The Future of Policing

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This essay examines the restructuring of policing currently taking place in developed democratic societies. It argues that restructuring is occurring under private as well as government auspices and will have profound effects on public safety, equity, human rights, and accountability. These effects are discussed, along with the trade-offs they represent for public policy. The driving forces behind restructuring are fear of crime, the inability of government to satisfy society's longing for security, the commodification of security, the rise of mass private property, and cultural individualism. The essay concludes with a prediction about the future of policing and suggests policies that are needed to avoid restructuring's harmful effects.

Modern democratic countries like the United States, Britain, and Canada have reached a watershed in the evolution of their systems of crime control and law enforcement. Future generations will look back on our era as a time when one system of policing ended and another took its place. Two developments define the change—the pluralizing of policing and the search by the public police for an appropriate role.

First, policing is no longer monopolized by the public police, that is, the police created by government. Policing is now being widely offered by institutions other than the state, most importantly by private companies on a commercial basis and by communities on a volunteer basis. Second, the public police are going through an intense period of self-questioning, indeed, a true identity crisis. No longer confident that they are either effective or efficient in controlling crime, they are anxiously examining every aspect of their performance—objectives, strategies, organization, management, discipline, and accountability. These movements, one inside and the other outside the police, amount to the restructuring of policing in contemporary democratic societies.

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The restructuring of policing, which is already well advanced, has profound implications for public life, especially on the level and distribution of public safety, the vitality of civil rights, and the character of democratic government. Yet, despite the fatefulness of these changes, there has been hardly any public debate on the future of policing. If Thomas Jefferson was right that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, then the current silence about these issues is a source of great risk for democratic societies.

In order to begin a debate that is long overdue, we first describe in greater detail the pluralizing of policing and the changing character of public policing. Second, we examine the impact of these developments on society and government. Third, we predict the likely future of policing by pinpointing the factors shaping each movement. Finally, we specify the policies that are needed ensure that the current restructuring of policing serves the broad interests of a developed democratic society.

It is very important to be clear about what we mean when we talk about policing. We are not concerned exclusively with "the police," that is, with people in uniforms who are hired, paid, and directed by government. We are interested in all explicit efforts to create visible agents of crime control, whether by government or by nongovernmental institutions. So we are dealing with policing, not just *police.* At the same time, we say *explicit* attempts to create policing institutions so as not to extend our discussion to all the informal agencies that societies rely on to maintain order, such as parents, churches, employers, spouses, peers, neighbors, professional associations, and so forth. The activities of such people and institutions are undoubtedly critically important in crime control, but they have not been explicitly designed for this purpose. They are rarely objects of explicit crime policy. So the scope of our discussion is bigger than the breadbox of the police but smaller than the elephant of social control. Our focus is on the self-conscious process whereby societies designate and authorize people to create public safety.

The End of a Monopoly

In the past 30 years the state's monopoly on policing has been broken by the creation of a host of private and community-based agencies that prevent crime, deter criminality, catch lawbreakers, investigate offenses, and stop conflict. The police and policing have become increasingly distinct. While the customary police are paid, the new policing agents come in both paid and unpaid forms. The former are referred to as private security; the latter as community crime prevention.

To complicate matters further, private security—the paid part of private policing—comes in two forms: people employed by commercial companies who are hired on contract by others

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and persons employed directly by companies to work as security specialists. Private police now outnumber the public police in most developed countries. In the United States, for example, there are three times more private security agents than public police officers (Bayley 1994).[1] There are twice as many private police as public police in Canada and in Britain (Johnston 1992). In all countries for which there is information, the private security sector is growing faster than the public. This has been true since the early 1960s, when the contemporary rebirth of private security began. Businesses and commercial firms, by the way, are not the only customers for private security. Private guards are now often used to guard many government buildings, including police stations.

The increase in the numbers of private police reflects a remarkable change in their status (Shearing 1992). Through World War II, private security was looked on as a somewhat unsavory occupation. It had the image of ill-trained bands of thugs hired by private businesses to break strikes, suppress labor, and spy on one another. The police, as well as the public, viewed private security companies as a dangerous and unauthorized intrusion by private interests into a government preserve. Since World War II, however, a more tolerant attitude has developed, with private security seen as a necessary supplement to the overburdened public police. In the past few years especially, governments have gone beyond passive acceptance to active encouragement of commercial private security. There now seems to be a general recognition that crime is too extensive and complex to be dealt with solely by the police and that the profit motive is not to be feared in policing.

In recent years private policing has also expanded under noncommercial auspices as communities have undertaken to provide security using volunteered resources and people. A generation ago community crime prevention was virtually nonexistent. Today it is everywhere—citizen automobile and foot patrols, neighborhood watches, crime-prevention associations and advisory councils, community newsletters, crime-prevention publications and presentations, protective escort services for at-risk populations, and monitors around schools, malls, and public parks. Like commercial private security, the acceptability of volunteer policing has been transformed in less than a generation. While once it was thought of as vigilantism, it is now popular with the public and actively encouraged by the police. Because these activities are uncoordinated, and sometimes ephemeral, it is hard to say how extensive they are. Impressionistically, they seem to be

[1] In the United States there are about 2 million private security people as opposed to about 650,000 sworn police.

