kind of control. The distinction between externally and internally based controls is reasonably clear in the police case, but it is not clear what form professional controls can take when a major purpose is to prevent police officers from taking advantage of the discretionary potential of their jobs (Goldstein, 1960; LaFave, 1969; Skolnick, 1966; Wilson, 1968). A central feature of professionalism is the relationship between a commitment to certain principles of conduct and the necessity to exercise discretionary judgment. But policing entails a constant exercise of discretion whether professional principles obtain or not, and this very factor has been a major genesis of unacceptable behaviors. Con-

sequently, it is at least *prima facie* unclear why the introduction of professionalism, with its dependence on discretionary judgment, should be relied upon to eradicate the evils of police discretion (Chevigny, 1969; Skolnick, 1966). Indeed, the prevailing mode of professionalized control in police departments today is deliberately centralized and nondiscretionary (Bordua and Reiss, 1966), reflecting the dilemma in its most pragmatic form. The second question left unanswered by the professionalist program, then, goes to the nature of the control being prescribed for the police setting.

The third question grows out of the identification of professionalism with a particular set of role perceptions. According to the reform thesis, a professional police officer will (by virtue of being professional) perceive his role in terms of serving positive functions such as preventing crime and helping to solve community problems. This orientation is important because it generates certain kinds of expectations, both in the officer and in his clientele, which reinforce the sense of positive contributions to the community. Consequently, the status of the police officer is defined by his own role perceptions in terms of positive rather than negative values, and it is these values that form the basis for efficacious professional controls. But studies of so-called "professionalized police departments" indicate that traditional negative functions—coercive law enforcement, order maintenance, and the like—are predominant in the role perceptions of most officers (Skolnick, 1966; Wilson, 1968). Furthermore, recent research (Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1969; Neiderhoffer, 1967; White, 1970) suggests that several different sets of role perceptions can develop within the context of professionalization. In short, if it is true, as the reform literature insists (Smith, 1960; Wilson, 1961), that recruitment criteria and training objectives must be defined by "professional standards" for the reason that the product will thereby see himself as a professional rather than as a necessary evil, then the matter of role perception is critical to professionalization. But what is then wholly unclear is the exact nature of the requisite professional role perceptions in police officers, especially in the light of the varied research findings.

Perhaps a more bothersome aspect of the role perception problem is the assumption in the professionalist program that the desired outcome of professionalization—namely acceptable behaviors—is necessarily linked to a particular set of role perceptions. This is not only a question of discovering which role

perceptions should go together with which behaviors, as raised in the preceding paragraphs; it is also a question of the relationship between particular psychological phenomena and presumably resulting conduct. Even if it were clear what should count as acceptable behaviors (in the defined sense) and as professional role perceptions, the claim that the former would necessarily follow from the latter is surely suspect. And yet, the professionalist program is premised on just such an assumption. A variety of factors might intervene between role perception and behavior in the police case, but the professionalist program does not take account of the possibility of disjunctions of professional controls and police conduct. Instead, it prescribes the inculcation of a professional code *in order to* generate acceptable behaviors.

None of the issues raised above represents a fatal objection to the professionalization thesis, for these are essentially empirical questions. But the fact that such fundamental questions remain unanswered reveals the extent of the information gap between prescriptions in the reform literature and the possibilities for effective implementation. The discussion that follows is an attempt to begin the task of bridging that information gap by subjecting some of the critical assumptions of police professionalization to systematic statement and analysis.

II

The movement to professionalize the police is widespread throughout the United States, although its success cannot be measured by noting its existence. What will be argued here is that the professionalization movement has succeeded in progressively differentiating the police role *as perceived by police officers themselves* into several identifiable types. The data on which this argument is based⁵ are neither complete nor conclusive, but they are suggestive of certain kinds of changes occurring. In order to portray these changes and their implications analytically, the characteristics associated with each observed role differentiation have been mapped into a conceptually defined typology of roles.⁶ The resulting analysis is therefore partly a conceptual enterprise, informed and constrained by empirical reference.⁷

Each role type is empirically specifiable by the perceptions and by the behaviors of the role occupants, and these two sets of specifications are measurable independently. But there is no

claim that the analytical descriptions of the role types, to be given below, exhaust the possible descriptions which might emerge through empirical investigation. Indeed, an operational hypothesis derived from the model would undoubtedly assume a continuum between and among the role types along which role perceptions would vary. On the other hand, a typology is useful at this stage of analysis as a means of directing attention to emerging patterns of behavior, and as a theoretical basis for generating operational hypotheses. And as the following discussion will indicate, the typology has considerable empirical justification as well as theoretical utility.

