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Improving Police: What's Craft Got to Do with It?

By James J. Willis

The lyf so short, the craft so long to learn.
Geoffrey Chaucer

To put it bluntly, it is not likely that police work generally, and the work of individual officers, will be appreciated at its actual value—that is as a service of being complex, important and serious, until we begin to give a damn whether it is done well.

Egon Bittner

driver's seat of police decision making, unlike past reforms that have aspired to professionalism by focusing on the legal and administrative features of the police environment (Klockars 1988). For example, the origins of the professional policing

Over the last century or so, the police have been the object of almost continuous and intensive attempts at reform. Currently, one of the most powerful forces for transforming what the police do and how they do it is the evidence-based policing movement, an approach that challenges the police to base their actions on scientific evidence about “what works.” This puts scientific research squarely in the

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model that dominated much of the twentieth century lay in the implementation of laws, organizational policies, and departmental rules. As features of bureaucratic organization, their purpose was to strengthen accountability and to influence the choices made by patrol officers and the organizations that employed them (Reiss 1992).¹ Community policing, the most popular reform of the last few decades, then sought to reverse this trend by assigning a greater role to the needs and concerns of local communities for guiding police actions (Mastrofski and Greene 1993, 80).

Whatever the reform approach, it is a common lament

¹My comments in this essay concentrate on patrol officers. Thus, policing and police work refer to the activities of these front-line practitioners unless otherwise noted.

among those seeking to improve policing that the policing “craft,” or the culmination of knowledge based on hands-on experience, is a feature of police culture that poses a formidable obstacle to implementing new policies and practices. Supporters of community- and problem-oriented policing, two recent and highly-touted reforms (Goldstein 1990; Skogan 2006), have expressed this concern, as have advocates of evidence-based policing. For example, Cynthia Lum (2009) notes in a previous *Ideas in American Policing* lecture that despite research demonstrating the crime control benefits of concentrating police officers in high-crime areas or hot spots, there is little indication that police agencies have actually tried to reallocate their patrol resources accordingly. Here she echoes a lament made

over twenty-five years ago by Lawrence Sherman, a leader in the evidence-based policing movement, about police officers’ general resistance to scientific discovery. Despite evidence showing that arresting batterers in misdemeanor domestic violence incidents in Minneapolis was the most effective response for reducing future offending, patrol officers in the department said they would continue to use their standard responses, including talking to both parties or asking one to leave (Sherman 1984, 75).² While proponents of evidence-based reform are careful to avoid attributing a reluctance to embrace research to a single cause, it is clear that they consider the lower status that police officers assign to science than to craft as a significant impediment to reform (Sherman 1984, 1998; Weisburd 2008; Lum 2009).

Today it appears that scholars are being attracted in increasing numbers toward the evidence-based movement and policymakers, such as the United States Department of Justice, are encouraging police to do the same.³ Consequently,

²Subsequent replications of this research at additional sites revealed more complex findings, including the contribution of arrest to future domestic violence under some circumstances (Sherman 1992).

³For example, the Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance Web site provides resources on evidence-based approaches and practices (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/evidence-based.htm>).

it would seem to be a good time to reconsider the value of the police craft in relationship to police science (Bayley and Bittner 1984). Improvements in policing rest heavily on the shoulders of those who do policing at the coalface, and patrol officers have long thought of the way they perform their work as a craft (Wilson 1978, 283). Thus, unless more attention is given to the craft aspects of policing within the context of the evidence-based movement, it is unlikely that efforts to integrate science with policing will deliver the results that reformers desire (Weisburd and Neyroud 2011). Ultimately, any attempt to improve police performance must take into account the views of those who constitute any department's largest resource and their understanding of what constitutes superior police work (Skogan 2008).

