

- NOTES
1. See Goldhamer, Herbert, *The Advisor* (New York: Elsevier, 1978).
  2. See Wolf, Charles, Jr., "Ethics and Policy Analysis," in Felishman, Liebman, and Moore, Eds., *Public Duties: The Moral Obligations of Government Officials* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).
  3. For a more extensive treatment, on which this discussion is based, see Wolf, Charles, Jr., *'Non-Market Failure' Revisited: The Anatomy and Physiology of Government Deficiencies* (Santa Monica, The Rand Corporation, March 1981).

WORKERS AS  
GUARDIANS OF THE  
STREET

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Street crime is increasing; resources to combat it are decreasing. Some proposed solutions focus on manipulation of the urban environment to increase natural surveillance: renewed emphasis on the informal social control associated with neighborhood watchfulness and concern might deter criminals and make citizens feel safer. Unfortunately, in many urban areas sidewalk activity is insufficient to provide much natural surveillance. Furthermore, not all sidewalk activity (e.g., of drug pushers, drunks, and prostitutes) is reassuring.

Recognizing these limits to a safety-in-numbers approach we suggest that security in urban public places could be enhanced by increased use of persons who are performing their ordinary occupational duties to serve as additional eyes on the street. There are several advantages to this. First, asking persons at work to watch for crime can be accomplished within present urban structures. Second, persons in their occupational roles may be cheaper and less symbolic of centralized government control than police. Third, such observers should be more effective control agents than persons not in an occupational role.

We are not suggesting a civilian spy network, but simply more systematic use of occupational groups, persons who are expected to be friendly and helpful. Occupational groups, while implicitly enhancing social control, are unlikely to become intrusive or obnoxious in the everyday lives of citizens. Persons performing work in public places need public support. Thus, they should adapt to the social norms of the communities in which they work, and become actively involved in preventing only those criminal acts that the local community sees as engendering serious harm, e.g., discouraging rape and robbery rather than discouraging marijuana smoking and petty gambling. Encouragement of informal social control is less likely than increased reliance upon the formal police to produce a police state.

If an occupational group increases safety, it may be worthwhile to augment the group. Since no one is being reimbursed for the "safety externality," there are fewer persons in occupational groups that enhance safety than economic efficiency demands. Society would be better off if the size of such occupational groups

were expanded to the level at which marginal social benefits equalled marginal social costs. Such reimbursements could be provided to private sector firms. For example, if telephone repairmen enhance security, their presence could be increased by subsidies or tax exemptions based on the number of employees working outside, in public locations. For the case of public sector employees, their numbers could be increased directly. If mailmen and city repairmen increase safety, they could be hired by city and federal governments in numbers greater than those minimally necessary to complete their jobs.

The cost effectiveness of such policies should be determined relative to hiring more police or using traditional hardware approaches to reduce crime. The marginal social product of hiring more police is simply its marginal crime prevention benefit. The marginal social product of increasing employment of other occupational groups is, however, both its marginal private product and its marginal crime prevention benefit. Although increased presence of police probably would make people more secure than the increased presence of other occupational groups, the other groups do not necessarily require full subsidization to increase their presence. For example, assume telephone repairmen and police were paid the same wage, but that an extra policeman was twice as effective in enhancing security as an extra telephone repairman. If only 25% subsidization were required to add another telephone repairman, it would be twice as effective to spend the wages of an extra policeman on the hiring of four additional repairmen. Non-criminal justice occupational groups certainly are not perfect substitutes for police, but, at the margin, they certainly may be partial substitutes that are more cost effective.

This proposal could also be compared with programs that encourage ordinary private citizens to observe and report crime. Ordinary citizens are not present in public places as continually as persons who work in public places. In addition, people are already accustomed to relying on mailmen, repairmen, and so on, and therefore should feel more secure in the presence of occupational persons on the street than in the presence of ordinary citizens. Furthermore, it is difficult to provide incentives to citizens in nonoccupational roles to become and remain actively engaged in providing bystander assistance. On the other hand, occupational groups are already providing some safety benefits and there is clear leverage (through their paycheck and employer) for increasing their presence and encouraging their watchfulness for serious crime.

Although the marginal safety enhancement of various occupational groups is unknown, there is evidence that it is positive and that the characteristics of occupational groups which have the greatest security effect can be identified. British studies show: lower rates of vandalism in buses operated by two-man rather than one-man crews; lower rates of vandalism on housing estates with resident caretakers; fewer auto-related crimes in parking lots with attendants; and less public telephone vandalism where tele-

phones are located in bars and laundromats rather than outside telephone booths.

In addition, programs specifically enlisting occupational groups to enhance safety have been developed, although unfortunately their security effect has not been evaluated. The Minnesota Crime Prevention Center developed a letter carrier's kit to train mail carriers to be observant and report suspicious activity. Some cities have programs that enlist postmen to keep track of senior citizens by making inquiry if mail has not been picked up for several days. Other cities (e.g., Evanston, New York) have experimented with radio-watch projects. Drivers of vehicles with two-way radios (e.g., taxi cabs) are encouraged to report suspicious activity to their dispatcher or to call police directly.

A pilot survey of college students, conducted by the authors, indicated that occupational groups eliciting the greatest reduction in fear of crime were those who worked in uniform or were employed by the public sector and had ties to the locale in which they were working. It is likely that feelings of safety engendered by occupational groups with these characteristics could be further increased by a campaign to train these groups to observe and intervene in serious crime situations and inform the public of this effort. This could be further augmented by encouraging occupational groups which do not wear uniforms to do so; those which wear uniforms to wear them on their daily trips to and from work and at other nonduty hours; and those which work at scattered sites to be assigned to specific neighborhoods.

In sum, it appears that occupational groups are a relatively untapped resource that could be profitably enlisted to aid with peace-keeping in public places.

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