

**It's situational: the dilemmas of police governance in
the 21st century**

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Introduction

For police services, organisational reform is no longer an event but a way of life. In the past thirty years, police services in the UK, Canada, the USA and Australia have been subjected to a series of demands for change and reform. (On the differences between the change process in the USA and countries such as the UK and Australia see Edwards 1999, 113-114).

The major agendas for reform have been fuelled variously by demands for efficiency and effectiveness, a concern about the relationship between police and the community they serve, and organised corruption and other abuses of authority (See: Bayley 1994, Chan 1997, Prenzler and Ransley 2002, Fleming and Lafferty 2000). In the UK industrial strife and public disorder provided the impetus for the reforms of the 1980s (see Scarman 1986). More latterly the imposition of structural and organisational reforms was driven by managerialist concerns about operational effectiveness, efficiency and accountability (Sheehy 1993,). In Australia, while the managerialist agenda contributed significantly to police organisational reform, successive inquiries into police misconduct since the late 1980s also provided the momentum for change (Fleming and Lafferty 2000). The same is true of the US reforms since Knapp in 1972 (Henry 1994). Reform has in effect become cyclical with each cycle often given a title of its own; examples include, Commissioner Imbert's *Plus* program in the Metropolitan Police of London and Commissioner's Falconer's *Delta* program in Western Australia (see Edwards 1999, 112).

Why is police reform constant? The short answer is because it is plagued with unintended consequences. This paper describes the reforms of the past twenty years as a shift from command and control bureaucracy through markets to networks. It argues that many of the unintended consequences stem from the limitations of each of these governing structures. We do not make an argument for bureaucracy, contracts or networks. We argue that each can work or fail. It depends on the context and the mix. At some point we have to accept that the structures mix like oil and water.

We recognize that most accounts of police reform use 'police culture' as an explanatory variable. (See Chan 1997; Reiner 1992; Paoline 2003, Barton 2003). That is not our aim.

We approach the topic of reform from the sub-fields of public administration, public policy and public management. We ask what these fields can add to our understanding of the subject. To achieve this object, we seek not to offer a critique of other approaches. Rather, we show that conflict between incompatible ideas simply makes it too easy for dynamic conservatism to win out. Our account of the limits to change complements rather than contradicts accounts rooted in culture.

In Part 1, we tell the distinctive stories of the Bureaucratic State, the Contract State and the Network State. We take these three sets of ideas as delineated in the literature and show how, over time, they have been variously adopted by police organisations. We ask to what extent these ideas are the source of the problems associated with police reform. We do not believe that the police service or indeed the public sector will develop in a single direction. Rather, we tell three distinct stories knowing they encapsulate trends that will diverge and intersect. We separate them and extrapolate to get a clearer

analytical purchase. If you prefer, we explore the effects of the sour laws of unintended consequences on police reform. The stories are diagnostic, not descriptive.

In Part 2, we focus on the newest way of delivering services – networks – and its effects on other forms of service delivery. Through semi-structured interviews with 27 senior officers ranking from Sergeant to Commissioner and senior civilian managers conducted in the UK and Australia, we explore the limits and prospects of such cooperative policing. The interviews took place in 2003. Interviewees were selected randomly with senior rank being the only requirement. As one would expect given the existing gender balance of British and Australian police organisations, only four of the interviewees were women. Our aim remains diagnostic. We move beyond the scepticism of managers and sworn officers to show that the conflicts between the core ideas that distinguish each governing structure create dilemmas that render all reforms contingent, and sometimes nugatory.

PART 1: TOWARDS THE NETWORK STATE

Governing structures are often presented as organisational phenomena yet they can also be seen as webs of beliefs about ways of allocating resources, resolving conflicts and coordinating actors. For both Australia and Britain, we argue that the beliefs of elite actors, that is, politicians and senior public servants, about the relative effectiveness of these governing structures has shifted away from hierarchies to markets and more recently to networks. (For a more detailed discussion see: Bevir and Rhodes 2003, Davis and Rhodes 2001, and Rhodes 1997a and 1997b).

In this section we briefly discuss each governing structure, with illustrations from the public sector as well as and, police organisations.

The Bureaucratic State

The story of bureaucracy is the dominant story of the twentieth century. Its characteristics are well known – hierarchy, rules, merit appointments, permanent, neutral, expert. Bayley (1994, 61) notes that police organisations are structured on authoritarian, para-military lines, regulated through strict organisational rules and legislation with an emphasis on internal and vertical communication. There is a premium on compliance rather than initiative ... decision-making is ‘rarely participative or collegial across rank lines’. As Davies and Thomas (2003, 682-3) point out, police organisations are resistant to change because of ‘a co-existence of formalized bureaucratic and standardised working practices, with a deeply entrenched and pervasive occupational culture’ of hierarchical subordination.

In varying degrees these characteristics fit many bureaucracies in most advanced industrial democracies. Critics deem bureaucracy to be inherently inefficient, too large and expensive, and lacking the structure of incentives of a market. Bureaucracy was suited to standardised administration, not management, and the management of bureaucracy was obsolete. Even worse, the routines of bureaucracy made it risk averse, discouraging innovation. This risk adverse culture has been compounded by the traditional resistance by police to organisational change (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986), which has proved a potential barrier to reform. For example, the move in the early 1990s

to remake police organisations as corporate entities was resisted vigorously in Australia by senior police officers, rank and file police and their unions (Fleming and Lafferty 2000, 165). Similarly, the UK government's White Paper on police reform in 1992 created an unprecedented wave of resistance from police officers at every level (Reiner 1993, 1096).