Professionalization implies a change in the means of control and, therefore, certain organizational developments as well. But it is not clear in the police case what sort of change should occur in order to produce the desired end — nor is it clear what sort of change will in fact occur during professionalization. The reason for this ambiguity is that control by virtue of adherence to external standards is currently unworkable in the police context; at least on a large scale. Hence, external controls have been developed largely within the hierarchical structure of the police department itself. In the early battles against corruption, the theory was that police administrators would themselves personify professional standards (Bordua and Reiss, 1966; Wilson, 1961). The emphasis on centralized command was achieved (at least partially) without having to convert large numbers of officers to a new and distressingly different psychological set. Professionalization in the sense of widespread adherence to professional standards has progressed little beyond the command orientation over the years (Bordua and Reiss, 1966; Niederkoffer, 1967; Wilson, 1968).

But it is important to see that there are organizational implications of both versions of professionalization. The command orientation is actually quite different from the paradigm case of professional controls in that it is assumed the individual operates from an assumption of broad discretionary license.⁸ Whether the individual in question is a patrolman on the street or a detective investigating a complicated larceny offense, the command orientation assumes that the police officer's conduct is closely and specifically controlled by norm, policy, and orders issuing from a central command while the discretion orientation assumes that the individual's conduct is controlled by norm and policy issuing from an internalized code.⁹ Standards may be internalized in either case, of course, in the sense of becoming

the operative motivational base for individual behavior; the difference lies in the source of authority to act, whether in a code or in a particular organizational commitment and mode. In the former case, control is centered in the individual, bounded by the practices of the local structure (usually the precinct) out of which he operates; in these terms, the internalized code may have its source in group norms or in standards established external to any particular group. In the case of command orientation, control is centered beyond the individual and beyond the local structure in the command hierarchy of the department. The first analytical distinction on which the typology is based, then, is that between the command-control orientation and the discretion-control orientation.

The second analytical distinction follows in part from the first and in part from the nature of the policing function itself. It is characteristic of patrol work (Niederhoffer, 1967; Wilson, 1968) that there be a sharp differentiation in focus between processes and outcomes. An officer who is inclined to focus primarily on outcomes will find patrol work peculiarly frustrating. Such an officer finds himself constantly observing events in progress with little opportunity to pursue these events to their conclusion. It is satisfying to do as the Queen told Alice: "Begin at the beginning, go on until you come to the end, then stop"; and this kind of satisfaction is denied patrolmen most of the time. They seldom know the fate of accident victims whom they pry loose from wrecked automobiles and send to the hospital. Most individuals with whom they deal must be referred to other agencies for help. Not only are they deprived of the opportunity to "follow things through," so to speak, but they are also prevented from experiencing outcomes judgmentally: that is, seeing X get his just desserts or knowing that Y has been helped. Even watching X "get off" or Y be turned away provides a sense of reality that is missing when one is limited to a passing connection with events.

It is clear that some police officers are more bothered by this state of affairs than others. Interviews suggest that some are apparently motivated toward specific accomplishment while others are satisfied to do their job well regardless of specific outcomes.¹⁰ This last implies that doing one's job well is determined on the basis of criteria that are not tied to the outcomes of events with which police officers deal. Thus, one can be judged a "good cop" without ever having made the "big pinch"; whether the same individual feels himself to be a "good

cop" is another question. Those who do appear to have a very different perception of their role than those who focus on outcomes. The former are concerned with the process of law enforcement and about the efficiency of that process. The implied (and sometimes stated) assumption is that if the process is efficient the outcomes will take care of themselves. These individuals are satisfied to perform discrete interventions into passing events, instead of seeking to control a particular set of events as they develop over time; for what ties their world together is the sense of being part of an efficient, and therefore effective, organization. The role perception of these individuals is largely determined by characteristics of the police organization rather than by problems, personalities, and events external to the organization.

By contrast, officers who focus on outcomes measure their satisfaction, not only in their occupation but in their own performance, against specific accomplishments; for what ties their world together is that sense of accomplishment which derives from coming to grips with particular events and pursuing them to their resolution. Such individuals may achieve that sense of accomplishment vicariously — it is, in other words, not necessarily a matter of personal accomplishment — but they will not be satisfied to focus on the process, efficient or otherwise. The role perception of these officers is relatively unaffected by the characteristics of the police organization, although it may be affected by group norms. The building blocks of this discretion-oriented role perception (Sarbin, 1968) are located outside the organization in the interaction between police and the problems law enforcement confronts.¹¹

In sum, the second analytical distinction in the police role typology embodies the difference between a focus on process and a focus on outcomes. It follows from the first because the focus on process is closely related to the command-control orientation, while the focus on outcomes requires some degree of freedom from organizationally defined controls. The officer who is drawn to events and their resolution is prevented by departmental regulations from pursuing this concern beyond the scope of his immediate duties. These departmental regulations are themselves designed to promote "efficient police work," certainly not to frustrate the concerns of officers; but the fact remains that, as in any bureaucracy, organizationally defined controls attract some types of individuals and facilitate

their working relationships while at the same time thwarting the natural inclinations of others.

