Final report
November 2007

Background paper prepared for the
Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP

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"Is it possible to impose a modern governance structure on a police force?"

David A. Brown

Introduction

The Brown Report into matters relating to RCMP pension and insurance plans, tabled in June 2007, identified improprieties having compromised the confidence and trust that Canadians place in the RCMP. The Task Force is therefore faced with the challenge of proposing ways in which order but also trust may be restored.

In the mandate of the Task Force, the challenge has been partitioned in two main strands: matters pertaining to governance and culture (mandate items ABC) and matters dealing with the development of a more ethical, fair and equitable workplace (DEFGH).

The core issue behind all these concerns is the culture of the RCMP.

Summarizing the results of his inquiry, David A. Brown refers to (1) the culture of the RCMP as characterized by « mistrust and cynicism », (2) to senior management not having responded to issues « in a manner that was transparent, timely, effective or thorough », but having projected « an attitude of disinterest and callousness », and (3) to the Force's values – honesty, integrity, commitment, respect, accountability and professionalism – having been « routinely disregarded by management ». He also pointed to « the governance structure and the culture at the RCMP» as the root cause of the difficulties and to one of the key problems being that a single individual had «unchallenged authority » (3-4).

In chapter 7, of his report, David A. Brown underlined the autocratic approach to leadership, the apparent lack of respect and civility, and the lack of consultation with the Senior Executive Committee, and denounced the « tone » at the higher echelons of the RCMP ascribable to the autocratic style of the commissioner, the absence of oversight, and the culture of intimidation and unquestioned obedience to lawful orders.

Consequently, without a sound understanding of the forces at work in the culture of the organization that have led to the aforementioned improprieties, one is unlikely to get at the source of the problems. One may be tempted to slap on the organization a series of additional oversight and controls that may appear to solve the problems, but this may in fact accentuate them in the longer haul.

A set of new controls instituting a number of additional mechanisms based on systematic distrust would only re-enforce a certain perverse aspect of *esprit de corps* (bent on protecting one's own at all costs), and tend to feed a subterranean culture of deception as excessive controls come to prevent proud professionals and highly-skilled experts from performing their job well.

This is the reason why this paper takes a moment (before proceeding explicitly with the different items in the first portion of the mandate) to set the stage in a sufficiently broad way to ensure that the search (1) for new governance and management mechanisms and (2) for a transformation of the organizational culture is anchored in as full an appreciation of the context as possible.

Preliminary considerations

First, members of a legitimate and credible police force are *professionals* whose work entails (like other professionals - medical doctors, lawyers, etc.), the delivery of services to citizens most often in situations of crisis. Such work calls for action in real time to be carried out according to some accepted rules, but also for the exercise of judgment and initiative in the light of circumstances that differ from place to place and from time to time.

Second, consequently, the burden of office of such professionals can only be defined in broad and somewhat fuzzy terms. Basic principles have to be seen as prevailing at all time, but there is a need for much interpretation. This in turn means that there must be much *empowerment* of the professional on the front line. As a result of the essential fuzziness of the notion of burden of office, the notions of accountability (what account has to be rendered) and ethics (what is acceptable performance) are of necessity also fuzzy.

Third, one should avoid falling into the 'illusion of totality'. Not everything that the RCMP does is tantamount to professional acts. There is also, apart from these professional acts, but intermingled with them, much work that is ordinary functional management (HR, finance) that simply and solely must meet the standards of good management. There is also much scientific work that must meet the requirements of good science. Moreover, at the different layers in the organization, members have immensely different responsibilities. As a matter of consequence, it would be unreasonable to conceive that any *effective governance apparatus would not have the requisite degree of variety*. A single regime will not fit all circumstances.

Fourth, a governance regime is always evolving as a result of challenges revealed by *past experience* and of correctives regarded as necessary as a result of past failures. This is the basis of social learning. In that sense, the basic test of the new regime called for by the recent crisis at the RCMP is its capacity to avoid the sort of improprieties that have been observed in the past. Learning from this legacy is a tricky exercise: one must not redesign the organization to help it fight only this particular last war. One must keep in mind the broader flaws revealed with a view that at a minimum the new regime should make past improprieties immensely less probable, but that it should also make the organization more capable of learning and more resilient.