Significant though change may be, bureaucracy is still with us. The past twenty years have seen the rise of managerialism with contracting out as one of its main tools. But the spread of contracting has not supplanted bureaucratic forms of organisation. Indeed, in a simple twist of fate, the unintended consequences of contracting may be to 'reinvent' the Bureaucratic State. It needs a permanent, autonomous and policy focused core public service, committed to non-partisan professional advice. This small but essential group draws on the techniques of strategic management rather than traditional public administration. Bureaucracies provide direct, hands-on control of policy and services through their hierarchical, rule-based structure. These characteristics favour intervention. Should any future government rail against the constraints of fragmented service delivery systems and seek to steer, they are likely to deploy bureaucracy as the most appropriate tool for hands-on management.

The Contract State

The story of the Contract State marks a potentially new phase in public sector management. Initially 'managerialism' referred to such reforms as performance measurement but its scope was rapidly extended to include contracting out (Rhodes

1997a, 48-9). The central plot of the contract story extends contracts beyond organising and managing the public sector to embrace the link between government and citizens (Yeatman 1995). What was once a political association now takes on an implied contractual form. Electors become clients, their rights and expectations encapsulated in a 'Citizens Charter' or a 'guarantee of service'. This contract binds the state to produce or facilitate certain levels of service, and specifies penalties for failure to comply. The principal and agent model, in which mutual obligations are spelled out in writing, becomes an organising principle for public life.

In Australia and Britain, such ideas created new forms of public organization, designed to work through markets rather than bureaucracy; 'transactional bureaucracies' that have been stripped to their core policy and contract management roles.

There is now an extensive literature on contracting-out in the public sector in both Australia and Britain (see: Davis and Wood 1998, Deakin and Walsh 1996, Domberger 1998, Walsh et al 1997). Despite resistance from police personnel, there has been a determined effort to use contracts to deliver police services (Bayley 1994, 130-132; Fleming and Lafferty 2000). For example, governments hold contracts with police services with such general objectives as creating a safer and more secure locality through the contractual provision of police services. Canada has a long history of contracting out police services. Municipalities in Canada 'solicit costing proposals from a range of policing services, both public and private and determining which kinds of organisations would have the best service for the best price' (Wood 2000, 19).

Police contracts focus on crime and safety management; road safety; crime prevention and successful prosecution data. Each service has many, often inconsistent performance indicators (PIs). How, for example, do we reconcile maximising the number of successful prosecutions with crime prevention objectives of reducing levels of crime? In effect, there is a quasi-market, with the police under great pressure to show that resources are being used efficiently with each objective maximised simultaneously (Moore 1990, 73). Scott (1998, 283) argues that PIs empower management by 'providing a way of measuring where police resources are being allocated' and increasing levels of managerial accountability. As Moore (1990, 74) points out such measurements set 'useful benchmarks' but are 'always susceptible to criticism and change'.

The shift to contracting, in both service delivery and employment, has significant unintended and unwanted consequences for the long-term needs of government. The key unintended consequence is the loss of institutional memory. Agencies must find people who understand public sector procedures. Gradually public servants build up their knowledge of public service traditions and are not easily replaced. Those who leave can be hired back as contractors. But who will train the next generation of administrators? Contracting fragments and scatters memory.

A second unintended consequence is rising transaction costs. Contracting out initially cuts costs, but it is less certain such savings endure (Davis and Wood 1998, 93-4). The costs of overseeing contracts are high, not least because parts of the public sector have had little time to develop the necessary skills and systems. Contract rigidity can impose unanticipated expense, when circumstances need more or different work. And

circumstances change often in crisis driven organisations like the police. It can also encourage a 'checklist approach' to output measurement and a focus on short-term results

The focus on ex ante specification has sometimes led to a checklist mentality, which is positive from the perspective of having managers take accountability seriously for tasks they are expected to complete. It is less desirable if it narrows responsibility to simple compliance with what is on the list, and prompts Chief Executives to disregard responsibility for items not specified. (Senior public servants cited in MAB-MIAC 1997, 94).

For public sector contracting, we know little about the incidence of social costs, about the long-term costs and benefits in specific agencies. For example, in policing, contracts and PIs are not necessarily conducive to proactive policing strategies. Community policing for example, exacts 'high internal costs' on police organisations in terms of resources (Edwards 1999, 111-112). It is incompatible with the 'lean and mean' emphasis of management in confronting the 'do more with less' corporate culture (O'Malley 1997, 374). Additionally, proactive policing is a long-term strategy, the results of which are not easily reflected in contracts or performance indicators. While accountability at the senior levels may improve, tensions over deciding the relative priority of objectives may well cause tension in the community itself. Middle management tends to reallocate resources away from community policing initiatives when they are under pressure to handle a high-profile incident or to reach specific targets. This is compounded when

officers actively prefer law enforcement strategies that favour reactive, action based solutions (Scott 1998, 285-287).

The concept of contracting out policing services to the private sector with an emphasis on satisfying the customer, now prevalent in Canada and gaining ground elsewhere, gives private institutions great scope to thrive (Wood 2000, 20). But there are other issues associated with legitimacy and authority. As Loader (1999, 378) observes for Britain:

the more the police resort to market imperatives as a means of reconfiguring police-public relations, the more difficult it will be for them to speak and act as ultimate guardians of order and security; to stand above the competitive fray and appeal successfully to other principles and loyalists, to 'traditional' modes of authority and expertise.