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as common as McDonald's golden arches, especially in urban areas.

Policing has become a responsibility explicitly shared between government and its citizens, sometimes mediated through commercial markets, sometimes arising spontaneously. Policing has become pluralized. Police are no longer the primary crime-deterrent presence in society; they have been supplanted by more numerous private providers of security.

Searching for Identity

During the past decade, police throughout the developed democratic world have increasingly questioned their role, operating strategies, organization, and management. This is attributable to growing doubts about the effectiveness of their traditional strategies in safeguarding the public from crime.

The visible presence of the police seems to be stretched so thin that it fails to deter. Police devote about 60% of their resources to patrolling but complain about running from one emergency call to another, often involving noncriminal matters. The scarecrow has grown tattered in relation to the prevalence of crime. At the same time, regrettably few villains are caught in relation to crimes committed: 21% in the United States, 26% in Britain, and 16% in Canada (1992 statistics).[2] Even fewer receive any sort of punishment through the criminal justice system. Crime pays, as scarcely more than 5% of crimes committed in the United States result in the imprisonment of the criminals involved. Because the police know all this, they are desperately searching for new approaches, responding in part to the competition they face from private security whose strategies overwhelmingly favor prevention over detection and punishment. The central question underlying police soul-searching is whether they can become more effective in truly preventing crime.

One answer to this has been community policing. Its philosophy is straightforward: the police cannot successfully prevent or investigate crime without the willing participation of the public, therefore police should transform communities from being passive consumers of police protection to active co-producers of public safety. Community policing changes the orientation of the police and represents a sharp break with the past. Community policing transforms police from being an emergency squad in the fight against crime to becoming primary diagnosticians and treatment coordinators.

[2] These calculations based on clearances for U.S. Index crimes or their near equivalents in Britain and Canada—homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 1993; United Kingdom Home Office 1992; and Statistics Canada 1993.

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Although community policing has gotten most of the publicity in recent years, many police believe that law enforcement, their traditional tool in crime fighting, can be made more efficient. This approach might be called crime-oriented policing. It involves developing smarter enforcement tactics so that crime will not pay. Some examples include the setting up of fencing operations to catch habitual thieves and burglars; harassing drug markets so as to raise the cost of doing business; monitoring the activities of career criminals and arresting them for minor infractions of the law; cracking down unpredictably on criminal activity in particular locations; installing video cameras on public streets; and analyzing financial transactions by computer to spot cheating and fraud.

Police are also discussing, and sometimes implementing, a strategy that is a hybrid of community-oriented and crime-oriented policing. It is referred to as order-maintenance policing and involves stopping the disorderly, unruly, and disturbing behavior of people in public places, whether lawful or not. This suppressive activity not only reassures the public, demonstrating the limits for unacceptable behavior but reduces the incidence of more serious crime (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Skogan 1990). The New York City Police Department employed this strategy against the "squeegy men" who extorted money from motorists by washing the windshields of cars stopped at traffic lights and asking for donations. The New York City Transit Police reduced the incidence of robbery on the subways by undertaking an energetic campaign against fare-beaters who vaulted over turnstiles. In both cases, the police reduced menacing activity that frightened law-abiding citizens and warned off criminals who would take advantage of what seemed to be unguarded territory (Kelling & Coles 1994). Like community policing, order-maintenance policing requires diagnosis and problem solving, but like traditional policing, it emphasizes law enforcement. It might be called community policing with a hard edge.

In addition to rethinking their standard strategies, the police are themselves helping to blur the line between government and nongovernment policing. For example, some police departments now sell the protective services they used to give away. Rather than considering police protection as a public good, free to all citizens, police are increasingly taking the view that people who derive a commercial benefit from police efforts should pay for it. Accordingly, ordinances have been enacted requiring private burglar-alarm companies to be fined or charged a fee if their electronic systems summon police to false alarms more than a specified number of times. Police are also beginning to charge fees for covering rock concerts, professional sporting events, and ethnic festivals. In some cities, businesses have banded together

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to pay for additional police patrols in order to get the protection they think they need.

In a development that is found across northern America, police not only sell their protective services but allow their own officers to be hired as private security guards—a practice known as "moonlighting." Many American police regularly work two jobs, one public, the other private. Indeed, moonlighting is considered a valuable perquisite of police employment. What this means is that the pluralizing of policing is being directly subsidized in the United States by public funds. Private policing uses police that have been recruited, trained, and supported by government. When acting as agents of private entities, police retain their legal authority and powers.