Fifth, no regime, however cleverly designed, can promise zero error. The design must therefore be geared to *quick learning and minimization of repeat mistakes*. Too tight a structure may buy error minimization at the price of zero creativity and initiative. In an

organization dealing in real time with critical issues, this would be catastrophic. Consequently the temptation to impose command and control arrangements (however strong such a temptation might be in the post-Gomery world) should be countered very strongly, and maximal effort should be put on designing a *distributed regime* that has much nimbleness, much learning capacity, and much resilience (i.e., the capacity to spring back undamaged even when put under stress by unusual events).

In the design of a governance apparatus likely to minimize the probability of re-occurrence of the noted improprieties, but also to perform as well as possible as a modern national police force, a number of considerations have to be kept in mind.

(1) There is a mix of reliability and innovation needed to qualify as a first-rate modern police force. This requires a new focus on *capacity to transform* in the face of new challenges (terrorism, globalization of criminal activities, and the like) while maintaining a close link with the various *communities* and *stakeholders* the force serves, keeping alive a vibrant *esprit de corps* that will facilitates effective collaboration, and developing an altogether new level of *sophistication* in skills and capabilities to be able to meet these multiplex challenges.

(2) This new degree of sophistication required of science-based modern policing calls for a much more complex organization of the work. Front line officers, highly skilled scientists, sophisticated intelligence and communication specialists, expert financial and logistics experts, competent human resource managers, perceptive and thoughtful continuous trainers and coaches, etc. are all necessary for the police force to perform in its whole portfolio of different tasks. Each of these groups has a piece of the information, of the power, and of the resources required for success. Governing entails recognizing the different families of functions (routine functions, management coordination, strategic planning needs and the like) but also ensuring that they all mesh together, and acknowledging that, as the organization becomes more complex, the heightened level of coordination required at all levels is bound to be ever more challenging.

(3) At the bottom of the governance pyramid, where the routine functions lie, most of the information necessary to do a good job used *to be* available within the organization. Conversely, at the top of the pyramid, where strategic planning dominates, much of the information necessary to do a good job used *not to be* available within the organization but had to be gathered, analyzed and assessed on the basis of external sources of information.

In the recent past, at all levels of the pyramid (routine, management, governance/leadership), an ever larger number of activities have come to depend much more than heretofore on external sources of information, on constant communication and collaboration among the different layers and segments of the organization, on a continuous need to update and refurbish professional skills, capabilities and sensitivities (as all professionals have to do), and therefore on better *intelligence and communication.*

Failures of police forces in dealing with terrorism and other new threats have been generally ascribed to poor intelligence and communication, and to lack of appropriate upgrading of skills, capabilities and sensitivities.

This change in the context and in the nature of the challenges has entailed a reframing of the mindset of police forces that is daunting especially for organizations with a strong and vibrant culture based on a long tradition. In the same way that honorable and famed universities find it more difficult than newly minted ones to change their ways, honorable and famed police forces are bound to have more difficulties changing their ways than those that have more shallow roots.

(4) Any profound transformation in an organization under stress, after a messy moment or a crisis (or when the very mandate of the organization has been felt to be in need of review) cannot be easily performed instantaneously. It is difficult both (i) to get rid of bad habits that have been the source of *distrust*, and (ii), at the same time, to establish new arrangements based on *trust*.

Yet one cannot inflict on the organization a process of permanent restructuring without destabilizing the organization and destroying its soul. So the challenge is to find ways to launch a process of change that would be allowed to be modulated along the way. This means that the change must be seen as simple, instantaneous, draconian and definitive, but must also be planned and seen as stepwise, continuing, and unfolding.