Some might argue that craft and science already work well together, noting that the relationship between police researchers and practitioners has improved substantially over the past few decades (Bayley 2008). This might be, but, aside from a few scholars (see Bayley and Bittner 1984; Mastrofski 1996), not much attention has focused on examining *how* scientific and professional knowledge might contribute to one another in mutually supportive ways in the context of street-level decision making. In this essay, I consider what a true marriage of craft and science might look like for guiding

the decisions of rank-and-file officers in two domains relevant to police practice: (1) advancing knowledge about what works, and (2) making decisions about the right thing to do. In doing so, I hope to illuminate some possibilities for reform that policymakers, practitioners, and researchers might wish to consider in their efforts to improve the police of the future.

Let Me Introduce Our Couple, Science and Craft

From the perspective of evidence-based policing, it is social science that promises to revolutionize the use of police discretion (Sherman 1984, 61). A glance through any research methods textbook reveals that social science encompasses a range of methodologies. However, the scientific gold standard of the evidence-based policing movement is the experimental study, as it is the most rigorous methodological tool for determining whether a causal relationship exists between a particular treatment and a desired outcome (Sampson 2010). If you want to learn whether problem-oriented policing is more effective than directed patrol for reducing crime at hot spots (Taylor, Koper, and Woods 2011), or whether arrest is the best option for reducing recidivism in domestic violence cases (Sherman 1992), then randomized trials are your best hope. This view

of police science conjures an image of the police professional as a technical expert, someone whose efforts to solve crime and disorder problems are influenced powerfully by scientific research. Indeed, Lawrence Sherman (1984, 76–77) has envisioned police officers making street-level decisions by accessing research results on laptop computers in their patrol cars. Having entered data about a particular suspect, a preprogrammed algorithm would advise the patrol officer on the best course of action based on the likely effects of the officer's actions on the suspect's behavior.

From the perspective of craft, professionalism is defined quite differently. Experience, not scientific knowledge, is the foundation of effective police work. By encountering a variety of situations and people over time, patrol officers learn valuable practical knowledge and develop specific skills. Some of these situations might seem clear cut, like dealing with a bank robbery or other violent crime in progress but others, such as domestic disturbances or traffic stops, are more complex and uncertain. This makes the decision about how best to respond much more challenging.

Under these conditions, what is embraced is “situated knowledge” that offers an officer immediate guidance about the constraints and possibilities for responding to a specific incident (Thacher 2008, 51). Craft places a high value on flexibility

to fit the right response to the particulars of the situation and does not necessarily demand orthodoxy in response. It also recognizes that what works well for one officer might not work so well for another due to differences in skills and personal traits. Scientific knowledge predicting the likely outcomes of a specific action is certainly useful, but patrol officers generally assign much greater importance to knowledge of laws and rules and in-depth understanding of people, places, and events. The former helps define the nature of the problem and the outer limits of the police officer's authority and responsibilities (Mastrofski, Willis, and Revier 2011, 16), and the latter increases an officer's "ability to predict intention and behavior" when confronting an unfamiliar setting for the first time (Bittner 1990, 252).

Craft combines this knowledge with a specific set of skills. For patrol officers, these include the ability to remain calm under pressure, to talk and listen to people, to use force sparingly, and to exercise good judgment by weighing up "a complex set of factors before coming to a reasoned decision" (Bayley and Bittner 1984; Fielding 1984; Kritzer 2007, 335; Muir 1977). Those who have mastered these tools of the trade are regarded by their peers as master craftsmen or women, that is, for being "cool, poised, inventive, careful, active, and nonviolent—officers who can cope without jeopardizing

themselves or others" (Bayley and Bittner 1984, 51–52).

In contrast to a computer-driven robocop, the craft image of the professional police officer is of someone who thinks quickly on her feet to behave in ways that are wise, compassionate, and fair. Under some circumstances, especially when an officer senses immediate danger, choices are made automatically and intuitively (Sherman 2012), but decision making also involves considerable observational and analytic rigor, and even admits the possibility that creativity in devising a course of action may be valuable (Muir 1977, 189–259). Thus, when police officers make street-level choices, they combine experience-based intuition and science-like analytic strategies for thinking both "fast" and "slow" (Kahneman 2011).