In short, we know little about the medium to long-term costs of contracting and practice is a long way ahead of the evidence.

The Network State

Networks are sets of resource dependent organizations; that is, for an organization to achieve its goals, it must exchange resources with other organisations. The key (but not sole) resources are money and authority (see, Rhodes 1988; 1999b [1981]).

If contracts are characterised by prices and competition and bureaucracies by authority and rules, then networks are characterised by diplomacy, trust and reciprocity.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy refers to management by negotiation. Diplomatic skills lie at the heart of steering inter-organisational networks (and for a more detailed discussion see Rhodes 1997b and 1999a). The idea is not new, just misplaced. We relearn old lessons.

Trust

At the heart of networks and management by diplomacy are the notions of trust and reciprocity. The social conception of trust is 'the most important attribute of network operations'. It is the central coordinating mechanism of networks in the same way that commands and price competition are the key mechanisms for bureaucracies and markets respectively (Frances et al 1991, 15). Shared values and norms and an appreciation of divergent organisational cultures are the glue which holds the complex set of relationships together; trust is essential for cooperative behaviour and, therefore, the existence of the network.

Reciprocity

Networks involve friendship, loyalty, even altruism (Thompson 1993, 54-8) but above all network culture is characterised by reciprocity. So, a network's 'normative standards ... sustain exchange', especially indebtedness, obligation and a long-term perspective. Any lack of equivalence creates a moral sanction, bonds that keep the parties in touch with one another; the books are balanced only in the long term (Powell 1991, 272-3). However, as Thompson (1993, 58) points out, reciprocity is also a symbolic relationship and 'in the constant ritual of exchange, deep obligations and duties are established, symbolic statuses

confirmed, metaphorical social references invoked'. In this way, network coordination becomes stabilised.

The characteristics of networks outlined above may not be immediately recognisable as relevant to police organisations. Police organisations like all other organisations consist of informal traditions, beliefs and practices. The 'way we do business' is passed on to all recruits. There is a dominant tradition. Police organisations are seen as insular, secretive, and prone to solidaristic practices. As Goldstein notes (1990, 29), there is 'a prevalent feeling that the public does not really understand what the police 'have to put up with' in dealing with citizens'. An 'us and them' perspective is a dominant characteristic of police culture, where 'them' can encompass both citizens and senior management, depending on the context.

The rationale behind networks is about creating partnerships. For example, care of the mentally ill or the protection of battered wives needs cooperation between several agencies, including police. If each is to do their job properly they need to share such resources as staff, information, money, infrastructure and expertise.

Networks are not a figment of our imagination. Network management is now a well-established feature of British government, locally, regionally and centrally (see for example, Cabinet Office 2000, Cm 4310 1999, Mulgan 2001). The skills of network management are a long-standing feature of the Australian public sector (Caiden 1990, 30; Keating and Wanna 2000). The language of network management however is not common currency. As is often the case, once an activity is labelled, it is obvious.

Policing through networks, also known as community policing or partnerships or whole of government, is established policy in both Australia and Britain. (On Britain see Davies and Thomas 2003, Edwards and Benyon 2001, Hughes 2002, Hughes and McLaughlin 2002). On Australia see: McKenzie 2000, APMC 2002, Vernon and McKillop 1990, Bayley 1986). Most crime problems and palliative solutions in present-day society are interlinked with other public policies. These policies include the delivery of urban services such as transport, housing and street lighting; educational matters such as school bullying and truancy; health and community welfare issues such as inadequate parenting (Cope 2001, Edwards 1999, Brereton 2000). There is increasing recognition, that given these linkages and the prevailing climate of fiscal constraint, crime control needs a 'whole of government approach' and indeed, a cross-sectoral approach involving civil society (Cabinet Office 2000, Garland 2001, Mulgan 2001). This argument suggests that no one agency, especially the police, commands the resources necessary to control crime in modern society. Effective crime management will require community effort, involving both individuals and institutions outside law enforcement, and beyond the public sector. Indeed, Loader (2000, 330) refers to the existence today of 'dispersed, inter-organizational policing networks'. The challenge is to enable the police to identify and manage such networks (see also Benyon and Edwards 1999, Edwards and Benyon 2001).

We need a new language to capture changes in the scope and practice of government. It matters how we understand government. If our existing map of our institutions and how they work is faulty, we mislead citizens and undermine representative democracy.

So the language of networks and the skills of networking are a way of making corrections to the existing map of government so citizens and politicians alike know what journeys they can and cannot take. However, if the skills of networking have been undervalued, they are now coming to prominence in the new arenas of inter-organisational service delivery systems. Words like diplomacy, trust and reciprocity are deeply unfashionable, yet they are central to understanding management in the Network State.

Part 3: From where they stand

The first part of this paper told the distinctive stories of the Bureaucratic State, the Contract State and the Network State and argued there was a shift to the Network State. So far, so general, but what does this view of the public sector mean for those charged with the task of managing the police? What do we know about the ways in which governing structures affect one another? What do we know about networks and policing? This section explores the views of the police on bureaucracy, contracts and networks in particular using data obtained from the interviews conducted with senior police officers and civilian managers.