A standard nugget of governance wisdom is that one cannot usually pursue X objectives with less than X instruments. If one wishes (i) to get rid of improprieties at the highest level (ii) while encouraging a cultural change throughout the organization that enables it to develop a mix of new skills, capabilities and sensitivities (iii) together with the new variety of disciplines the new work entails, and (iv) maintaining the best element of *esprit de corps* that has been one of the major strengths of the force over time, (v) while getting rid of the creeping tendency to defend the not-defendable to save the organization from ever being embarrassed and colleagues from ever being found at fault – many instruments will have to be used, and positive results on all these fronts may require a particular sequencing of interventions.

(5) There are many families of levers available to help trigger the required transformation: transparency, suasion, incentives and coercion. Different mixes of these instruments are embedded in any change in the structure, accountability and oversight apparatus, but also in the culture of the organization. There may be a tendency in the post-Gomery world to play up coercion, hard accountability and ferocious oversight across the board. This may be a toxic mixture. A more useful strategy to intervene in any complex organization is to regard it as a portfolio of activities and functions each requiring often a slightly different mix of uses of these levers.

(6) Playing down the ferocious oversight and hard accountability, may appear to be a weak response to a scandal that has rocked the trust the population had in the RCMP, and may be received not too well by a citizenry often poorly informed and intent on heads

rolling when there are improprieties. But it may be even more dangerous to appear to mindlessly admit that a whole organization is rotten because some improprieties have been discovered at the top.

What is most useful is not a shotgun approach but (i) a rifle approach aiming at correcting what has to be corrected and transformed, structurally, (ii) while explicitly recognizing that much of the corpus of activities and many functions that have remained untainted need not be tampered with structurally, but (iii) with a full appreciation that, in the case of the culture of an organization like the RCMP, the whole mindset cannot be transformed or repaired (and trust regained) without all the members being involved.

(7) In intervening in any large organization, as in intervening in the human body, it is quite risky to try to resolve all perceived mishaps and failures only at the very locus where the impropriety has been spotted. Often, headaches have their source in other parts of the body. For instance, as chapter 7 of the Brown report suggests, much that has gone wrong in the financial management or the human resource management or in other areas of the RCMP has had to do with culture: some of the pre-conditions that have made these improprieties possible had to do with a certain mindset that is more diffuse and cannot be excised with a scalpel but by only by cultural change.

(8) As the force becomes ever more professionalized (even if it means differentially professionalized), better designed governance structures, refurbished professionalism, and a head-on approach to cultural change (however difficult it may be and however long it might take) may be the most promising instruments.

A tentative diagnosis

The improprieties mentioned by the Brown Report have revealed a profound malaise within the RCMP:

- deception has occurred
- denial of accountability at the top also
- failure of internal control was obvious
- an imperial authoritarian management style prevailed
- intimidation was rampant
- complete lack of oversight was flagrant
- chasm between formal structure and real operations was observed

What was revealed is an ethos that permitted the *authoritarianism* and *intimidation* by a few to over-ride the principles of the many, and a *culture of fear* to prevent any effective challenge by subordinates of abusive behavior by superiors. This translated into a *perverted esprit de corps at the top* (loyalty to the organization first and foremost), and into a *law of silence in the middle ranks* for those who had any aspiration to promotions. It also led to *non-Mounties taking a three-monkey type attitude*: I did not hear anything, I did not see anything, I did not say anything…it was none of my business. *Cynicism at the bottom* could not but blossom and become contagious.

These interrelated perversions could not but cascade down into a variety of cover ups at the lower levels that may be difficult to identify and prove, but for which there is much anecdotal evidence: officers being relocated after some offense very much in the manner that bishops of the Roman Catholic Church relocated offending priests – in good conscience, they said, to 'protect' the reputation of the organization and to live up to what is 'owed' to colleagues that are members of the club.

Such *deep-rooted unprincipledness* cannot be eliminated by simple carpentering of the structure, accountability arrangements or oversight institutions. Such carpentering would help, but will not suffice. It must be complemented by initiatives striking at the very culture of the organization. A *révolution dans les esprits* is required.