The two analytical distinctions produced so far yield only two role types. The third analytical distinction begins to complicate matters. It follows from the previous discussion that the command-oriented officer is committed, by professional ideology, to the use of efficient techniques of law enforcement across the entire range of cases that confront him. That is to say, such an officer looks to the expertise of the profession as it is adopted into the organization, and to the organization's even-handed application of that expertise, to solve the problems of law enforcement—regardless of the peculiarities of individual cases. An officer who behaves in this way can be said to be applying techniques universalistically. By contrast, an officer who responds to the peculiarities of individual cases (or types of cases) and treats them accordingly can be said to be applying techniques particularistically (Parsons, 1951). The particularistic application of techniques is consistent with a discretion-control orientation and a focus on outcomes.

On the other hand, the application of techniques is not the only feature of the police role that can be described as either universalistic or particularistic. The values which the individual as police officer adheres to are equally important to an officer's role perception since they provide him with a basis for justifying his conduct. Because the police officer is particularly susceptible to criticism, the values to which he appeals when justifying his conduct are a central feature of his role perception. Furthermore, it is instructive and appropriate to characterize these values as universalistic or particularistic. Universalistic values in the police context,¹² when translated into operating norms, require the officer to behave on the assumption that in all matters critical to police work his clientele are equal and alike. No stereotypical or categorical distinctions on the basis of social or psychological characteristics are permitted, but only those classifications inherent in or implied by the criminal law.¹³ By contrast, adherence to particularistic values permits an officer to assume inequalities and dissimilarities in clientele as premises for justifying his treatment of them.

The fact that the distinction between particularistic and universalistic applications of techniques is appropriate as well for a police officer's values introduces an intriguing empirical complication into the model. For empirical evidence suggests that there is no necessary connection between, for example, the

particularistic application of techniques and adherence to particularistic values. The officer who is discretion-control oriented, who focuses on outcomes, and who uses techniques particularistically may well adhere to universalistic values. On the other hand, the officer who is command-control oriented, who focuses on process, and who uses techniques universalistically may well adhere to particularistic values. This conclusion illuminates both the concept of police role, as discussed below, and the relationship between values or operating norms and the application of techniques, for the values themselves do not ordinarily prescribe behavior but rather provide a basis for justifying behavior. The logic model of action, based on movement from premise to conclusion, is often reversed in behavior with the "movement" translating from the arrow of implication into an atemporal appeal for justification (White, 1970).

The concept of police role is illuminated when one begins to add empirical description to the completed set of analytical distinctions. Without confronting at present the important difference between role perception and role enactment, one can distinguish behavioral characteristics of four definite types. First, there are two types of discretion-control oriented officers. Both are concerned with outcomes and both apply the techniques of their calling particularistically. But one type, which I shall term the *problem-solver*, adheres to universalistic values while the other type, which I shall term the *tough cop*, adheres to particularistic values. The difference marked by this distinction is an important one, for the *problem-solver* and the *tough cop* are poles apart in behavior. Additionally, there are two types of command-control oriented officers: the *crime-fighter* adheres to universalistic values while applying techniques universalistically; but the *rule-applier* applies techniques universalistically, in accordance with his command-control orientation, and at the same time adheres to particularistic values. Table 1 illustrates these relationships.

TABLE 1: POLICE ROLE TYPES

		Application of Techniques:	
		particularistic	universalistic
Values:	particularistic	tough cop	rule-applier
	universalistic	problem-solver	crime-fighter

The *tough cop* is a traditionalist whose perception of his role is wholly dependent upon the social reality of the police subculture. He resists the professionalist, feels threatened by professional standards such as college training, and locates defense lawyers and sociologists on the fringes of the "criminal element." He has no patience with welfare, considers minority group militants to be at least troublemakers, and makes no attempt to hide his stereotypical perceptions of police clientele. He is usually from a working-class background, of which he is belligerently proud, and his philosophy of law enforcement rests on the maxim: "force is the only language these hoods understand." His role perception is founded on the belief, frequently avowed, that "cops are supposed to be tough." To the *tough cop*, policing is the job of keeping the criminal elements under control, usually by force. His role perception is largely defined by adversarial expectations.