What Might a Good Marriage Between Science and Craft Look Like?

This image of science and craft vying for supremacy, in the hope that springs eternal from American police reformers' desire to improve policing, generates at least three distinct ways that science and craft may be coupled together. In the first coupling, science is dominant and craft is suppressed. While this model is not unduly dismissive of experience as a guide to police action (Sherman 1984, 62), it emphasizes the limitations of

intuitive knowledge and expresses alarm about its potential for negative consequences (Lum 2009). From an evidence-based policing standpoint, policing as a craft projects an overly romantic conception of a diligent and skillful practitioner making judicious decisions. In doing so, it fails to consider fully that even the most well-respected patrol officers have a limited range of experiences to draw upon and often lack the ability to learn much about the long-term consequences of their actions (that is, beyond what they are able to observe during an encounter) (Sherman 1984). Where science is absent, officers are free to dispense their own version of justice based on any number of problematic or unethical factors, including guesswork, personal biases, and offensive stereotypes (Lum 2009, 3; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). Moreover, because officers often do not have reliable knowledge about the results of their actions, what they do, no matter how well intentioned, may be ineffectual or even harmful to suspects, victims, and offenders (Sherman 1984, 64).

These are important criticisms, but there are also limitations to science's capacity to dictate decision making. Leaving aside the fact that police may simply not trust scientific findings, supporters of good scientific evaluations often attribute the failure of practitioners to embrace science

to their not being aware of relevant findings published in academic journals, or to not understanding the form in which they are delivered (Birkeland, Murphy-Graham, and Weiss 2005). The obvious solution is to disseminate knowledge about “what works” more widely and in more “digestible” formats (Lum, Telep, Koper, and Grieco 2012). Clear examples of such an approach are the recent creation of the Office of Justice Programs’ CrimeSolutions.gov Web site to highlight and rate the effectiveness of different criminal justice approaches on a straightforward color-coded scale, and the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix summarizing the effects of different crime control strategies in a simple three-dimensional cube.⁴

No doubt distrust and the unavailability and inaccessibility of scientific findings help explain some of the gap between research, policy, and practice, but there are other good reasons why craft may be deaf to science’s exhortations. One is the crucial recognition that police organizations and the officers who work for them are expected to accomplish multiple goals at once. The evidence-based movement has tended to identify crime reduction as the primary end of policing, but police work is characterized by a swath of values or ends, such

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as equity, legitimacy, liberty, and efficiency, which often conflict (Thacher 2001, 392). Under these conditions, scientific knowledge that identifies the best means to a given end, such as crime control, offers useful guidance, but it cannot resolve these value conflicts and thus “serve as a firm guide to action” (Thacher 2001, 389). This is particularly true for patrol officers working at the street level who must try to reconcile the numerous requirements that justice demands, say between being responsive to the needs and wishes of a victim while reducing the risk of future offending. For example, in the case of a minor assault, should the officer make an arrest when a husband—the family’s only breadwinner—swears that he will never slap his wife

again and she supports his claim while pleading for leniency?

There are also times when an officer’s judgment should override the dictates of even well-established scientific findings. For example, we probably do not want police officers to single out domestic violence offenders for arrest based on their employment status or where they live, even if evidence suggests that arresting those with jobs or who live in affluent areas is the most effective means for reducing the risk of future violence (Sherman 1998, 8). Finally, social science at best improves the odds of success of a given sort but, given the complexities of human behavior, it rarely guarantees it and it is far from matching the predictive power of the natural sciences (Gutting 2012). Sherman (1984,

⁴<http://gemini.gmu.edu/cebcp/>

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1998) frequently acknowledges this fact, but not in the context of subjecting to empirical testing the assumption that social science is superior to craft in producing desirable outcomes.