We have taken great care to disguise our respondents and their nationality because they talked frankly and we are mindful of the need to protect reputations and careers. Some may view the disguised nature of our data as a problem. It isn't, because our aim is diagnostic. We are not trying to explain patterns of behaviour in a specific force by reference to such variables as local history, geography, and the wealth and socio-

economic composition of the area. Rather, we analyse twenty-seven semi-structured interviews using the three governing structures as diagnostic tools, or scalpels, to justify the argument that reform is impeded not by recalcitrant actors – although it often is – or by police culture – which can act as a brake – but more importantly by the dilemmas created by the irreconcilable ideas of bureaucracy, markets and networks. Fieldwork was carried out in police organisations in both Australia and Britain. We draw on the data from one organisation that explored the effects of police reform and the potential for network governance. We use Australian and British terms interchangeably, opting for Commissioner rather than Chief Constable because it is shorter! Similarly we use the term ‘government’ to cover central government, state government or local government. In this section, we let the interviewees speak. We selected the passages from the transcripts. Obviously, we provide the organising concepts that guide the selection. We quote extensively so the reader can make an informed judgement about the plausibility of our interpretation. Also, to avoid any misunderstanding, we stress we do not argue for or against either bureaucracy or contracts or networks. All work. All fail. It depends on the context. It depends on where you stand. It depends on the mix.

On bureaucracy

The continuing importance of bureaucracy - of authority, hierarchy, rules, and an *esprit de corps* ‘us and them’ stance - pervades the interviews.

We have practical guidelines for the procedure on how to deal with a mentally disturbed person; animals on the loose; pulling vehicles over; arresting someone –

just about everything a police officer does is prescribed by a practical guideline. Its up to them to make sure they know it because if a complaint is made against you the first thing [internal investigations] is going to ask is 'did you stick by the guidelines?' Sometimes we have to create new ones to deal with new legislative requirements or new situations. Its about procedure and policy – how we do things – they are not strategy documents. (Interview 10)

With rules go uniforms to bind and differentiate.

I am a firm believer in promotion through uniform - demonstrating where you are in the police service – telling people what you do. The air force and the army all use it. The bomb people have a little bomb motif on their sleeves and I can think of other examples. It's good for morale and recognises achievement. (Interview 19)

Whenever a few officers congregate at a scene or anywhere we all quickly establish who has the higher rank and then defer accordingly (Interview 25).

Inevitably perhaps the traditional 'command and control' style persists:

... action and results are highly valued by police officers ... they are competitive about arrests... they view success as someone behind bars... there is a desire to right wrongs ...that's what motivates them... they are not motivated by a school principle who says they have conducted their community policing duties well (Interview 1)

It isn't about associating with the community. It's about getting a quick result and moving on to the next job – the sooner they can write off the job or put down 'no further police action' the better. (Interview 27)

And an 'us and them', 'macho' mentality goes with the command and control style.

There is an insularity, defensiveness about them – they make it clear their job is to catch crooks – they often feel unappreciated – there is an 'us and them' attitude ... they tend to overreact and become authoritarian. (Interview 1).

There is still a command and control mentality within the service and [a sense] that the police have no ownership of what goes on. (Interview 2)

Policing is essentially a blue collar occupation – they are into penalties, overtime, it's the culture. (Interview 4)

There is still an 'us and them' thing here. (Interview 7)

The troops don't trust us though, there is still an 'us and them' mentality and that extends to management. They don't trust us. (Interview 9)

Despite extensive reform, for some little has changed. There is much agreement among senior officers that there is a 'silo mentality' (Interviews 9, 16, 17, 20) and a lack of delegation on management's part. The structure is still centralised.

we have gone back to the rationalised, centralised model – where areas such as traffic and crime prevention are considered as specialised units. ... there is a lot of slippage too. We are all variously starved of information as to what is

happening in these areas ...[as a result] we have little flexibility and are unable to micro manage quite as effectively (Interview 15. Also Interview 24).

With centralisation goes respect for rank and care in dealing with superiors.

they pay a lot of lip service to the notion that we have a corporate mentality – no rank distinction – everyone can say what they want but believe you me when you step out of line, the military line comes right back and if you want to get on you are not going to be part of a frank discussion (Interview 24).

Two important inferences can be drawn from this material. First, beliefs in the efficacy of rules, uniforms, and authority persist after decades of reform and appear as essential organising principles in these accounts. Second, such beliefs persist because they accord with the experience of the officers. For them, bureaucracy works because it imposes order. So this data can be interpreted as evidence of both recalcitrance and resistance to change, and of the effectiveness of bureaucracy.

On contracts

Managerialism in both its guises of performance measurement and contracting-out litters the conversation of interviewees. There is much 'management-speak' - service deliverers, strategic attainment, corporate governance, streamline managerial accountability with outcomes, ownership, motivation to achieve desired targets. The language of competition abounds and infiltrates their worldview. Some choke on it.

I am sick and tired of the lip service we pay to service, to crime reduction. They are just rhetoric, platitudes, shamozzle, scraps of clichés from management textbooks that tell you to do more with less. (Interview 24)

Others offer less trenchant comments.

... the competitiveness around managerialism contributes to a silo mentality where senior officers seek to rob each other of resources or officers. (Interview 9)

Many believe that they are 'driven by contracts' (Interview 23) and are often fearful that those contracts will be awarded elsewhere:

I think the [contract] is up for tender shortly. There is a feeling that we have to safeguard against X getting it. (Interview 25)

Most ire is reserved for the PIs. One senior officer described performance measurement as a 'farce' with little being achieved and most people coming away 'none the wiser' (Interview 24). The fact that no junior officer was aware of his or her output responsibilities or indeed of the [performance measurement] document suggests that managerialist reforms have not percolated far down the hierarchy (Interview 8). The insistent call is for performance measurement 'to be more flexible' (Interview 25. Also interview 26). Specific measures call forth derision.