The *tough cop* distrusts the notion that policing can be resolved into efficient process; for him the essence of policing is doing justice on the model of just desert, which means that outcomes are critically important. He is, therefore, particularly susceptible to angry resentment toward legal norms and toward the indignation their adherents express over alleged police violations of these norms; the supportive function of the police subculture is very important for him (Westley, 1970). The process of law enforcement is, in effect, internalized by the *tough cop* as his overriding concern with outcomes leads him to personify the law to his clientele and to personalize doing justice. At the same time, he applies techniques particularistically: for example, giving a break to a first offender with a job while leaning hard on the first offender who is a "hippie type," and addressing a white middle-class woman as "ma'am" while calling a black woman "girl." He justifies these particularistic behaviors by appeal (implicitly) to a set of values which are also clearly particularistic: that is, the first offender with a job is a "decent, hard-working guy who just made a mistake" while the first offender who is a "hippie type" is a "natural troublemaker."

By contrast, the *problem-solver* is an idealist whose perception of his role is wholly dependent on standards that are external to his particular police organization. But like the *tough cop*, the *problem-solver* resists the command-control orientation of the professionalists. This demonstrates that the discretion-control orientation can have two very different mani-

festations: one manifestation derives from an individualist assertion of independence from command control, and relies on the dictates of experience and common sense; the other derives from a professionalist assertion of independence from bureaucratic regulation and relies on the controls implicit in universalistic professional standards. The two orientations differ in obvious ways but at the same time there is a theoretically significant similarity: both focus on outcomes rather than process. The *problem-solver* demands to pursue problems to their solution, as the *tough cop* demands to do justice.

The *problem-solver* had many of the attitudinal characteristics of the social worker, for whom service to a clientele needing help is of overriding importance.¹⁴ The *problem-solver* sees his clientele as people burdened by socially defined stigmas who then act out the deviant roles attributed to them. In this context, the police officer's role is to understand the causes of deviant behavior and provide the various kinds of help required to "cure" such deviance. The enforcing of laws is almost incidental to the role on this view, although the *problem-solver* would neither deny nor avoid the necessity of operating as a negative force when occasion demands. The central thrust of the *problem-solver's* role is to represent a positive force in the lives of police clientele by offering assistance in solving whatever kind of problem they face—including housing inspection and garbage pick-up, counseling of delinquents and addicts, and even legal needs such as tenant/landlord disputes. The adversarial expectations so characteristic of the *tough cop* are alien to the *problem-solver's* outlook.

While the *tough cop* demands discretion in order to operate according to the dictates of his own experience, the *problem-solver* requires discretion because of the variety of problems which he considers his responsibility. And this same variety of problems generates a particularistic application of techniques—not on the grounds of desert but on the grounds of need. The *tough cop* dispenses justice according to desert, and his stereotypical perceptions of clientele and inclinations toward enforcement combine to yield particularistic prescriptions. But the *problem-solver* operates with a broader sense of distributive justice which permits particularistic applications of techniques in order to meet the different needs of the people he serves, and thereby to solve the variety of problems he perceives as police matters. He would not use "ma'am" and "girl" particularistically, but he would use the verbalizations appropriate to

particular settings for the purpose of effective communication. He would not give an employed first offender a break while leaning on a "hippie type," but he would treat each offender differently depending on the individual problem. He is constrained by two imperatives: to demonstrate respect of person and to solve the problem. In consequence, there is no conflict between his universalistic values and a particularistic application of techniques.

The same kind of complication obtains within the command-control orientation category. This group has literally been created by the professionalists, who are prominent in the higher ranks of police departments. The extent to which these individuals dominate police organizations, whether in numbers or in influence, will vary from one department to another; but that they are a significant factor in most departments of any size is not disputed. The professionalist influence is typically directed at the top policy levels and at the training agency, with an eye to developing personnel oriented to command control. But there are serious obstacles in the way of this sort of program for change. Although a direct linkage between these obstacles and current role behavior has not been empirically demonstrated, observations of the latter suggest some developments which are not consistent with the professionalists' expectations. One such development is the phenomenon of the *problem-solver*, a professional that somewhat fits the model of the social worker who differs in most particulars of police behavior not only from the *tough cop* but from the police professionalist as well. A further development is a bifurcation within the command-control oriented group itself, between the professionalist *crime-fighters* and the *rule-appliers*.

Both these role types exhibit characteristics related to the command-control orientation: namely, a concern with process rather than outcomes, and a universalistic application of techniques. The concern with process develops out of a commitment to efficiency which both precludes focusing on outcomes and provides an alternative source of satisfaction for working police officers. It is natural for officers so oriented to look to the expertise of the profession as it is adopted into the organization, and to the organization's even-handed application of that expertise in solving the problems of law enforcement — regardless of the peculiarities of individual cases. But such an approach does not entail commitment to a set of universalistic values. There is nothing in the notion of applying techniques univer-

salistically that demands justification by universalistic values. In terms of police operations, this means that the universalistic application of techniques can be justified by appeal to the value of efficiency—specifically, to what efficiency requires. While many professionalists do adhere to universalistic values, according to which no stereotypical distinctions among clientele are permitted, others merely follow what they believe to be the dictates of efficient police work (Skolnick, 1966). The latter are susceptible to any particularistic arguments which promise a basis for achieving efficiency whether their value premises are universalistic or particularistic.

