



Governing the Police: Experience in Six Democracies

David H. Bayley, Philip C. Stenning

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Every modern democracy in our increasingly complex world must confront a fundamental problem: how should politicians manage police, ensuring that they act in the public interest while avoiding the temptation to utilize them in a partisan manner? Drawing on first-hand experiences from six democracies, the authors describe how frequently disagreements arise between politicians and police commanders, what issues are involved, and how they are resolved.

Governing the Police is organized into three parts: the intellectual and governmental context of democratic governance; the experience of chief officers in that relationship; and the reflections on lessons learned. Instead of describing practices within each individual country, it compares them across countries, developing generalizations about practices, explanations for differences, and assessments of success in managing the police/political relationship.

Focusing mainly on the daily, informal interactions between politicians and police as they balance their respective duties, this book compares the experiences and opinions of chief police officers in Australia, Britain, Canada, India, New Zealand, and the United States. By examining the experiences of important officials, the authors explain how the balance between accountability and independence can be managed and what challenges leaders face. The authors conclude by posing well-informed recommendations for improving police governance.

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