The dilemma such a situation poses is akin to the ones faced by medical doctors when they have, as a last resort, to use draconian shock/radio/chemo therapies aimed at eliminating the source of a life-threatening disease. The side effects of such therapies are always devastating, but they often save the patient. However, they may also kill the patient.

Such intrusive and draconian initiatives in the case at hand cannot avoid having to do more than dealing with material and legal realities. They must attack frontally the symbolic texture of the organization, and aim at nothing less than changing the self-image, the myths, the narratives that have carried the organization through much of its glorious past, the very mindset of the organization. The therapy must amount to nothing less than a change of identity.

If one is to deal with a mindset, surgery or organ replacement will not suffice.

A framework

One must recognize that organizations are social systems that contain *structure, technology and theory*. The structure is the set of roles and relations among members; the theory pertains to the views held (inside and outside the organization) about its purposes, operations and environment; both structure and theory reflect, but in turn influence, the prevailing technology of the system; and these dimensions hang together so tightly that changes in one produces change in the others (D.A. Schön, Beyond the State State. New York: Norton 1971, 33). Any successful transformation will have to take this dynamic into account.

It follows from the tentative diagnosis of the last section that a fixation on modifying only the structure does not sound promising. Any meaningful attempt must work at the three levels.

The easiest lever to use is obviously *technology* (physical and social): modifying the tools usually generates less of a mobilization of the forces of dynamic conservatism, and it may have much reverberation on structure and theory. When Bratton inflicted a

Blackberry on his police officers, he changed their self-image, their mindset, and the very nature of the way the police force defined its business in Los Angeles.

The most difficult element to change is the mindset and the sense by members of an organization of the sort of business they are in. Many organizations have died rather than modify their sense of the business they are in.

In the case of the RCMP, the right mix of interventions must be designed with the full recognition that even though technology and structure may have to be seen as tinkered with more explicitly because it is easier, what is really at stake is modifying *the theory the RCMP has of itself*.

New structures, plastered on the organization as it is, might have little impact. The same forces at work that allowed the improprieties of the past to occur would still be at work and would regenerate the virus that has stunted the organization in the recent past.

One cannot expect a *bouleversement* of the organization of the sort that would appear to be required without structure, technology and theory all being on the table and put into question. Pretending that structural change will suffice, and reacting later with surprise, astonishment and improvisation to predictable consequences when this approach proves flawed, may not be the way. One might want to work explicitly on ways to deal with the whole nexus of issues right from the start.

The instrumentation used in modern science-based policing – in the whole range of its activities from CSI to CIA – is extraordinarily complex. It is bound to shape the day-to-day activity of RCMP over time, the recruitment necessary for this new breed of officers, the continuous education and training required, etc. It is also bound to demand a governance structure immensely more diversified and complex than what was involved at the time of the cavalry.

The structural changes suggested by the analysis of the Brown Report are obviously important. Strengthening accountability and building some oversight are essential. But one has to avoid instituting distrust by imposing rigid structures that will ossify the organization. A potential result might be the replacement of some rigid structure by another, with little gained in the process when so much could be accomplished by tackling both structure and culture as the Brown Report strongly argued.

Dealing with the mindset will be infinitely more difficult and painful. Any *psychoanalysis* leaves an individual transformed, with a different sense of self. An organization subjected to *socio-analysis* and *socio-therapy* will be forced through the same fundamental transformation of mindset and self-image.

Can a fundamental refurbishment of the organization to ensure it is superbly fit to do its job of modern policing allow the quaint image of the RCMP officer on his horse to stay in place? Should it?

Responses at three levels but also at a fourth one

It would be simplistic to pretend to allocate the vast array of activity areas, and of lines of business the RCMP has responsibility for, according to only one principle. It must be the result of a fairly detailed analysis of those activities and lines of business. But one cannot proceed further without at least trying to identify the different portfolios that might be considered separately when redesigning the governance apparatus.

Modern governance suggests that decision making should be distributed to the point closest to where the action is where effective decision making is possible. This entails that *subsidiarity* has to be accepted as a basic principle: as much decentralization as possible, but as much centralization as necessary for best performance.