In the second coupling between craft and science, craft is dominant and science is missing or, if it is present, it is merely a “presentational strategy” for justifying traditional police policies and practices (Manning 1992, 365). That is, science is not really driving decision making, at least in the ways it is supposed to. Compstat could be considered an example of this version of the science-craft relationship. Implemented in the New York City Police Department in 1994, Compstat is an information and management tool that tallies and maps crime statistics to hold command staff accountable for crime levels in their beats. According to

Compstat doctrine, police are supposed to go beyond their own experiences and to apply innovations in crime prevention theory and research in order to solve crime problems (Bratton 1998). In practice, however, in-depth research conducted at multiple sites has shown that despite the availability of electronic maps, timely crime data, and crime analysis, police continued to rely heavily upon what they have learned in the course of their careers about where crime occurs and how best to respond. Rather than carefully assessing a range of promising alternatives before selecting the most effective crime strategy, district commanders frequently used tactics they have tried in the past and that they believed work, such as saturating an area with patrol or increasing arrests (Willis, Mastrofski, and Weisburd 2007). In this case, impressive electronic

maps and crime statistics—the harbingers of science—help confer legitimacy on police actions while the experience-based aspects of police work continue to hold sway.

A third model regards craft and science as a true marriage, where each partner bestows equal worth on the other and has a rightful place in guiding the decisions of the rank-and-file officer. In the next section, I try to envision what a successful marriage of this sort would look like. Which partner—craft or science—does what, and how might some differences between the two be resolved?

Advancing Knowledge About What Works

In the first instance, police science could probably do more to pay attention to police craft in order to validate what works and under what conditions. In focusing so much of its energy on identifying the best means to preventing crime, the evidence-based movement has improved understanding about how police can contribute to public safety. In comparison, it has largely overlooked the many concerns officers must take into account when making a decision, including the many different tactics that are available to them (Bayley and Bittner 1984). Egon Bittner noted long ago that the work of front-line police officers could not be adequately captured and assessed

in such simple terms as fighting crime or enforcing laws (Bittner 1970). In their encounters with the public, officers must consider other important goals, including preventing disputes from escalating, ensuring safety at the scene, and responding adequately to legitimate citizen needs (Bayley and Bittner 1984; Mastrofski 1996). Little is still known about the best treatments available for accomplishing these kinds of goals. Albert Reiss (1995, 103) noted with surprise almost twenty years ago that interpersonal conflicts and disputes were the cause of much violence but that “little is known about the effectiveness of police in preventing the occurrence of different kinds of disputes or their escalation into crimes when they occur.” Little seems to have changed in the interim, suggesting that researchers need to do more to learn from practitioners themselves at close range, that is, through direct observations and interviews, about the goals they identify as most important in any given situation and the specific tactics they use for their accomplishment. Ethnographers, such as Egon Bittner and William Muir, have provided valuable insights into how patrol officers use their discretion but not as part of a self-conscious attempt to propose standardized treatments and then subject them to empirical evaluation.

In the absence of scientific attempts to identify, analyze,

and validate much of what experience has taught patrol officers, practitioners currently must rely on what they have learned by listening to old hands in their agency or through their acquisition of personal experience. As Bayley and Bittner (1984, 47) observed almost thirty years ago, those interested in improving the quality of police work stand to gain much by using systematic ways to identify and test scientifically the “operational imperatives” that officers consider important in their daily work dealing with the public.

Like a good marriage, the willingness of both partners to consider alternative perspectives on any given issue before making judgments is an important criterion for success. In this regard, proponents of science or craft should not just assume that one is more effective than the other in leading to desirable outcomes. This leads craft or science to merely proselytize to one another rather than using evidence and reason to try to resolve where their differences lie. Thus, it would be fruitful for science and craft to consider the assumption that one is superior to the other to be a hypothesis worth testing, but to date this idea has received little attention. To some degree, this squabble could be overcome by conducting rigorous evaluations that compare police discretion that is exercised using science to police discretion exercised using craft (and some combination of the two).

One could envision an experiment that uses a variety of treatment conditions. Some officers could be provided with access to scientific knowledge that they are prepared to use in concert with the kind of “computer-aided discretion” model espoused by Sherman and discussed earlier. Officers assigned to this group would be required to have their discretion governed by scientific findings. In responding to a particular situation, such as a domestic dispute, a computer would advise officers about the preferred strategy given their answers to a set of relevant questions that might include the offender’s prior record and the seriousness of the offense.

