Crime Control

**The Use and Misuse
of Police Resources**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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CRIME CONTROL: The Use and Misuse of Police Resources
David John Farmer

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To Rory
and to
Damien, Mark, Gregory, and Elizabeth

Foreword

The question of how to use police resources productively, particularly in this era of tight municipal budgets, is a major concern for police chiefs and others responsible for crime control. In *Crime Control: The Use and Misuse of Police Resources*, David J. Farmer provides new insights into this question and suggests a practical resource allocation approach for police policymakers and administrators. The book documents the results of current police resource allocation practices and describes the major research studies that have identified a need to restructure police field operations. It very usefully outlines the development and nature of allocation techniques and analyzes the political contexts which influence resource allocation. After describing planning at the neighborhood level that should inform the allocation process, the author provides a comprehensive "planning-budgeting-resources allocation" approach to managing a productive police department.

This comprehensive approach is illustrated by an account of the Manpower Allocation Review System (MARS), which the author developed and introduced in the New York City Police Department in 1972 when I was commissioner. As I can

attest, the MARS approach had practical utility. For the author, it served as a forerunner to the more elaborate system he describes in this book.

In recent years, American policing has benefited greatly from the observations and analyses of scholars and researchers, particularly when they have had on-line experience in police agencies at one or another stage in their careers. David J. Farmer is a scholar who has had such experience, which adds a special dimension to his observations and conclusions.

Patrick V. Murphy

Preface

How can crime be controlled more effectively? The widespread public urge for an easy answer to this difficult question reflects not only the seriousness of the problem but also a general reluctance to treat the matter as seriously as it deserves. Despite fluctuations in the crime data and despite improvements in criminal justice operating practices over the past decade and a half, we remain denied the fullest benefits of urban and other living by the grossness and the extent of our most crippling social disease—crime. Despite the real gains in understanding about criminal justice, public policymaking and debate about crime control remain shackled by dualistic thinking and by the child-like impulse for simplistic answers. The dualistic character of the thinking, assuming only a dichotomous world of “right versus wrong” and “we versus they,” is reflected in the nature of our perennial debates over gun control and capital punishment. The urge for the “one-liner” solution is reflected in the character of the remedies commonly touted for the crime problem—“Lock them up and throw away the key;” and “Abolish unemployment;” and “Eliminate the insanity defense.” As long as we are con-

strained by a proclivity toward such instant solutions, we will remain impotent in addressing the crime control problem.

This book presents an analysis and a policy agenda that focus on a subject critical for crime control—the use and misuse of police resources. First, it is concerned with police resources allocation decision-making. It describes present practices and techniques, provides new information on these approaches, and then presents a new framework for understanding and developing allocation techniques. Second, it describes the critical features of a new form of police agency that is required if police resources are to be used effectively and if society is to reduce the crime problem. It outlines the nature of the new form and specifies the policy steps required for implementation. The analysis, while straightforward, does require reconsideration of traditional and comfortable conceptions. It describes the necessity for a reconceptualization of the utilization of police resources, both in the nature of police resources allocation decision-making and in the very form of the police agency. The policy agenda, while offering a potent and needed approach for crime control, is no “hair tonic” remedy. Rather, it presents an effective framework which, with much additional effort, can assure over time that the crime control problem will be addressed to permit the quality of living to which we aspire.

This analysis and policy agenda are based on an interdisciplinary information base. Research data have been collected and analyzed from a survey of United States cities with populations over 100,000, from a survey in a selected state of communities with populations over 5,000, and from participant observation case studies. The techniques and concepts of microeconomics have been applied to the analysis of resources allocation decision-making, and reliance is placed on criminal justice research and other literature. The views expressed have also been shaped by the writer's own experiences—for example, as Special Assistant to the Police Commissioner in the New York City Police Department, and as Director of the Police Division of the National Institute of Justice at the U.S.

Department of Justice. The analysis and policy agenda represent an amalgam of analysis, synthesis, and research.

At one level, this book—it is explained in Chapter 1—is a twin institutional “biography.” It analyzes police resources allocation decision-making; and it also offers an analysis of the total police institution by means of its account of a “new form of police agency.” At another level, Chapter 1 explains that the book is a call to arms. It is such because of three contentions. First, crime can, and needs to be, more effectively controlled. Second, police resources can be more effectively used, and they must be better utilized if the crime control problem is to be addressed. Third, only by pursuing a policy agenda that works toward a new form of police agency can this more effective utilization be realized.