This is based on the recognition that there are inevitable organizational failures in large organizations as a result of cognition, motivation and design failures. More decentralized organizations have the merit of being made of smaller units, and therefore the consequences of failures are likely to be less important.

Moreover smaller sub-organizations are likely to ensure better overall results both because of the reduced size of the targets they are confronted with, and of the consequent *multistability* of an overall organization that can delegate sub-tasks to segments of the organization best able to deal with them, and protect the rest of the overall organization from the impact of local failures in this specific area.

Yet, on the other hand, certain basic functions pertaining to the very mission of the RCMP and its broad strategic directions must rest at the center.

For instance, one of the main weaknesses revealed by the Brown Report has been the lack of a governing board providing both the leadership and the general oversight of the organization. As a result, the equivalent of the CEO could indulge in what could be regarded as whimsical reallocation of resources or take important decisions for the force without having to render account to anyone. Such an arrangement is unacceptable.

So some refurbishment is necessary at the very top to begin with.

(1) at the macro level

A. A governing board on the model of the Canada Revenue Agency and the Bank of Canada might be envisaged. Such a board would be meant to perform two basic jobs: (1) to create an effective oversight mechanism for the CEO and an apparatus where he/she must render account *ex post*; and (2) to be the locus where the broad mission of the organization will be defined (and constantly redefined) *ex ante* and where social learning and the stewardship of the organization will be shaped. Without this layer of central guidance for the organization, there is no real control on the management of the Force.

The degree of hands-on control by the governing board will vary considerably for the different portions of the portfolios.

There are tasks that the governing board cannot delegate. They have to do with the definition of what businesses the RCMP is in, of the broad principles that should guide its management, and of the monitoring and discipline that must be enforced to make sure that the management stays on course.

Such a governing board would also clearly establish, at the symbolic level, that, in a democracy, civilian oversight is required to impose civilian order on police organizations.

This would for ever eliminate the view that the RCMP operates outside the normal order of government. What has been claimed *de facto* by those trying to impose authoritarianism in the management of the force is that the police forces are outside the law if not above it. They have claimed, at least implicitly, *exceptional status* for the organization. From this claim follows naturally the right to operate in exceptional ways. This perception has to be questioned.

There may be times for *l'état d'exception* when, for instance, government uses the War Measures Act, but, in normal times, the police force must be operating normally under civilian rules. The improprieties confirmed in the Brown Report, and more importantly the attitudes documented there, were possible because the organization saw itself as not really bound by normal rules. Unless this *état d'esprit* is eradicated, no change in the book of rules will have any impact.

In the same spirit, such a governing board would have to also quash the idea that a police force is a para-military agency. Again, this is most important both in symbolic and in real terms. So even though the creation of the governing board is seemingly a move at the structural level, it would also have much of an impact at the symbolic/theory level, and one should ensure that such a move is so explained very well to all inside and outside the Force.

The composition of the governing board should not be allowed to be polluted by the sort of patronage appointments that are so usual in such circumstances. Indeed, it should be explicitly stated that, since Canada's security depends on the quality of this board, a mechanism (like Cabinet approval) might have to be put in place to minimize the risk of such appointments not being of the highest quality.

The board should be composed of expert Canadians of outstanding reputation and chaired by an eminent Canadian who has the necessary expertise.

It might also have a number of *ex officio* members drawn from the judiciary or from other expert bodies to ensure that it has a strong component of expertise about the new challenges that the RCMP is facing.

B. At the same time, in order to make sure that the governing board is seen as dealing proactively and robustly with deception and misinformation, another mechanism might be put in place: the creation of an ombudsperson – a person to whom issues of deception and misinformation may be reported – who will have extraordinary powers (as an agent of parliament or something of the sort) because of the extraordinary importance of trust in the RCMP.

The central concern here is the existence of a mechanism (whether it is a person or a process) to insure that any issue raised inside or outside the organization would be investigated and suggestions for action and repairs put forward. The report of the ombudsperson (or of whatever other mechanism that might be said to exercise the same type of function) would be filed with the CEO and the board, and action would be expected at the next board meeting: the CEO would be expected to announce in what ways he/she has handled the matter, and if the board were not to be satisfied with the way it has been handled, it could mandate action.