A second treatment condition might be a special training and supervision program that brings out the best of what craft has to inform officers about what to do. Bayley and Bittner (1984, 54) propose such a model when they recommend that those officers identified as master craftsmen or women are used to train their peers on those skills they consider most important to producing high quality police work. Supervision by these experienced and respected craftspeople might include regular debriefings, especially following situations that an officer found particularly challenging. Their purpose would be to allow officers to discuss and seek counsel on their decision-making process, including the accuracy of the initial diagnosis of the situation, the appropriateness

of the goals being pursued, and the strengths and limitations of the tactics used for their accomplishment.

A third treatment condition could be a hybrid approach, where officers are exposed to scientific evidence and are prepared to use it, but they are also exposed to the best that craft has to offer. These officers are then given the freedom to fashion their actions to best fit particular circumstances. The control condition would be that the department provides no more guidance than is usually available to officers through its existing rules, training, supervisory practices, and performance review process.

The experiment could be designed to measure a range of outcomes, including reductions in crime and disorder and also citizen satisfaction or alienation. Thus, information could be provided not just on which of these approaches is more likely to produce desirable results, but which of these produces *more* desirable results.

The experiment should also incorporate a process evaluation for patrol officers to provide feedback to researchers about how well each method worked and what were the most helpful or difficult aspects of doing each. In addition to helping illuminate why a particular innovation did or, as importantly, did not work (since information about failures is equally valuable to advancing reform), this feedback can open

up potentially fruitful avenues for future scholarly inquiry (Willis and Mastrofski 2011). Moreover, here craft might be particularly useful in identifying the specific circumstances under which one response is likely to be more or less effective. Replications of the Minneapolis experiment on domestic violence showed that the effects of arrest depended on the status of offenders and the degree to which they experienced procedural justice (Sherman 1992), but similar insights can be revealed by tapping frequently and systematically into the rich vein of practitioners' experiences and then testing them.

But it is not just the offender who matters in predicting outcomes. Ethnographies and surveys reveal that officers generally believe that what works best for one officer might not work well for another based on the skills and characteristics of the individual officer doing the job (Muir 1977; Mastrofski, Willis, and Revier 2011). These characteristics include an officer's gender, amount of experience, physical size, and verbal facility. Identifying and then using science to measure these interactive effects might reveal that different officer styles are equally effective and therefore provide a range of alternative responses from which to choose. In turn, such customization of responses could increase the prospects that any research would actually be incorporated into officers' daily decision making by eschewing a

one-size-fits-all approach (Bayley and Bittner 1984, 51). In short, validating what works, under what conditions, and by whom would help strengthen the bond between science and craft by serving the needs and perspectives of front-line workers directly. In doing so, it would redress a current imbalance in police research that tends to focus on the kinds of program evaluations that are more relevant to policymakers and police managers than street-level decision makers (Thacher 2008).

Deciding on the Right Thing to Do

The marriage between science and craft could be further improved by partisans from both sides working more closely together to help police officers deliver more justice than is currently on offer. To date, social scientists have commonly ignored the fundamental normative component to assessing the quality of work that street-level patrol officers perform, preferring to focus on explaining and predicting variations in what police do and how they do it (e.g., use of force, arrests). This trend toward separating fact from value, or *how much* from *how well*, extends back at least as far as Max Weber, who asserted that while science could offer factual statements and causal explanations, it was incapable of resolving questions about important public values

or about “what ought to be” (Thacher 2006). According to Weber, answers to these questions ultimately depended on one’s particular moral or political outlook and could not be validated empirically. The problem here, of course, is that measuring the quantity of police work an officer performs tells us very little about its quality, or whether or not an officer uses his or her discretion to do the right thing. A consequence of this traditional divide is that science is virtually silent on those aspects of police work that matter most to police leaders, their officers, and the communities they serve. This is a major oversight. Over the last few decades, many police leaders have demonstrated a clear commitment to promoting better policing (Bayley 2008), patrol officers have expressed interest in more sophisticated approaches to assessing their performance than simple tallies of work outputs (Mastrofski, Willis, and Revier 2011), and research has shown that citizens care mightily about the quality of treatment they receive in their personal encounters with police officers (Tyler 2004; Bottoms and Tankebe 2012). Surely as researchers we can do more to learn from patrol officers and help them make better choices.