Concerning resources allocation decision-making, this book documents results indicating the opportunity for the better utilization of police resources and suggesting the shape of the fundamental changes needed throughout the entire range of police operational practices. It describes the development and character of the major types of resources allocation techniques, and presents survey information showing that the police resources allocation decision-making process is more complex in critical respects than the criminal justice literature implies. It demonstrates and illustrates the political context of allocation decision-making, and argues for a reconceptualization of the resources allocation process that considers the political and other factors underlying the decision-making. It presents a conditional model of police resources allocation decision-making. This model shows that conditions determine the extent to which resource allocation decisions are politicized, and it suggests the possibility of controlling or manipulating these conditions. The conditional model presents police policymakers and managers with the prospect that they need not be merely the victims of political influence. The book presents a socioeconomic view of the purpose of policing that supplements the descriptions already in the literature, and it emphasizes how neighborhood-level and real-

istic planning must be part of the resources allocation process. It offers a new perspective on the allocation process, using the vantage point of economics literature. It specifies a comprehensive "planning-budgeting-resources allocation" approach that can form a practical and sound basis for improving resources allocation decision-making and results, and it illustrates aspects of this approach by describing a system developed by the author for application in the New York City Police Department. The book provides comments on the policy beginnings required of police managers and elected officials wishing to improve resource allocation practices.

Concerning the police institution, the book documents how the contemporary police institution is less than adequate in meeting society's needs. It describes and illustrates how the police institution is afflicted by a dedication to process that should be displaced by greater emphasis on purpose. It observes how, turned inward, the contemporary police institution is suffering from deep bureaucratic malaise that can be broken only by opening lines for an effective working relationship between the political and the programmatic. Needed is a new form of police institution that is open to the extent that the contemporary institution is closed. This new purpose-oriented and accountable form, proceeding beyond the professional model, requires effective political involvement. This new form can address the three realities of police political relations. It must accept that politics permeates policing; that police decision-making can be improved not by denying but by recognizing and manipulating the political element; and that, while some are bad, certain political intrusions are necessary and desirable for fully effective performance. The policy leadership role of the community, acting through its elected officials, is described as critical for establishing the purposive, open type of police institution that is necessary if crime is to be adequately controlled. Reliance on the politician is noted as necessary in establishing the "profit-making burden" on the police administrator and in insisting on police receptivity to new modes of thinking. The book notes how

politicians are failing in their management of the police function, and suggests practical policy beginnings for better results.

The new form of police agency that is needed for effective crime control is described as one structured, staffed, and managed so that it has two major capabilities beyond the professional model. Possession of these capabilities, acting synergistically with a third which is part of the professional model, would ensure evolution of the police institution into the required new form. The professional model is described as one which has dominated the modern development of policing and where the drive for operating effectiveness/efficiency is based on professional autonomy, professional knowledge, and the service ideal. The first characteristic of the new form of police agency is the capacity for developing—in partnership with other public and private agencies—workable purposes, plans, and policies for realizing higher levels of order, law, and justice in the community. The second is the capacity for mobilizing and leading agencies and individuals in order to achieve order enhancement, with an emphasis on working not only directly but also indirectly through other societal organizations. The third, a feature of the professional model, is the capacity for utilizing research results and new perspectives as much as possible in agency thinking about its “doing” activities—the capacity for being creative. The book describes the relevance for crime control of this new form of police institution that is purpose-oriented, outgoing to the environment, and creative.

The basic policies or approaches described do constitute a genuine policy agenda for communities wanting effective crime control. It is explained that the term “policy” is used throughout to emphasize the need to concentrate on the fundamental arrangements for allocating resources and for establishing the new form—the need to focus on the basic arrangements of the new form before addressing the nitty-gritty administrative difficulties attendant on any fundamental change. While the thrust of the book is away from the preva-

lent but unrealistic "criminal justice impulse" for instant results, advice is added for managers and politicians wishing to make policy beginnings toward the more effective utilization of their resources.

This book has been written for two main reasons. The first is that, while the literature on aspects of these topics is extensive, it has been possible to break new ground in this book in developing our understanding of the utilization of police resources. We will leave to the reader's generosity to judge whether this book, as it claims, has made significant contributions to advancing knowledge concerning the techniques and practice of using police resources. The second reason is that this study convinces the author that the pessimistic view so common about crime control is unrealistic. This pessimism considers that little can really be done to cope with the crime situation. On the contrary, this book shows that the new form of police agency can give us the beginning we want in addressing our crime problems, and it indicates that we have the capability and the information to begin effecting these needed changes now. We can overcome. We can enjoy the minimal crime hazards and the higher caliber of policing that we deserve.

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D.J.F.

Acknowledgments

In writing any serious book on criminal justice and police issues, the primary debt that must be acknowledged is to the practitioners and researchers who made it possible. Over the years, the author has been fortunate to receive guidance, information, and example from many excellent police commanders in departments throughout the country—and from some poor ones. The debt to the many criminal justice researchers and thinkers is equally clear from the text. This book stands on their shoulders.

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Particular thanks are due also to my secretary, Gloria E. Washington, for her heroic efforts in typing and retyping this manuscript.

This book is dedicated to my wife Rory, my companion in all things, and to my children, Damien, Mark, Gregory, and Elizabeth. My hope is that this book will make a contribution, however small, toward rendering police policymaking and management safer for them—and for America.

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