I mean – the number of briefs delivered to the DPP. Where did they come up with that figure? Quite honestly I could do that in a couple of weeks if I had to.

As it happens we've exceeded it already but what does that mean? What does it achieve? If I am managing to provide briefs in big numbers does that mean that crime prevention is not doing its job? Does that mean they have not managed to divert juveniles from crime? Why are we being measured on it? (Interview 18. Also 2 and 20)

As ever, interpretations differ. For some, the shift to the new management style has yet to take place.

The thing is collectively we haven't realised yet we are a business. We have to make decisions. [Senior management] don't make decisions and when they are forced by circumstance to do so they shoot from the hip. ... A strategic plan still doesn't exist! (Interview 12).

For others, change is gradual but the force is getting there.

When I arrived, in the order of 110 performance measures were being proposed! We got it down to 75 in the end but it was difficult. I couldn't believe it when I saw the rising crime figures and this ongoing preoccupation with things like how many forensic tests we might perform in any one year. There didn't seem to be a concern about crime at all at this point. ... The excess of performance measures ... reflected [government] uncertainty with it all - they didn't know what was expected but they knew they didn't want much flexibility. ... The good thing ... was ... we did start to move away from a numbers culture to one based on outcomes. In other words, the debate about staff numbers was not driving the service as it has been previously.

Now [government] was starting to become interested in genuine outcomes. ... In the years that followed the measures have changed. Some of them were still a bit meaningless such as number of warrants served – there was no value in this. ... [Subsequently] we focused on measures that would provide an outcome. We had six to start with, then four. [We] were pragmatic about indicators that could be measured, that could be verified. (Interview 5)

Not all areas of policing are affected by contracts and managerialism.

They (PIs) don't affect us. We have no specific outcomes ... our job is to filter information for intelligence purposes. (Interview 25)

On networks

Community policing is a dramatic departure from traditional policing because it adopts a 'long term strategic approach rather than offering a quick fix to an immediate problem' (Edwards 1999, 112), whatever its form (see Beyer 1993, 12-16). Community policing is about leadership, partnerships, consultation and 'building trust, within and outside the organisation' (Greene et al 1994, 107). Community policing also means government support and adequate resources – factors that are out of the force's control. Edwards notes that 'community policing exerts a high internal cost on the police service'. It is expensive in terms of budget and human resources (Edwards 1999, 111-112).

To varying degrees, managing networks or partnerships is the current trend in the public service and increasingly in policing. So, we spend more time describing the

views of police organisations on this reform. First, there is a low level of awareness among officers about what is done. Few of our respondents were aware of the extent of the force's involvement with other government agencies and the voluntary sector. They know about their own links but not those of their colleagues. There was no central database or written collective memory. One officer cynically commented to us that 'corporate memory in this organisation is the last meeting you went to'. The force has no idea of how many officers, how many resources it is expending on collaborative work because it has never asked.

The force has formal consultative links, issue specific links and informal activity. On the back of these interviews, we came up with the following examples. Formal consultative links cover, for example, domestic violence, working with and in schools, and community consultation. Issue specific links refer in the main to such agreements as memorandums of understanding or MOUs. The force has some 50 MOUs covering partnerships with local taxi firms, mental health, and prisons and corrective services. Even when there is no formal consultative body or MOU, the police still have informal contacts with various sections of the community, especially with local chambers of commerce. However, such informal alliances also extend to everyday citizens. In an effort to 'to get the troops more on side' with community initiatives, one officer recalled:

I told the mobile team to target the school areas. Constable X comes back to me and says he has written a dozen tickets but has spoken to no one. I told him I didn't care about tickets so much as knowing what the community was thinking

about crime and their fear of it. I sent him away. Next day he comes and says he's written a few tickets and issued some cautions but has had a great lunch with the local school, noted their concerns and added, 'some of the mums were ok too"! That's what I want them to be doing. (Interview 7)

There are workshops on working with youth and ethnic groups, partnerships with non-government organisations (on rape, domestic violence, racial conflict) and informal understandings with government agencies. There may be low levels of awareness of the extent of police involvement, but there is commitment from those who see community networking as the future.

I think the community policing thing is a good idea - I think it works - the problem of course is that it is hard to keep people in the same place for significant periods, but I think it's good, I think it's good for the community. We come up with lots of initiatives - we are good at that - but we are poor finishers - too many goals really. I think we should hit on three things and do them. (Interview 8)

I think we've got to start focusing on service more. I can see us becoming one arm in a community consultative board - all inter-locking - family services, youth services for example, all meshing with the departments no longer working in isolation - I don't mean a 1984 scenario but I am coordinating it now. An example, a dysfunctional family is causing all sorts of problems at the housing estate where they live - they come from a lower socio economic background and the child has learning problems. I got together representatives from the

Department of [Housing] and [Social Services] and someone from mental health too and sorted something out – housing got them somewhere else to live. The same family also had problems with a recidivist offender with a drug problem. We ... sat down to see what we could do about this lad. In the end the Social Services took it off us but sometimes I wonder why I am doing this – I suppose that's the lot of community policing. ... We need to work towards an inter-agency approach – it will be difficult but if you are determined to make it work there is no physical reason why it shouldn't work if you persevere. We need a cooperative focus. (Interview 24)

Even the traditional copper sees some virtue in a more integrated approach.