Take, for example, two patrol officers responding to a dispute between two neighbors in an apartment building. A complainant is upset that the woman living in the adjacent

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apartment, who may or may not be suffering from mental illness, has been pounding on her door with a flat iron and physically threatening her. When questioned, the woman with the flat iron says she is frustrated by the complainant’s tendency to slam her door when entering and leaving. The officers express puzzlement that this should be the cause of so much hostility, but they do not explore this in detail with the second neighbor. They advise the complainant that she should get a summons, and advise the second woman that she could also get a summons but that she is not allowed to take the law into her own hands and retaliate by damaging the complainant’s door. When she remains defiant, they tell her that if they have to return that night, she will be taken down to the precinct. Having given

this warning, the officers leave, disposing of the flat iron in a nearby trash can as they wait for an elevator. The entire encounter lasts less than ten minutes.

This is the kind of run-of-the-mill dispute that characterizes everyday police work, but what is the best response in this particular case? Is it delivering a sense of justice to the citizens involved? Resolving the underlying cause of the dispute? Giving these citizens the capacity to solve this problem without summoning the law? Making costly police resources available to those who are in greater need of police services? This dispute is taken from a video clip⁵ of an actual incident, which my colleagues and I showed to

⁵This clip is from *The Police Tapes* (1976), which was produced, edited, and directed by Alan and Susan Raymond.

Possible Dimensions for Measuring Quality of Police Performance

Procedural justice	To what degree were the victim and offender treated fairly and respectfully?
Problem diagnosis	Did the officers demonstrate good skills in identifying the nature of the problem?
Safety and order at the scene	Was the potential for immediate violence adequately controlled?
Lawfulness of response	Was their response justified by the evidence?
Distributive justice	Was the resolution fair to all stakeholders?
Economy	Did the officers spend too much or too little time on the dispute?
Prospects for future risk	Did the officers reduce the potential for future problems between the two?

patrol officers as part of a study examining how they judge the quality of the work that they perform (Willis et al. 2011). What we discovered was that there was little consensus about what constituted good police work, suggesting that at present work quality at the street level is left largely to the will and skill of the individual patrol officer.

While it is impossible to generalize from a study of a single department, officers' responses to this clip appear to indicate that existing mechanisms may not be doing a very good job of promoting and advancing a common

vision of what constitutes good policing. There are good reasons for this. Available options for offering practical guidance, namely, bureaucratic rules and laws and, as has been identified here, increasing scientific knowledge, can offer only partial solutions as they are challenged by their general qualities (Marx 2006, 280). The art of street-level decision making is in figuring how, if at all, these can be applied to the contextual richness of individual cases where information is often limited, inchoate, and conflicting, and where there is pressure to act quickly (Schon

1983). The advantage of craft is that it provides a stock of knowledge acquired through years of handling many different situations and contingencies, and yet this source is seldom tapped systematically and made available as a source of guidance. What is more, science can play an important role in this process.

Take the disgruntled neighbor scenario described above. The video clip could be shown to a group of officers who have been recruited for their skillful work. They could be asked to judge the quality of the officers' response in the clip and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the approach on display. A police researcher could play a useful role in this process by helping identify and clarify the major concerns that arise. Based on what we heard during our interviews, these might include a range of dimensions as shown in the table on this page.