Not only do public police work as private police but civilians—nonpolice people—increasingly share responsibilities within public policing. Special Constables in Great Britain and Cadets, Police Auxiliaries, and Reserves in the United States often work on the street alongside regular police personnel. Though they serve without pay, and often without weapons, they are virtually indistinguishable in appearance from police. Some communities in Britain have hired able-bodied unemployed persons to patrol the streets, and others have deployed partially trained police officers as community liaison officers (Johnston 1994).

Furthermore, work traditionally performed by uniformed officers has increasingly been given to civilian employees. Usually these are jobs that don't require law enforcement, such as repairing motor vehicles, programming computers, analyzing forensic evidence, and operating radio-dispatch systems. Of all police employees, 27% in the United States are now civilians; 35% in Great Britain; 20% in Canada and Australia; and 12% in Japan (Bayley 1994). A variation on this is to contract out—privatize—support functions altogether, such as publishing, maintaining criminal records, forensic analysis, auditing and disbursement, and the guarding of police premises. Police departments are also beginning to use senior citizen volunteers to provide specialized expertise as pilots, auditors, chemists, or computer programmers.

Some communities employ special support personnel, often dressed in uniforms similar to those of the police, in frontline functions as well. The most common of these are the now ubiquitous parking-meter patrols. But uniformed civilians also conduct crime-prevention classes, make security inspections of premises, provide follow-up counseling to crime victims, resolve neighborhood disputes, and advise about pending criminal matters (Skolnick & Bayley 1986).

The innovations that are being made in operational strategies as well as the increasing use of civilians in police work have important implications for the management and organization of

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the police. For example, police increasingly resent being used by government as an omnibus regulatory agency. So, in an effort to save money and focus on crime prevention, many departments are considering reducing the scope of regulatory activity, such as licensing bars and nightclubs, enforcing parking regulations, maintaining lost and founds, organizing neighborhood watches, conducting crime-prevention seminars, and advising property owners about protective hardware (Johnston 1994; Bayley 1985).

Police are also beginning to recognize that the traditional quasi-military management model, based on ranks and a hierarchical chain of command, may not accommodate the requirements of modern policing. Several forces have recently eliminated redundant supervisory ranks, and almost all are talking about the value of participative, collegial management. This involves decentralizing command and allowing subordinate commanders to determine the character of police operations in their areas. There is also a great deal of talk about treating the public as customers and about measuring performance by surveys of public satisfaction rather than exclusively by the number of crimes and arrests.

Finally, police are being subjected to more intense and rigorous supervision by both government and nongovernment agencies than has ever been true in the past. In Britain, Canada, and Australia civilian review boards have recently been created that can independently investigate instances of police misbehavior, especially those involving allegations of brutality. In the United States, too, 66 major police departments had civilian review by late 1994 and the number was steadily increasing (Walker & Wright 1994). From the police point of view, the unthinkable is happening: the behavior of individual officers is now subject to civilian oversight, including, in some jurisdictions, determining blame and the severity of punishment.

Moreover, great attention is now being given to developing mechanisms for the systematic evaluation of the quality of police service. Checklists of performance indicators have being developed and national data bases assembled to assist the evaluation exercise. Private management consultant firms are now regularly hired to assist local governments in evaluating police. Accrediting organizations have been set up nationally as well as in several American states and Canadian provinces to develop standards of police performance and organization.

Taken together, the pluralizing of policing and the search by the public police for a new role and methodology mean that not only has government's monopoly on policing been broken in the late 20th century, but the police monopoly on expertise within its own sphere of activity has ended. Policing now belongs to everybody—in activity, in responsibility, and in oversight.

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What's at Stake

Does it matter that policing is being reconstructed? Should we care that policing is pluralizing and that the public police are having an identity crisis? Yes, we should. These developments have fateful consequences for the level of public safety, for access to public security, for human rights, and for accountability. Let us examine restructuring's implications for each of these.

Safety

Expanding the auspices under which policing is provided increases the number of security agents. If visible policing deters, then communities should be safer if there are private uniformed security guards and designated civilian patrols and watchers to supplement the public police. If the expansion of private policing was occurring at the expense of public police, of course, then safety would not be enhanced. But that does not appear to be happening. Relative to population, there are more police in developed democracies in 1995 than in 1970 despite the growth in private security. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that pluralizing has made communities safer.

Pluralizing the sources of policing affects not only the quantity of policing but its quality as well. Although both public and private police rely on visibility to deter criminality, private police emphasize the logic of security, while public police emphasize the logic of justice. The major purpose of private security is the reduce the risk of crime by taking preventive actions; the major purpose of the public police is to deter crime by catching and punishing criminals.