The *crime-fighters* are so called not out of facetiousness but rather to describe their own self-perception most accurately. These individuals are idealists of an intensity commensurate with that of the *problem-solvers*, but there is a marked difference between the expressed objectives of the two types of officers. Unlike the *problem-solvers*, the *crime-fighters* see themselves primarily as enforcers of the law defending the public against those who would violate life and property. The fact that service calls occupy the largest portion of their time is a source of frustration for these officers. They are “gung-ho” in the strict sense, but their commitment is narrowly directed toward fighting crime rather than broadly applied to the variety of tasks currently intrinsic to the policing function. Indeed, they are often zealots in pursuit of the most efficient, thorough, and scrupulous discharge of their mission to defend the law. Since their role expectations are so strongly adversarial, this zealotness can—and frequently does—lead to trouble. In many cities the “tactical squad” (or sometimes “flying squad”) is made up of *crime-fighter* types. Some observers explain the fact that members of these elite squads are disproportionately involved in street clashes by reference to their role as troubleshooters; but others, including fellow officers, claim that these individuals are more like lightning rods whose very presence draws trouble.

Whatever the answer (there are no systematic data), it seems clear that the *crime-fighter* seeks action.¹⁵ He wants to be first on the scene, and he chafes under the constraints of ordinary patrol wherein action is a rare respite from the prevailing boredom. He envisions himself as the personification of the law as it works to protect citizens from crime. Such officers may literally burn themselves out on the street from sheer frustration. The *crime-fighter* is particularly resentful of

limitations on the police role,¹⁶ both in terms of police helplessness in the face of severe social pathologies and in terms of specific legal constraints, and the only effective diversion is a focus on strengthening the process of law enforcement. Unfortunately, the same intense idealism which makes him “gung-ho” renders him easily disillusioned with the police organization (Niederhoffer, 1967; Walsh, 1970). Fellow officers who are, in his pristine view, lazy or incompetent or uncommitted to essential ideals represent a “disgrace to the uniform.” As a consequence, the attraction of process is tenuous and can dissipate in the face of disillusionment with the organization; it must constantly be reinforced by emphasis on the efficacy of the organization, the importance of its mission, and the superiority of its personnel.

But despite this need for constant reinforcement in the case of the *crime-fighter*, the attraction of process is normally strengthened by another characteristic of this role type, namely his adherence to universalistic values. It is easier for him to conclude that “outcomes will take care of themselves if the process is efficient” when the process is not only efficient but predicated on the assumption that respect of person and impartiality will be honored as well. Typically, the *crime-fighter* who becomes disillusioned with the efficacy of the organization also begins to question his universalistic values—a clear sign that the promise for professional development vested in him is dissipating (Walsh, 1970). In at least one metropolitan police department, and probably in many, such officers either quit the force or are siphoned off into administrative positions where their passions are rekindled and their energies redirected into improving the process of law enforcement. They become, in a word, the elites of the police system. But there is often an intermediate “testing” stage as well in which the frustrated *crime-fighter* is recruited into the tactical squad where his action orientation is satisfied but the strain on his professional commitment is further exacerbated by the constant opportunity for quick and violent solutions. The members of these elite squads appear to be continually on the verge of deviation into the *tough cop* category (many are already) as they flirt with the temptation to make the world conform to their vision of it.

Paradoxically, then, the *crime-fighter* and the patrol function tend to be incompatible; the *crime-fighter* would appear to be unable to adapt to such normal realities of organizational life as mediocre personnel and the requirements of routine. On

the other hand, available evidence suggests that there are a significant number of young officers today who—like the *crime-fighter*—can be classified as command-control oriented, focusing on process rather than outcomes and applying techniques universalistically. In terms of the typology, the difference between these officers and the *crime-fighters* lies in the former's adherence to particularistic rather than universalistic values. And these officers—the *rule-appliers*—appear to be able to adapt easily to the same conditions which so trouble the *crime-fighters*. They are tied to professionalism by virtue of a focus on process and a commitment to apply techniques universalistically, but the professionalists' adherence to universalistic values does not have the attraction for them that the instrumental value of efficiency has. In a sense, the *rule-appliers* can be said to *act like* professionals without *being* professional: that is to say, the *rule-appliers* are motivated by efficiency norms to apply techniques universalistically but they are not motivated by such universalistic values as respect of person and impartiality. Nor do they see themselves as personifying the law and representing all its virtues to the people. At the same time, they adapt easily to the various task and organizational requirements which strain the professional commitment of the *crime-fighters*.