Working in this collaborative environment, the group could then be asked to identify more or less desirable responses, with the researcher offering insights based on scientific theory and evidence, particularly regarding potentially harmful consequences. It would also be necessary to try to establish priorities among these criteria in order to make their application useful to others, a tough challenge but one that it is still possible. Studies on the craft-based culture of policing have often examined its undesirable or negative features, such as

alienation from the department hierarchy or hostility toward the public, but ethnographies show that good officers develop intellectual and moral virtues that help them weigh the exigencies of any given situation and make sophisticated judgments about the best thing to do (Muir 1977, 189–224). Providing a forum that encourages thoughtful deliberation about these judgments and the trade-offs they imply would help clarify priorities among different value systems. Anticipating potential conflicts ahead of time would also help guide discretion in the field, as trying to resolve these while under pressure to act quickly is very difficult. In the case of the disgruntled neighbor, while the officers were certainly attentive and polite, a persuasive case could be made that their gracious and efficient manner took undue precedence over efforts to minimize the possibility of future conflict. In our interviews, some respondents were surprised that the officers seemed satisfied with leaving the problem in the same state they had found it. There will certainly be disagreements about how to best handle these kinds of disputes, but, by identifying what the relevant values are in a particular context, exploring their meanings, and clarifying which should take priority, it should be possible to justify some responses as superior to others. Furthermore, acknowledging where the tensions lie between different

uses of discretion and identifying acceptable levels of compromise would also help inform decision making.

Police leaders, especially chiefs, first-line supervisors, recruit trainers, and field training officers, should play a key role in this process. Through their participation, they can help establish the important public values that the organization should pursue and inspire others to embrace them. What is often lost in discussions about science's role in governing practice is the vital contribution a coherent and enlightened philosophy can make to police work, and yet it is a valuable leadership trait for those in authoritative positions to establish the cultural tone of their organization by advancing a view of good policing that is transparent both to employees and to the public (Bass 1998).

The next important step would be to subject these standards to empirical testing before coming up with a strategy that allows for them to be applied in an operational setting (Mastrofski 2007). It might be possible, for example, to construct a checklist that promotes memory recall about what is important and why and also helps improve consistency, a key element of craft (Gatawande 2009; Kritzer 2007). While guidelines cannot account for every contingency and will sometimes not work as intended, by providing structure they can increase the likelihood that patrol

officers will use their discretion in desirable ways (Kelling 1999). This approach to mobilizing craft could be used for a variety of encounters that are selected for being particularly problematic (like various domestic disputes), or because they are commonplace (traffic stops, for example). The availability of body cameras easily allows for this kind of naturalistic observation, as well as opportunities for supervisors to give feedback on officers' performance before and after the implementation of this discretionary tool.

Conclusion

I have suggested that we want our police officers to act wisely and well, doing the kind of job that makes us step back in admiration at their capacity to make good judgments. Undoubtedly there are some officers who prompt this reaction, so perhaps it makes sense to take greater advantage of the insights they have to offer and to do more to assess their effects. The evidence-based movement has captured the attention of government and generated excitement about the possibilities for reform, so this is a good time to use science to cultivate and test what accumulated experience has to offer. Oscar Wilde once remarked that the proper basis for marriage was mutual misunderstanding, and that happiness could not be found within its bounds. This

does not have to be the case for craft and science, with one looking past the other and lamenting missed opportunities. A fuller appreciation of the qualities each brings to the other promises a much more satisfying and enduring relationship. Advancing reform in ways that police administrators, officers, researchers, and ordinary citizens all care about requires that we focus on what can be gained by strengthening this union and not on the differences that divide it.

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ABOUT THE POLICE FOUNDATION

The Police Foundation is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing innovation and science in policing. As the country's oldest police research organization, the Police Foundation has learned that police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best, the paradigm of evidence-based policing. Established in 1970, the foundation has conducted seminal research in police behavior, policy, and procedure, and works to transfer to local agencies the best new information about practices for dealing effectively with a range of important police operational and administrative concerns. Motivating all of the foundation's efforts is the goal of efficient, humane policing that operates within the framework of democratic principles and the highest ideals of the nation.

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