Arrest is the special competence and preferred tool of the public police. By using it quickly and accurately, they hope to deter criminality. Private police, on the other hand, both commercial and community based, have no greater enforcement powers than property owners and ordinary citizens. Thus, their special competence and preferred tool is anticipatory regulation and amelioration. By analyzing the circumstances that give rise to victimization and financial loss, they recommend courses of action that will reduce the opportunity for crime to occur. These recommendations are followed because they become conditions for employment or participation. For a secretary in an office, locking doors and keeping a purse in a desk drawer is a condition of employment; for a teenager in a shopping mall, wearing shoes and not playing loud music are conditions of access; for a retailer, not selling goods on the sidewalk in front of his store is a condition for acceptance by the local business community; and for airline passengers, passing through a metal detector is a condition of travel. Because such regulations are legitimized by the

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fiction of being self-imposed, as opposed to being mandated by government, they avoid most constitutional challenge.

There is a closer connection between the end—safety—and the means—policing—with private police, both commercial and volunteer, than with public police. Governments protect communities by providing police and then limiting their authority; private institutions and informal communities protect themselves by determining what circumstances produce crime and then finding people who know how to change them (Shearing 1996). Private police are more responsive than public police to the "bottom line" of safety. If safety is not increased, private police can be fired. For public police the bottom line is not safety but clearance rates. But even here failure has few negative consequences. Police are not fired for not achieving this objective.

The public police are beginning to recognize the inherent limitations of their justice-based approach. Through community policing and order-maintenance policing, the public police are developing strategies for reducing disorder and the opportunities for crime that are similar to the practices readily accepted by commercial and informal communities from private police.

Both quantitatively and qualitatively, then, the pluralizing of policing should increase public safety.

The gains in public safety from the soul-searching currently unsettling public policing are less predictable. It depends on which way they go: more of the same, crime-oriented law enforcement, order maintenance, or community policing. Improvements in crime prevention will require commitment to experiment with new approaches and a willingness to subject them to rigorous evaluation. What is required is a shift in the logic of policing from one that conceives of it as remedying past wrongs to one that seeks to promote security.

Equity

The pluralizing of policing promises to increase public safety and has already done so in some places. The problem is that pluralizing under market auspices at present does not improve security equally across society. It favors institutions and individuals that are well-to-do. Commercial policing not balanced either by voluntary neighborhood crime prevention or by public policing following a preventive, presumptive logic leads to the inequitable distribution of security along class lines. If public safety is considered a general responsibility of government, perhaps even a human right, then increased reliance on commercial private policing represents a growing injustice.

The effects of pluralization under commercial auspices would be even more harmful if the prosperous sectors of the community who pay most of the taxes were to withdraw resources

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from the public sector, objecting that they were paying twice for security—once to the government and once again to hired private security. If this were to occur, the government's ability to develop qualitatively improved policing for the poor would be undermined. It might even be difficult to maintain existing levels of police service. Sam Walker (1976) has argued that this has already occurred and explains the chronic underpolicing of lower- and middle-income neighborhoods throughout American history. It may also be happening today in the form of tax revolts, such as Proposition 13 in California. Undoubtedly the people who are most interested in reducing taxes are those who feel relatively secure and spend most of their time in privately protected places.

That people are calculating the cumulative costs of policing would be unambiguously indicated if communities began to ask for vouchers from the government to spend on policing, public or private, as has happened in public education. In such a system, communities could opt out of the public sector, or substitute an alternative public supplier of police services. The contract system of policing in Canada is like this, although communities must choose exclusively among government suppliers. Despite the popularity of the idea of privatization in the public sector, no government we know of has allowed communities to use public money to substitute private for public police. As we will argue shortly this provides one element in a response to the injustice of the growing inequality of access to security.

Some of the efforts the public police are making to restructure themselves may help to solve the equity issue, others will not. If police concentrate on law enforcement, the dualism between rich and poor will be exacerbated. The rich will be increasingly policed preventively by commercial security while the poor will be policed reactively by enforcement-oriented public police. Moreover, since there seems to be a qualitative difference in the efficacy of these approaches—deterrence versus prevention—the poor will also be relatively less secure. There are three ways theoretically to prevent this inequitable dualism from arising, given the unavailability of market mechanisms for poor people.

First, the numbers of traditional police could be increased in poor high-crime areas. Unfortunately, this might be as unpleasant for the poor as the dualism itself, because it would lead to an intensification of traditional law enforcement.

Second, the public police could adopt the community policing model for economically poor high-crime areas. Community and order-maintenance policing incorporates many of the adaptive, consensual, ends-oriented practices of private security. Unfortunately, despite pronouncements to the contrary, police are often reluctant to adopt such policies in high-crime area where they are already feeling hard pressed and where the efficacy of

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new approaches is unproven. Although community policing in theory is a powerful way to provide preventive policing for the poor, it may be distributed across cities in such a way that it reinforces rather than offsets the growing inequity in public security along class and racial lines.

Third, communities themselves might spontaneously develop their crime-preventing capacities. The chances of community-based pluralizing offsetting the defects of public policing are difficult to predict. Mobilization takes place more easily where people trust one another, possess leadership skills, have a stake in their communities, and are organized politically to achieve it. Although such efforts are growing by leaps and bounds, their efficacy, especially in high-crime areas, is unproven (Rosenbaum & Heath 1990: Skogan 1990).