I don't know if outsourcing is the answer (although we outsource the switchboard). It occurs to me that the public like a uniform – they want someone to help them and I don't think they care whether it is a St John's Ambulance person, a parking attendant or a private security guy. Parking attendants used to look like police officers with their uniforms but they don't now. They deliberately dress unlike police officers. A whole of government approach might consider bringing all services under the police umbrella – ambulance, fire, security, so for example if there was a major football game. The events planner could ring one number and organise police officers, St John's Ambulance, private security; traffic coordination. A policy like this would give us a better response to things too. The others might not have the powers but they would have the powers to detain until

we arrived or at least provide a liaison point with the police on the ground. It would give us much better surge capacity. (Interview 19)

And some are pragmatic:

We need to make more use of support agencies (Interview 25)

There is a clear stereotype that the police focus on crime and see networking as soft.

I think your biggest problem will be the culture. It's still isolated, a 'boy's own' club - community policing means beat policing to them and they don't do that well. They don't like all this touchy feely stuff. (Interview 16)

Police don't want to get into the crime prevention stuff though. No one wants to do these jobs - they want to leave it to the warm and fuzzies. Police want to wear their underpants on the outside and save the world - they want to make the person pay. Culture has changed to some extent but it is still influenced by older people. People who are attracted to the policing role often have that mindset. (Interview 18)

[The Commissioner] puts a lot of rhetoric into crime prevention but at present it is just a limp-wristed, touch jockey, hug a tree PR job. ... crime prevention as the band aid solution (Interview 24)

Even supporters have their doubts.

[The community] have progressive views - for example they are comfortable with the idea of multi-agency work. [On the police side, however] there is a

reluctance to cooperate in multi-agency work, although I should say, the higher you go in rank, the more accepting they seem to be. (Interview 1)

Of course the critics are not just professional sceptics, casting a jaundiced eye on another set of reforms. They have some important points to make.

A common theme is that community policing is starved of resources.

Lots of platitudes but little action. The reactive stuff always takes precedence over the proactive stuff. 40 people in my department is not enough and yet still [the Commissioner] asks me continually whether or not my mix of sworn and administrative staff is the right mix with a view to taking away the sworn officers for more important duties. (Interview 3)

But it is also hard to attract staff.

It's hard to attract the right kind of people to the crime prevention area. We don't want people that just want to knock off at 4.00 doing it. If we force them to go there, many people see it as putting their career on the back burner for 12 months. We need to say to people that they need to demonstrate their diversity and suggest that time in crime prevention is a move forward in their careers. (Interview 17)

And it is scarcely any easier to get community support.

I am not confident about people getting together on these things. ... I have been saving people's lives; cutting people out of cars and generally looking after the

community for 24 years and you barely get a thank you. Nowadays you are more likely to get a civil litigation suit because someone has told them you lifted them wrongly or something. We've been spat on and everything. The community's ideas about whether or not they like you are changeable and can change because of a poor episode of *The Bill*. They ring us up asking us why we don't introduce something they've seen on television the night before and they can be quite arrogant about it. I think we need to continue with our efforts to educate the community but I am a bit of a realist. I think we make as much impact as the anti-smoking media. (Interview 19)

On Dilemmas

Evidence that conflicts between the divergent beliefs encapsulated in the three governing structures produce dilemmas for police officers can be found in their beliefs about change, their cynicism about the politics of change and their criticisms of leadership. (On dilemmas see Bevir 1999 and Bevir and Rhodes 2003).

Reform

For these officers the prospect of even more reform is unwelcome.

[The force] is change weary. Since 1990 it has been one major upheaval after another. The [last Commissioner] had big ideas, and [so did] the Commissioner before him. They would go around telling it how it was but every time there was a change of management, there was another reorganisation. Police are so fed up

with this that the [current] Commissioner has decreed that any further change must be incremental. (Interview 9).

The force is not only weary but also averse to further change.

New initiatives will be seen as just another fad – a sense that they will outlive the Commissioner and the fad. While they may be supportive of a new system senior staff have seen it all before. They know resources will not be given to such a scheme and that this alone will kill it off. They may well pay lip service to it but will know that a change of Commissioner will bring on other changes. (Interview 2)

The change process never stops; it just constantly evolves – those who say we are change-weary miss the point – change is ongoing. Mintzberg makes it clear that change is a stop – move forward – constant evolution on all fronts – subject to constant review. We are constantly building strategy so it's nonsense to try to build strategy years ahead – it needs to be constantly renegotiated because the contemporary environment changes. (Interview 7).

There is a sense at the moment we are enduring 'paralysis by analysis'. All we seem to do is to wait around for reviews to tell us something or committees to make a decision. (Interview 15)

I mean the current [Commissioner] is concerned with decentralisation – we move from decentralisation to centralisation continually – a new [Commissioner]

might take us back to the front end again. This is hard on the organisation internally. (Interview 17)

The politics of change

Officers see change as political, not necessarily serving either police or community interests.

As you can see it is all political. Any major changes you want to make or anything that required a change in philosophy would require us to talk to the [government]. They listen, and if it could be sold to them as an asset, I think they would accept it, but they would expect to be consulted (Interview 5).

We are a bit conservative at changing the way we do things ... I think we are always concerned about doing things the right way – incremental – there is a lot at stake and the media are always ready to have a go at police initiatives that go wrong` (Interview 8).