The ombudsperson or such a process should perform *both a redress and a learning function*. There is a need for deception and misinformation to be punished, but it is equally important that it be understood that a *learning culture* need to be instituted: mistakes are a source of learning. Cover ups being punished extremely harshly, but open discussion of screw ups becoming not only possible but welcome as a way to improve social learning. In this context, a look at the After Action Program in the US armed forces might be useful.

C. A third action might be the clarification of the mandate of the committees of the governing board charged with oversight of the vertical functions, regional portfolios or other transversal activities.

These different portfolios would normally be assigned to an Assistant Commissioner. But it should be clear that the governing board is unlikely to have a full grasp of the working of the organization unless its committee structure is such that functional, regional, transversal and other portfolios have a clear and unambiguous connection to one of the committees of the board.

(2) at the meso level

As for the broad directions for the redesign of external oversight and internal accountability activities, the general philosophy should be that these two functions are complementary.

In the ideal world (where trust prevails), soft accountability and oversight suffice. However, after a crisis of confidence, it might be necessary to impose a transition phase: harsh accountability and oversight until trust is earned.

Indeed, what is aimed at over the medium term is the development of *earned trust*, and this should be stated clearly in the mandated redesign.

Moreover, the design of the mixes of accountability and oversight for different portions of the organization should be allowed to differ.

For instance, in a world where empowerment of persons on the front line is to be encouraged, harsh oversight and soft accountability for field operations may be required: much latitude to improvise, but after action evaluation that is quite rigorous.

On the other hand, soft oversight and harsh accountability might be much better for back office activities where management standards are known and easily enforceable.

The need to balance oversight and accountability entails designing a higher or lower degree of decentralization depending on the nature of the activities. For each portfolio of activities, the governing board should clearly establish the requisite pattern of accountability/oversight.

The oversight/accountability world

Oversight	Harsh	x	w
	Soft	y	z
		Soft	Harsh

Accountability

D. A most important appointment might be that of a Deputy Commissioner charged with the relationships with the stakeholders and responsible for continuing education in the Force.

It is quite clear that, in a vast organization with such complex and numerous portfolios of activities where coordination and communication problems have been important, a Deputy Commissioner might be charged with constant communication with the wide variety of stakeholders with a view to ensure that retroaction is most effective at the top and that any blockage encountered in the lines of business, that might prevent maximal and most effective collaboration, will be quickly eliminated.

This is all the more important if the governance is going to be distributed and the likelihood of communication failures rather high.

It would also help significantly in underlining the importance of understanding the horizontal and transversal links in the light of what the variety of stakeholders expect.

Such a function would be an insurance policy against silos at the senior executive level and in the boardroom.

However, such a function would risk being strictly ornamental if it did not connect with the whole process of continuing education that is necessary in any corps of professionals. What is the point of noting particular flaws in the dispatching of duties ascribable to lack of skills, capabilities or sensitivities if there is not instantly some corrective introduced at the very locus where the training and continuing education is shaped.

Such lack of follow-through is plaguing the whole continuing education in the public service and proves very costly, but one cannot afford to put up with it when public security is involved.

Indeed, especially at the cultural level, there is no way to ensure that the needed repairs will be made without making use of continuing education. Only a Deputy Commissioner, whose function is transversal, might have the authority to ensure that the requisite transformational work pertaining to the whole force and its mindset will be carried out.

Some additional comments are made on this matter under heading H below.

E. Senior management and the governing board have to ensure that, at each meeting, some attention is given to routine monitoring of both (1) the variance noted among services within the organization at any level, and (2) the degree of fluid communication between headquarters and the different portfolios.

The amount of police contracting of the RCMP in all sorts of contexts is quite significant. This form of work can best be monitored locally or regionally, and it can best be done by those to whom such services are rendered. This might entail a dramatic decentralization of such activities, and the design of administrative, staffing and financial management capabilities that go with it.