The mobilizing activities of the public police through community policing are probably necessary, therefore, to offset the emerging dualism. This alone is likely to be of limited value, however, because experience so far suggests that community policing is harder to introduce in poor than in affluent neighborhoods. The irony may be that community policing compensates for the emerging dualism best where it is least needed and worst where it is most needed.

Human Rights

Because government is deeply distrusted in Anglo-American tradition, the powers of the police are circumscribed; their activities closely monitored. Private commercial policing and community-based private security, on the other hand, are apt to be more intrusive, premonitory, and presumptive than public policing. They impose the more onerous and extensive obligations of custom and public opinion. The pluralizing of policing, therefore, increases the informal regulatory control of crime. This, indeed, is the strength of policing under nonstate auspices: social pressure rather than law ensures discipline.

Seen in these terms, community policing, which is community-based crime prevention under governmental auspices, is a contradiction in terms. It requires the police, who are bound by law, to lead communities in informal surveillance, analysis, and treatment. Community policing is a license for police to intervene in the private life of individuals. It harnesses the coercive power of the state to social amelioration. This represents an expansion of police power, and is much more in keeping with the continental European than with the Anglo-American traditions of policing. Community policing may be an answer to the dualism brought by pluralizing but at the risk of encouraging the "vigilantism of the majority" (Johnston 1994).

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Community policing, and its cousin community-based crime prevention, are attractive solutions to the problem of security inequity in a society where policing is being pluralized. But both impose costs. Community-based crime prevention, like commercial private policing, imposes social rather than governmental constraints. Community policing, on the other hand, couples social pressure with government direction. The mitigating factor is that community policing, as we note below, can provide for some measure of "bottom-up" accountability if it is developed in ways that encourage and permit genuine citizen participation.

Democracy

Democratic principle requires that police be accountable so that they serve the interests of the people. This is surely no less true for policing generically, which, as we have just seen, determines in a practical way the balance between freedom and order that people experience. At first glance, pluralization would not seem to pose a problem for accountability. Commercial private security is accountable to the market. If customers don't like what their security experts do, they can fire them. This alternative is not available for public police, who can only be fired by revolution. The problem with this view is that the accountability provided by markets accrues to buyers of private security and not to all the people who might be affected by it. Private security inevitably serves employers better than workers, owners better than patrons, and institutions better than individuals. The great advantage of public policing in democratic countries is that it is accountable to every citizen through the mechanisms of representative government.

Furthermore, the pluralizing of security under commercial auspices changes the social basis on which policing is organized. In democratic countries, police have been created to serve the interests of people territorially defined. Public policing is based on geographical communities. Private police, by contrast, serves primarily interest communities, that is, communities united by function rather than geography. It follows that the decentralization of policing that occurs through pluralizing is very different from the decentralization that occurs when government does it. The former is more selective in social terms; the latter includes everyone.

Voluntary community crime prevention, the other way in which pluralizing is occurring, does not suffer from the defect of social selectivity. The social basis for it is the same as under government, namely, people territorially defined. The problem with volunteer private policing, however, is its organizational informality. It may fail to represent the interests of people who are inarticulate, unorganized, and marginalized. The volunteers in

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private policing are likely to have interests that may differ from those of people who decline to participate. Community crime prevention is policing by the self-appointed, which is what people usually think of as vigilantism.

In sum, commercial private policing provides accountability through the formal mechanism of contracts but on the basis of social interests that may exclude many citizens. Volunteer private security provides accountability through informal mechanisms organized on the basis of citizenship that may or may not include everybody. Public policing provides accountability through formal mechanisms organized on the basis of citizenship that, in principle, cover everyone. Unless new alternatives are developed, it follows that accountability is best achieved through public policing operating according to principles of community policing. Community policing supplements the customary accountability of representative political institutions with grassroots consultation, evaluation, and feedback.

Trade-offs

What trade-offs among these qualitatively different features—safety, equity, human rights, and accountability—does the current restructuring of policing present?

Broadening the auspices under which policing is organized, especially substituting private for governmental ones, probably raises the level of public safety because it increases the number of security agents and also substitutes a preventive security paradigm for a deterrent one. However, pluralizing increases safety at the cost of equity. This can be offset if community policing is strongly implemented in disorganized poor communities afflicted by crime.

Pluralized policing, however, is less constrained by formal rules and, therefore, puts the rights of the people it polices at risk. Pluralized policing is more security conscious than rights conscious.

Pluralized policing, under both commercial and community auspices, is only fictively consensual and democratic. Although it represents and empowers new groups, it does so on the basis of social interest rather than citizenship, and it provides haphazardly for the representation of all who might be affected by it. Pluralized policing inevitably shifts power away from government, but it does not necessarily distribute it to more people. Community policing, on the other hand, combines the traditional accountability of representative government with the informal accountability of volunteer crime prevention.