[The Commissioner] finds it difficult balancing the political against the needs of the organisation. If we wanted to make any major changes in the organisation we would always have to run it past the government first – they would want to think about it in terms of the community. Its not that they don't take our advice about things but they are wary, very wary. (Interview 9)

Success is not seen as in the hands of the police.

You must have [government] on board – any change must be backed up by [government]. The agencies would fall in line, culture or no culture if [government] directed it. (Interview 24)

Leadership

Middle management is critical of the top leadership.

[Senior management] don't manage well corporately. You can't get them to sign off on anything ... Once they lose interest, ... it becomes hard to do anything ... there is a real command and leadership problem up there. ... They are splintered as a group, they don't mesh and I've told the [Commissioner] that, they just don't function well as an entity. It makes it difficult for the rest of us. ... [Senior management] have different personalities, different agendas ... One of the advantages of a fractured leadership of course is that you can hone in on someone and get them to champion a cause for you (Interview 12).

The communication from the top down is poor. The senior executive does not command a vision – not much doubt about that. (Interview 17)

I had a fully laid out blueprint for them – outlining my needs on a prioritised basis and everything. I am still here waiting for their response! They haven't signed off on it! It's so hard to get anything up and running. I think [senior management] mean well but they are so caught up with politics that they are deflected from the main game (Interview 18).

The lack of communication is the fault of [senior management] for the most part.

Our business plan has been with them since May and has still not been signed off.

We just carry on regardless. (Interview 15)

On occasion, their frustrations are leavened with wit.

All the [Commissioners] are different, we had one who used to have dreams and visions and would make decisions accordingly. We had another one who would make all his decisions in isolation – we used to call him Nike – just do it! (Interview 15)

Part 4: It's the mix that matters.

The conflict of ideas may manifest itself in an aversion to change and criticisms of the leadership but several managers are all too well aware of the contradictions. One officer makes the point with brutal simplicity: 'Terrorism is a problem – it doesn't go with the ideology of community policing and crime management' (Interview 1). The governance issues posed by the conflicting ideas of the three governing structures can be drawn together around a discussion of the dilemmas of: competition vs. cooperation, accountability vs. efficiency, openness vs. closure, and governability vs. flexibility (Jessop 2000, 20-23).

Competition vs. cooperation

Scott (Scott 1998, 285-287) shows that an organisation that measures itself through targets and surveys - that is, one that has a high performance culture - which at the same time seeks to introduce sector or community policing, faces several problems. Tensions over the priorities among objectives may well cause competition in the community

itself. As we have seen, it is likely that resources will be allocated mainly to those activities that are deemed quantifiable or are a part of a target initiative.

We have already shown the prevalence of a silo mentality within the force, and the frustrations engendered by performance measurement. PIs are tangible and easy to monitor. Subsequent agreements may well increase the number of PIs and the levels at which they are to be measured. There is already competition between the silos. More PIs could foster more competitiveness between senior officers and discourage innovative practices that are not measurable.

Clearly, there is a tension between cooperative behaviour in the form of inter-agency agreements and working with the community and the internal competition for resource allocations linked to performance measurement.

Accountability vs. efficiency

PIs may empower management by 'providing a way of measuring where police resources are being allocated' and increasing levels of managerial accountability (Scott 1998, 283) but they do not necessarily measure police effectiveness (Beyer 1990, 97).

It is costly to collect data on the effects of PIs. Nonetheless there is some evidence that several PIs are inappropriate, betraying a lack of understanding of how policing works. For example, police responsiveness, and the *way* in which they respond, has been linked by a number of studies to community satisfaction levels. So, how quickly they arrive, and how they behave when they get there, will effect police evaluations (Percy 1998, Tyler and Yeun 2002). Yet reducing response times does not reduce the crime problem

or the probability of an arrest (Mazerolle 2001, 3; Beyer 1993, 131). Problem-solving policing cannot be based solely on rapid response times. It puts pressure on officers to move on quickly, often 'writing off jobs' without even investigating them (Interview 27). As Moore (1994, 213) notes in the Australian context, 'this superficial understanding of police accountability':

... is almost certainly fostering reactive, defensive practices. Yet voices from the same quarters are simultaneously calling for open, proactive approaches to the complex social issues with which police are required to deal. It is little wonder, therefore that senior police managers often provide convoluted even contradictory, answers when asked about the philosophies informing their police practice. Their responses reflect the contradictory demands made on police agencies.

One more example of PIs undermining efficiency will suffice. In this case, PIs impose rigidities and thwart innovation.

We need to put more money into it for updated programmes and more sophisticated software. But of course we haven't planned for this and now they are not happy about having to look at it carefully with a view to spending money we haven't got. And as I said we don't get a lot of input. ... The budgets are completely out of our hands. ... It is agreed that the PIs need to be more flexible and less tied to public perception, which can be affected by anything, but that's where it all ends (Interview 25)

Indicators are here to stay. Governments insist on this form of financial accountability. But for community policing to work, police organisations require a more sympathetic set of measures. The boast of increasing accountability to government and the community through outsourcing and PIs will prove meaningless if the police are responsible for setting the targets. Joint service delivery requires joint measurements.

Openness vs. closure

It has been argued by many commentators and scholars that the community, both individually and collectively, holds expectations of its police service that are impossible to achieve (Bradley 1998). Edwards (1999, 115-17) suggests that inflated community expectations of the police is a result of the community itself having little interest in, or conception of, the actual core business of police work. He exposes the paradox inherent in public complaints of police inefficiency on the one hand, and public demand that police do all manner of non-police work and attend to non-urgent calls on the other. He draws on anecdotal evidence of the types of calls made to the police, and the phenomenon Bittner refers to as 'calling the cops', to demonstrate the way in which the police end up being called both to the non-urgent incidents, and to incidents where the public is unsure about the service to call. Edwards explains that other services such as fire brigades, hospitals, and a myriad of social support groups, all have specific areas of focus, but that the police are the easy 'catch-all' option for all kinds of problems that may lie between these other services.