The adaptive characteristics of the *rule-appliers* are worth more extended comment. Not only are these individuals able to avoid being disturbed by the requirements of routine and similar exasperating features of police life, as indicated above, but they are also successful in adopting buffer attitudes toward specific pressures. For example, a common hazard for police officers today is the verbal insult, usually in the form of some use of the term "pig." *Tough cops* and *crime-fighters* normally find such provocative tactics irresistible, and they tend to reply in kind or with excessive force even when they know that they are being goaded into unwise action.¹⁷ But *rule-appliers* seem to have no trouble making use of the defense mechanism specifically designed for this problem by police training experts: namely, the simple but effective rationalization, "I just consider the source." Verbalization of this defense mechanism, along with a low-intensity response to the question about being called "pig," is characteristic of those officers otherwise identified as *rule-appliers*. Another sign of adaptiveness in the behavior of *rule-appliers* is their capacity to accept and work within the limits prescribed by Supreme Court rulings on criminal procedure. Their reaction to these constraints is very similar

to that in the previous example. The *rule-appliers* shrug their shoulders and remark on the importance of respecting people's rights, while a typical response of the *crime-fighter* and the *tough cop* is to become angry and recriminatory toward the courts.

The *rule-appliers* are in some ways the most interesting of the four role types. They are the most numerous and potentially the most lasting product of police professionalization. They represent the aspirations of the many individuals committed over the years to bettering police performance through improving personnel. But they are not the "professionals" envisioned by the reformers. They are neither committed to solving the social problems that produce crime nor to being heroic defenders of the law, nor are they wedded to the great universalistic values of our legal system. The *rule-appliers* are normally polite and fair and helpful — because they believe that the process of law enforcement is more efficient and easier as a result. They are command-control oriented because centralized command is the source of prevailing efficiency norms and the locus of the leadership which promotes them. They see themselves as law officers, a negative force, but are unperturbed by the predominance of service tasks. Their world does not disintegrate in the face of unfortunate or adverse outcomes, and they are more willing (and probably more able) to tolerate easygoing behavior on the part of their fellow officers. They are, in short, pragmatists as compared with the idealism of the *crime-fighters*. They see themselves as controlled by rules rather than by group norms, in contrast to the *tough cops*; but in coping with the job they narrow the scope of their ideals to conform to functional realities. At the same time, the *rule-appliers* rely more on organizational support and on the sense of participating in a group enterprise: it is the organization which is the source of the rules they apply. They operate "by the book" not so much because the book is right but because their task is made easier as a result. Therefore, the particularistic values of the *rule-applier* do not clash with his universalistic application of techniques as long as organizational routine demands only that he act in prescribed ways.

Since the attraction of process is not based on universalistic values in the case of *rule-appliers*, the question arises as to its strength and durability. Is their partial professionalism subject to erosion in the face of a continuing hostile environment and the inevitable failures and disappointments confronting further

reform of police organizations? The answer is not altogether clear, but available evidence suggests some tentative conclusions. What the command-control organization has accomplished is the creation of an image of the police officer as the "impersonal arm of the law." Of those officers imbued with this image, the *crime-fighters* seem inherently susceptible to disillusionment while the *rule-appliers* are relatively invulnerable to this weakness of idealism. The personalization of law enforcement is a direct contradiction of the objectives of command control with its counteremphasis on process, and therefore the heroic style characteristic of *crime-fighters* is bound to conflict at some point with the impersonality of the process approach. But the *rule-appliers* have no such difficulty. They fit comfortably into the "impersonal arm of the law" image. Indeed, they are often so little involved in a personal way with external events that they can assert quite truthfully that police work is "just another job" for them. The following is a typical characterization of police work by a *rule-applier*: "I like it better than I did being a stock clerk or working in a gas station. It gets a little dull once in a while but mostly I like moving around a lot. I'm no hero — I'll let the super-cops handle the big stuff. I figure if the police just do their jobs most of the people will respect us. It's no big thing." At the same time the *rule-appliers* take pride in their organization and adhere to the notion that police officers must resist corruption and act as an example to the community: "it's part of the job." The extent to which *rule-appliers* actually do resist corruption and generally flourish in a high-temptation environment cannot be answered from the available evidence. But it can be said that they are ordinarily content to apply the rules, which are the laws as defined by that police department, and "do their jobs" within the task and organizational constraints as they find them. In a sense, they are in limbo between reference groups (Krislov, 1959; Sherif, 1968), having avoided dependence on the subculture dominated by the *tough cops* and therefore being relatively independent of group norms while at the same time they are uncommitted to the universalistic values of the *problem-solver* and *crime-fighter*. A major unanswered question thus becomes whether the "marginal" *rule-appliers* will eventually become their own reference group.