The point to underscore is that the changes occurring in policing are more than technical adjustments in the way policing is delivered. They represent the restructuring of government itself

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and the redistribution of power over one of government's core functions. By shifting policing to new auspices through markets, community action, and police reform, the nature of governance is changing.

The Likely Future

Recognizing that fundamental changes are being made in policing that have profound consequences for the quality of civic life, is it possible to predict what the future holds? What balance among the overlapping and competing movements of pluralization and reformation will emerge? Will a new and stable equilibrium be found between state and nonstate policing? Might the state reassert itself, once again dominating policing? Could the public police become increasingly marginalized, confined to the policing of poor inner cities? And what will the character of public policing become—enforcement oriented, community based, or some new combination?

The current restructuring is driven by the public's concern about security. It is hardly an accident that the expansion of private security as well as the development of community policing coincided with rising crime rates throughout the developed world. If the threat to security were to decline significantly, the impetus to restructuring would be largely removed. This is unlikely to happen. Crime, notwithstanding the recent decline in overall rates in some countries, will continue to rise and even perhaps get worse for two reasons. First, crime is disproportionately committed by young males between the ages of 15 and 25. Twenty-nine percent of serious crime in the United States is committed by people under 19.[3] This group will rise by over 20% in the next decade. In Canada 14% of crime of violence and 25% of crimes against property are committed by people 12 to 17 years old (Statistics Canada 1993). Second, the violence of crime has been increasing. During the past 10 years the rate at which American teens are murdered has doubled (Blumstein 1994). The homicide arrest rate for white youths rose by 80% during the past decade, for black youths 125%. This rising lethality can be traced to the increased availability of sophisticated firearms that in turn is related to the penetration of drug markets into poor urban neighborhoods (Butterfield 1995). Unless circumstances change fundamentally, the violence of crime will continue to be perceived as a serious threat.

Furthermore, whatever happens to crime objectively, the public's fear of crime will certainly not decline. Because crime is fascinating, the media can be counted on to continue to exploit and exaggerate it. Only criminologists and police seem to know

[3] "After the Respite, Crime Rises," *Albany Times Union,* 14 Dec. 1994, p. 1.

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that crime is not randomly distributed in society; that it is not a national problem affecting everyone to the same extent. Crime is concentrated in particular localities characterized by unemployment, poverty, poor education, and single-parent homes. Crime has indeed risen and become more deadly during the last generation, but it has only marginally worsened for most of us. Unfortunately, because there seems to be no economic incentive, or political one either, for pointing this out, the public will continue to be terrorized by the exploitation of crime news (Chermak 1995).

Assuming that crime and the fear of crime are unlikely to decline, can we expect governments to adopt policies that would rectify the underlying conditions, the so-called root causes, that breed crime? If this happened, then the restructuring of policing would be less imperative. This, too, is unlikely for several reasons. The political mood, currently represented by Reagan, Thatcher, Major, and Gingrich, is certainly against large-scale social intervention by government. Rising crime rates are often considered to be evidence that Great Society programs have failed. Ironically, then, the very rise in crime that impels the restructuring of policing may have helped convince people that social programs undertaken by government are a waste of money. Conservative social theorists also argue that government doesn't know how to remedy criminogenic conditions. Social programs are as likely to be counterproductive as they are wasteful (Murray 1988; Wilson 1983). The political hostility to amelioration is also fueled by a general perception that taxes are too high. Tax revolt has become a permanent condition, and placating it an enduring political necessity. All governments seem resigned to doing less with less for the foreseeable future.

For demographic, social, and political reasons, then, the threat of crime will intensify. The search for security will not diminish but may grow in desperation. How, then, will government and the larger community provide for its intense desire for security?

First, government is unlikely to be able to respond effectively through traditional law enforcement programs. It will certainly not be able to do so through simply increasing the number of public police. Most research over the past 30 years has failed to show a connection between variations in the numbers of police and the incidence of crime.[4]

At the same time, the cost of increasing the "visible presence" of the police, that is, police on the streets, remains dauntingly

[4] This conclusion has recently been challenged by Stephen Levitt who has demonstrated for the first time that hiring additional police may be cost effective (Levitt 1994a, 1994b). Levitt's analysis shows that in large American cities each additional officer prevents between 7 and 10 crimes per year, at an annual saving that is $150,000 more than the cost of the officer's hire.

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high. Because of staffing and deployment rules, 10 additional officers must be hired in order to get one extra uniformed police officer on the streets around the clock throughout the year (Bayley 1985). The incremental cost of a unit of "visible presence" on American streets is, therefore, about $500,000—10 times a patrol officer's average annual salary plus benefits. Few governments are going to be willing to make such investments.

Moreover, the distributional requirements of democratic politics ensure that additional police officers will not be concentrated in high-crime neighborhoods where their marginal utility would be highest, but will parcel them out in dribs and drabs so that every politician can claim to have gotten some police for his or her constituency. The allocations made under the 1994 Crime Control Act in the United States show this clearly. Distributional politics reduces the effectiveness of public expenditures on policing in any democratic society.