It has been widely observed that in response to unrealistic community expectations, some police attempt the impossible by cutting corners, acting improperly or following

unwise procedures (Goldstein 1977, 14). Edwards (1999, 116) sees this situation as a significant obstacle for policing generally, and for community policing specifically, because declining non-urgent calls, or those outside the core functions of the police, reduces public trust and confidence in them, and undoubtedly generates further criticism. However community expectations about crime prevention cannot be met while the tremendous workload of non-police work remains at its current levels.

As Goldstein (1977, 14) has suggested, greater openness on the part of the police is needed with respect to their true capacity to reduce the pressures now brought to bear upon them, and increase the willingness of the public to provide the police with additional and alternative resources when necessary. It would also:

...increase the likelihood that that the public would more aggressively explore alternatives for dealing with some of the problems now relegated to the police.

But openness has costs. First,

The current [Commissioner's] concentration on crime prevention rather than reactive policing is impacting on our resources. In an era when we have politicians agitating, the [media] on our back questioning the way we do things and questioning our policing methods, it makes delivery difficult. I suppose it would be difficult for [the Commissioner] to go out and tell the community the truth – tell it the way we is. We are reducing numbers on the street and are looking for ways to compensate for this. (Interview 17)

Openness about such cost reduction strategies will not be seen as a feasible political option by Commissioner or [government]. And as one officer pointed out, 'you can't publicise to the criminal, look we are not looking at stolen motorbikes anymore'. And partnerships impose unwelcome reciprocal obligations on agencies with crucial authoritative discretion over other actors. The MOU with the local cab company foundered on just this point.

The Cabs thing didn't work because some cabbies wanted something in return – not be booked for example – you are always going to get that though, people wanting some thing back. (Interview 17. Also interview 10)

Governability vs. flexibility

Many of the people we spoke to have alluded to the difficult situation the [Commissioner] finds himself in and the difficulties of 'balanc[ing] the needs of the organisation with that of [government]' (Interview 9):

We had a property crime issue. The [government] went to [the Commissioner] and said fix it. [The Commissioner] comes to us and says we have a problem – we say we don't have the resources, he says well find the resources and fix it. He's in a no-win situation. (Interview 23).

I think the trouble is that we try to be all things to all people. We say yes to everything, if someone asks us we say yes – we are poll driven, media driven, community driven, government driven. We need to be able to say clearly what we can do and what we can't do ... the [Commissioner] can't say no to

the politicians, we've always got one eye on the [contracts] ... most of us see the [Commissioner] as a figurehead not running the show (Interview 25)

We have to get government on board. We have to say to them that eventually there is going to be substantial discontent out there and they mustn't buckle at the knees. They have to sell it to the public and tell them that while we are not attending a gnome theft or even a burglary, we are doing more on patrol and ... reducing the opportunities for crime. The stats will hopefully support this approach. That's the way to sell it - to explain that the available resources are being used more effectively elsewhere. (Interview 23)

We can't say no to politicians. (Interview 25)

So police leadership is compromised by political responsiveness.

Equally working with other agencies can confound governability.

We have a drugs programme and one of our measures is to refer people to this programme. The only trouble is that the criteria for them is too narrow. They have to meet five criteria - no criminal record, no violence, they have to fully admit the crime, that sort of thing. Well let's take a kid of 15 who steals money off someone and in the process gives the person a shove. He wants the money for some marijuana. That shove has cost him his place in the drugs programme. It's difficult to get them in and many of them would benefit. ... We need to loosen the criteria up or expand it in some way - not so prescriptive. (Interview 23)

Conclusions

In short, the story of managing the police is the story of managing the public sector writ small. There has been a shift from the bureaucracy of the interventionist state of the immediate post-war years and the contract state of the neo-liberals to the network state of partnerships. The arrival of network steering signals a further switch of emphasis from management to diplomacy. The story of the Contract State may seem the most plausible account of recent changes, but our analysis suggests there are limits. Even in the Contract State, there will be core state functions and clearly a continuing role for the public service in managing and coordinating a fragmented system. And this task will place a premium on networking skills. Management by negotiation will extend to services previously run by hierarchies. So the future will not lie with either markets, or hierarchies or networks but with all three. The trick will not be to manage contracts or steer networks but to mix the three systems effectively when they conflict with and undermine one another. The cooperative behaviour of a network can collapse under the impact of competition or of changed priorities. Such changes are a continuing problem in crisis driven organisations like family services, police and mental. Some officers appreciate the dilemmas they confront and recognise the need to fit their managerial strategies to the context.

Command and control is situational. In my team, I don't have subordinates. I have team members. Years ago a constable wouldn't speak to a superintendent – this is not the case now. I invite their ideas and input and encourage them to talk to me. If they are happy I have a productive working team. However, as I said,

it's situational. Fighting fires is a good example. As a commander, when I want something done, it isn't up for negotiation, I tell the troops. We have to rely on command and control in these situations. (Interview 7)

The central story of police reform will be the efforts to match management style to the situation, to balance the unholy trinity of the ever-changing mix of markets, hierarchies and networks.

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