In sum, the analytical distinctions discussed above have produced a typology of police roles which can be represented in the following way:

perceptions in the context of professionalization—questions which can now be restated as hypotheses which are testable using the kinds of data to which social scientists can gain access. In this case, testable hypotheses can be generated following procedures as outlined below.

To begin with, each of the four role types can be defined operationally as a syndrome of attributes. The *problem-solver*, for example, focuses on outcomes rather than processes, does not have adversarial expectations, adheres to universalistic rather than particularistic values, applies techniques particularistically rather than universalistically, and sees himself as a positive rather than a negative force in the community. An index can be created that enables one to rank order all subject police officers within each syndrome, permitting comparisons within and across types. To guard against the tempting circularity inherent in any effort to measure role behavior, it is important to operationalize each attribute in two independent ways: one measuring role perception and another measuring role behaviors. Such a move permits the construction and comparison of several diverse indices, as well as enabling the researcher to detect possible differences in the relationship between role perceptions and role behavior under varying conditions.

Since a typology is always conceptual in origin—even though its development depends on empirical description—it is particularly valuable as a basis for measuring variation along theoretically determined dimensions among any population of empirical referents. In the case of police role types one wants to discover initially the extent to which each type, as operationally defined by a specific set of attributes, actually emerges as a distinct syndrome. Obviously, a specification of conditions according to which the fit of each type is more or less good would be a significant development of the typology; but this is the sort of development which must await empirical application. Once the overall fit is determined, the degree of deviation from each type and the distribution of that deviation within the population can be measured. Again, the theoretically significant objective would be a specification of the conditions under which particular distributions of deviation from each type are likely to obtain. It is instructive, too, in studying the particular research setting to identify and construct analytic descriptions of the “inconsistent” cases.

Once these several distributions are specified in relation to

varying conditions, the typology will prove a useful base for determining the intersection of several other dimensions of police behavior. For example, Niederhoffer's (1967) delineation of the development of cynicism among police officers may provide a framework for applying, and refining, the typology of police roles longitudinally. On a broader scale, the relevance of Wilson's typology of police administrative strategies should be explored, as well as the potential for cross-national comparisons of police roles and administrative strategies. Another factor which has not been commented on yet, but which is clearly relevant, is the effect of personality characteristics. Not only might there be personality effects on recruitment by virtue of a self-selection process, but it might also be the case that differences in behavior among police officers are wholly explainable in terms of personality characteristics. The latter possibility excludes any influence by virtue of socialization, which is unlikely. But the typology of police roles, while not constructed from personality measurement data, is obviously related to basic personality differences among police officers. This relationship ought to be examined for both theoretical and policy reasons.

In the light of the above discussion, a number of testable hypotheses emerge. A few of the obvious are stated below:

- 1) A police department undergoing professionalization will evince proportionately increasing numbers of *crime-fighters*, *rule-appliers*, and *problem-solvers*, and proportionately decreasing numbers of *tough cops*.
- 2) In a police department undergoing professionalization, the numbers of *rule-appliers* will increase faster than will the numbers of *crime-fighters* and *problem-solvers*.
- 3) Professionalization is associated with increasing conflict between *tough cops*, on the one hand, and *crime-fighters*, *rule-appliers*, and *problem-solvers*, on the other.
- 4) The larger the proportion of *tough cops* in a police department, the higher the rate of attrition of both *tough cops* and *crime-fighters*.
- 5) As the proportion of *rule-appliers* in a police department increases, conflict between *tough cops* and *crime-fighters* will decrease.
- 6) The ratio of *crime-fighters* to administrative and special positions will be higher than the ratio of *crime-fighters* to patrol positions.
- 7) The ratio of *problem-solvers* to administrative and special

positions will be lower than the ratio of *problem-solvers* to patrol positions.

- 8) As professionalization increases in a police department, activity increases within the patrolmen's union.
- 9) Role types become more sharply defined as professionalization develops in a police department.
- 10) Under an administration of *tough cops*, *problem-solvers* and *crime-fighters* tend to be isolated in peripheral tasks; the overall proportion of each of the two types decreases.
- 11) *Problem-solvers* are the most radical administrators; *tough cops* are the least radical administrators.
- 12) Longitudinal role-type changes in individual officers are associated with developing cynicism.