Democratic governments are also limited in their ability to respond to crime by political values. In the Anglo-American tradition, government is distrusted. As a result, public pressure to "get tough" on crime invariably encounters stiff resistance from people concerned about civil liberties. Governments may sometimes enact Draconian policies, but in the long run they swing back and forth between punishment and due process. Deterrence, which will continue to dominate the efforts of modern democratic governments to control crime, clashes with the very precepts on which government has been established. Democratic societies may fear crime, but they fear authoritarianism more.

We believe, therefore, that democratic governments are unlikely to be able to allay the public's desperate need for safety through the criminal justice system. The demand for security is unlikely to be met by governmental action, whether through amelioration or deterrence.

Second, we are unsure but skeptical of the ability of Western societies to respond to the demand for order by spontaneous crime-preventive activities undertaken by communities. Our skepticism arises out of the value Western societies places on individualism. Westerners want to be free not only from government constraint but from social constraint as well. Because people in Western countries, unlike the Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans, place great importance on individual development and freedom, they do not readily submit to the informal discipline of groups (Bayley 1985, 1991). If they do so, it is for short-term instrumental ends, such as winning a game, obtaining emotional support for a particular problem, making useful contacts, or obtaining particular advantages. The capacity of families, neighborhoods, schools, churches, and employers to discipline their members and to organize against crime and disorder is weak in individualistic societies. Although the vitality of community crime

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prevention in Western democratic countries currently is impressive and heartening, its staying power and its effectiveness are doubtful. Experience so far indicates that efforts at community organization are difficult to sustain after initial enthusiasm wears off. Moreover, the rigorous research so far done on community crime prevention has failed to show substantial benefits.

Individualistic democratic societies are caught between a rock and a hard place with respect to crime control. On the one hand, they are limited by their political values from authoritarian controls and, on the other, they are limited by their cultural values from the discipline of informal social control.

Third, caught in this bind, it is inevitable that Western democratic societies will continue to resort to the marketplace for security solutions. Free enterprise capitalism is the mechanism the West must rely on to compensate for the deficiencies of governmental control and social cohesion in controlling crime. Market-mediated private security is the natural response of societies like ours, just as privatization generally has been to problems of health, education, research, information dissemination, and income support. Security can hardly not become "commodified" in individualistic democratic societies. There is no other place to turn.

Commodification of security has been encouraged by the rise of "mass private property" in the latter half of the 20th century—meaning facilities that are owned privately but to which the public has right of access and use (Shearing & Stenning 1983). These include shopping malls, educational campuses, residential communities, high-rise condominiums and apartments, banks, commercial facilities, and recreation complexes. The world is no longer divided simply between privately owned space used by its owners and the numerous public streets used by the public. By blurring the distinction between the public and the private, mass private property attenuates and marginalizes government's responsibility for security. It constricts government efforts at preventive policing to clearly public venues. Preventive policing in mass private property has become the responsibility of security specialists bought privately through the market.

If we are right that governments cannot provide satisfactory public safety, that neighborhoods will have only haphazard success in doing so, and that mass private property will continue to dominate urban space, then market-based private security will inevitably increase relative to public policing. It may even begin to cannibalize public policing if affluent people become more reluctant to pay twice for safety. It follows, therefore, that there will be no avoiding the emergence of dualistic policing stratified by race and class. The affluent will be protected by private security agents organized by interest groups and operating according to preventive principles backed up by the requirements of special-

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ized membership or participation; the poor will be protected by a weakened public police operating according to principles of deterrence based on procedurally limited law enforcement. Western democratic societies are moving inexorably, we fear, into a Clockwork Orange world where both the market and the government protect the affluent from the poor—the one by barricading and excluding, the other by repressing and imprisoning—and where civil society for the poor disappears in the face of criminal victimization and governmental repression.

Fourth, there is one more factor that may powerfully influence the security trends outlined here, namely, outbreaks of collective violence, especially in large cities. The United States has already experienced serious but isolated instances of this—the "Rodney King" riots in Los Angeles, the Thompkins Park and Crown Heights riots in New York City, and the Liberty City riots in Miami. But collective violence is happening in quieter, more pervasive ways that is not so easily recognized. Gang violence in some inner-city neighborhoods has attained the dimensions of an ongoing riot. The former Mayor of Washington, DC, formally requested the deployment of the National Guard in August 1994. And Americans asked why the Army and Marines were sent to Somalia when the United States had its own gang warlords terrorizing inner-city neighborhoods. England now has "slow riots" in the summer in which unemployed youths from public housing estates regularly burn tires, cars, and sometimes buses "for fun."

Collective violence, whether in the form of short, intense riots or persistent, endemic criminality, powerfully reinforces the dualistic tendencies in the current restructuring of policing. Portrayed as unpredictable and random, such violence scares the well-to-do and demonstrates the impotence of the police. This encourages further privatization along class lines. At the same time, collective violence weakens community crime prevention impulses among the disadvantaged by polarizing communities and weakening trust among neighbors and even family members. Furthermore, in the face of collective violence, governments become less willing to allow poor communities to develop self-defense capabilities (Bayley 1975, 1985). Collective violence is inevitably perceived in political terms. The standard response of governments is, therefore, to centralize policing power rather than allow it to be decentralized among what appear to be unpredictable and politically untrustworthy communities.

Collective violence not only drives a wedge deeper between the rich and the poor; it undercuts the ability of the state to more equitably distribute security among the rich and the poor by undermining the capacity and enthusiasm among the public police for community policing. Persistent collective violence causes the police to centralize decisionmaking, adopt a military style of command, emphasize law enforcement, deploy heavier weap-

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onry, patrol in groups rather than as individuals, take preemptive action, and distrust the public. Collective violence also makes commanders cautious about tying down officers in community-development work. They want to save resources for "the big event," which weakens their capacity for flexible adaptation and problem solving, both of which are essential elements of community policing.

Collective violence is like a bus waiting to broadside the evolution of policing in the late 20th century. If it hits, there may be nothing anyone can do to prevent the emergence of a dualistic system of policing.

Fateful Choices

The fear of crime, the absence of ameliorative social policies, the ineffectiveness of deterrence, the rise of mass private property, and the commodification of security are powerful forces shaping the future of policing. The dualistic tendencies in policing are almost certain to be strengthened, with consequent distortions of equity, human rights, and accountability. In the face of these developments, can modern democratic, individualistic societies provide humane policing equitably for all their members? We believe they can, but only if two policies are adopted.

First, it is necessary to enable poor people to participate in markets for security. For this to happen it will be necessary to develop mechanisms to provide for the reallocation of public funding for security. The objective should be to provide poorer communities with the ability to sustain self-governing initiatives.

One way of achieving this would be through block grants to poor communities so that they can participate in the commercial market for security. Not only does this level up access to security, it vests directive authority in the people most affected. If appropriate mechanisms for community self-government are created, block grants raise the likelihood that policing will be responsive to the wishes of the community. Block grants would encourage poor communities to develop security regimes that fit their problems and mores in the same way that private security adapts to the goals of businesses. In effect, communities would be given security budgets that they could spend on various mixtures of public and private policing. Distributional problems between rich and poor might still arise, of course, particularly if the rich refused to pay. All policies that have any prospect of mitigating the growing class differences in public safety depend on the affluent segments of our societies recognizing that security is indivisible. The well-to-do are paying for crime now; but they have not learned that they will save more by leveling up security than by ghettoizing it.

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Second, community policing must become the organizing paradigm of public policing. Through community policing governments can develop the self-disciplining and crime-preventive capacity of poor, high-crime neighborhoods. Community policing incorporates the logic of security by forging partnership between police and public. Since safety is fundamental to the quality of life, co-production between police and public legitimates government, lessening the corrosive alienation that disorganizes communities and triggers collective violence. Community policing is the only way to achieve discriminating law enforcement supported by community consensus in high-crime neighborhoods.

Community policing faces substantial obstacles and will not be easy to achieve. Most police are still not convinced it is needed, and research so far is equivocal about its success. The latter may be attributable more to failures in implementation than defects in the program. Community policing requires substantial revision of organizational priorities within the police and is managerially demanding. It requires new styles of supervision and new methods of evaluating performance. Although community policing sounds appealing, few politicians have the nerve to force community policing on reluctant police departments. They would rather give unrestricted grants to police agencies, thereby earning credit for being tough on crime while not challenging standard operating procedures. Finally, as we have noted, community policing is hardest to achieve in the places that need it most. In terms of resources, it requires government to take the security problems of the poor as seriously as it does the security problems of the rich.

Both of these policies—community block grants and community policing—highlight a fundamental question: does government have the wisdom, even if it has the will, to guide the course of security's restructuring without making it worse? Vouchers and community policing will work to offset the socially divisive effects of restructuring only to the extent that they empower communities to take responsibility for themselves and, in some cases, to heal themselves. This requires government not only to reform the police but to redistribute political power with respect to one of the core function of government. This is a lot to ask, because faced with shortcomings in public safety, governments will be tempted to enhance directiveness rather than encourage devolution. To avoid this, a radical rethinking of the role of government is required.

Fortunately, while the inclination of government to stipulate rather than facilitate remains strong, there is a widespread and growing movement to challenge this. Just as the past is prologue to the continued restructuring of policing, so, too, there seems to be a growing realization in democratic, individualistic societies

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that in order to create a more humane, safe, and civil society, government must be reinvented, specifically, that grassroots communities must be made responsible for central aspects of governance. The rethinking of security that our proposals require is consistent with this rethinking of governance. Restructuring is a problem that may contain the seeds of its own solution.

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