CONCLUSION

There can be no solid empirical conclusions concerning the nature and effects of police professionalization until these and other related hypotheses have been tested. And without the sort of knowledge that such a procedure can yield the professionalist program remains an empty set of slogans. This is not to say, however, that the normative task of developing criteria for acceptable police behaviors should be suspended. Indeed, the police role typology ought to provoke some new thinking in this area for it surely implies that more than one model of professionalism is applicable in the police setting. It further implies that different consequences follow from each model. The concept "professional" thereby takes on various operational meanings depending on the particular permutation of police role properties which happens to obtain.

But the different consequences which follow, rather than the appropriateness of the label "professional," should be the focus of future concern. The rhetoric of professionalization and its accompanying politics only obscure the deeper problem, which is a basic confusion over the nature of the policing function itself.

FOOTNOTES

¹ A range of statements on police professionalization can be found in the following: Hopkins (1931); Parker (1957); Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement (1967); Vollmer (1936); Wilson (1961).

² The social science literature on professionalization is, of course, extensive and varied. Particularly relevant are: Hughes (1958 and 1959); Vollmer and Mills (1966); Goode (1961); Walsh (1968, 1969, 1970); and Wilensky (1956 and 1964).

³ The few challengers have been those for whom the requirements pose a threat; e.g., the patrolmen's unions.

- ⁴ There have been varying accounts of the extent and nature of police solidarity, especially of the loyalty and secrecy elements. (Niederhoffer, 1967; Savitz, 1970; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970).
- ⁵ This analysis is based in large part on two research projects: one was conducted in 1968-1969 in the Minneapolis Police Department and is discussed in the author's Ph.D. thesis (White, 1970); the other is a study, in progress, of the socialization of police recruits. The data for the latter are being collected through interviews conducted over time with members of four recruit training classes of the Minneapolis Police Department.
- ⁶ An interesting discussion of the uses of typologies can be found in McKinney (1966). A good example of the kind of analysis being attempted here can be found in Wilensky (1956).
- ⁷ Statistical statements cannot yet be made because the interview data are still incomplete; but clear patterns are emerging and they are reported here in confidence.
- ⁸ Much discussion in the literature (Chevigny, 1969; Goldstein, 1960, LaFave, 1969; Skolnick, 1966; Wilson, 1968) has been devoted to the problem of police discretion; what will be argued here is a contribution to that discussion only peripherally, for reasons which will become clear as the argument proceeds. What is an issue here is the effect of a discretionary-control orientation, as opposed to a command-control orientation, on police role behavior.
- ⁹ Hence Skolnick's discussion of discretion and innovativeness can apply to either orientation, depending on the norms specified. The kind of innovative techniques which Skolnick refers to are compatible with the command orientation because they are used and even promulgated as a matter of command policy; in fact, they are accepted just because they are command policy.
- ¹⁰ These are, of course, relative traits and could only be measured on a continuum.
- ¹¹ This is not to say that the intervening variable of the police subculture may not operate to mediate between objective external factors and the developing role perception. It is only to say that the focus is on factors external to the organization and its efficiency.
- ¹² Here it is important to note that much of the literature on professionalization tends to equate commitment to professional norms with a "service ideal": e.g., William Goode, in discussing the professionalization of librarians, comments that a "service orientation" means that the professional decision is not properly to be based on the self-interest of the professional but on the need of the client" (1961). This equation does not fit the police case, both because the service ideal raises basic issues of function (Bercal, 1970; Wilson, 1968) and because the police-client relationship has unique aspects (Wilson, 1963). The concept of universalistic values does not violate the basic notion of professionalism and is more applicable in the police case.
- ¹³ Since it is often difficult for lawyers trained and professionally buttressed in adherence to these values to follow them in practice, the problems faced by relatively untrained and subprofessional police officers are not surprising.
- ¹⁴ There are also significant differences, especially with respect to degree of outcome orientation. See Blau (1960) for a discussion of social worker role perceptions and behaviors.
- ¹⁵ Fellow officers frequently use that terminology to describe *crime-fighters*.
- ¹⁶ James Leo Walsh (1970) points out that those officers who are high professional strivers are likely to be similar in some of their attitudes to officers showing low professionalism (the categories of professional striving and professionalism are defined differently); Walsh's data indicate that both groups were more likely than other officers to vote for George Wallace in the 1968 presidential election. This finding is consistent with the description here, for the *tough cop* and the *crime-fighter* share much in both personality characteristics and expectations. But it should be noted that Walsh's measure of professional striving differs significantly from the distinction made in this analysis. For example, the present research indicates that Walsh's use of "something to help" responses will not differentiate among otherwise distinct role types.

¹⁷ *Problem-solvers* are likely to be divided on their reaction to verbal insults. Because their approach to clientele is so different from that of other types, they are less likely to respond at all; but they are also outcome oriented and so might be inclined to regard a verbal insult as a *positive* challenge.

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