The governing board and senior management may wisely approve and encourage some tailor-made arrangements to adjust to local circumstances, but some oversight function has to be developed to ensure that the interpretation of rules stays *within a certain corridor of acceptable variance*, that local and regional practices and mores are not at too much variance. This can be arranged by using a matrix form of arrangement where these activities are mainly monitored at the local levels while a subsidiary audit responsibility kicks in at the functional level from the center through periodic audits, if it proves necessary – which it may not.

Conversely, matters of national security, integrated market enforcement teams, and a variety of issues where international collaboration, secret service type work, and FBI type activities are required, would need to remain highly centralized, but not necessarily concentrated.

Networks are the fabric of intelligence work, and there needs to be some ways for these centralized activities to benefit from the large number of ears and eyes that may be mobilized by the Force throughout the country.

The burden of the proof in partitioning the activities into distributed and non-distributed ones should be on the shoulders of those who want to centralize. Unless the case can be made that these activities cannot be conducted efficiently in a decentralized manner, they should be decentralized, and the bulk of the innovative work should focus on inventing ways to maintain workable coordination when much decentralization prevails.

Indeed, this is the main challenge of distributed governance – governing in a decentralized organization – to invent soft and non intrusive ways to maintain oversight from afar and to keep the communication channels open between the center and the periphery, while building strong accountability links between the peripheral groups and the clients they serve who are best able to demand hard accountability for performance.

In the case where strong accountability at the center dominates the scene, the oversight function is much more to ensure that communication channels are open that allow information from afar to be tapped and analyzed.

In both cases, some hybrid form of organization is likely to be providing the best performance.

F. It is also the role of senior management and of the governing board to ensure that safe spaces are provided throughout the organization for appraisive retroaction on a continuous basis after the completion of field operations. What is of interest here is the input of junior or non-executive or non-Mounties staff who have been involved in the operations, and should have an opportunity to be heard at debriefing time.

The After Action Program in the US army has shown that even in military organizations, it is possible to gain extraordinary insights into what has gone well or not (with a temporary suspension of the notion of ranks) . Pascale et al (“Changing the Way we Change” Harvard Business Review 75(6), 1997, 127-139) have explained how this most powerful mechanism of social learning has been used profitably both in the US Army and in the private sector.

But such mechanisms and safe spaces have to be seen to exist as an explicit and forcefully stated wish of the very top of the organization, and with the strong explicit support of the board and senior management, otherwise they will quickly atrophy. There might also be a need for senior management and the board to insist that the existence of such safe spaces is necessary to ensure a sound process of social learning in the organization.

The results of such ongoing experiments would be expected to be part of the routine monitoring activity of senior management and the board under E., but there might be a special effort to ensure that the requisite mechanisms are in place for such after-action-

learning to occur. This is absolutely fundamental but especially difficult in an organization that has suffered from a culture of intimidation.

At first, it is likely that there will be much cynicism when such practices are introduced. This is also where the generational chasm will most probably show its ugly face: too many older members of the Force might have been schooled and have lived in the culture of unquestioned obedience for too long to have any appreciation of the importance of critical thinking throughout the Force. The younger generation may have been less deeply accultured into this sort of mindset despite their 'basic' training.

Consequently, it might be a top priority of both the board and senior management to work hard at providing safe spaces where critical thinking can find an outlet.

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(3) at the micro level

At the micro level, the most important and the most difficult task is to maintain the focus of attention of the individual members simultaneously on both (1) the task at hand and (2) the broad mission of the Force.

In an organization that has been traumatized and that one wants to transform from a culture of entitlement at the top and blind obedience at the bottom to a culture of pride, collaboration and learning, this requires transformative leadership that reaches down to the fundamentals.

G. The first big lever is professionalism..

Professionalism provides the experiential and existential notion of *relational accountability*. Officers who are fully aware of their burden of office navigate these waters easily. But it requires that a notion of the burden of office be fully internalized. And this is where the culture of the organization plays its full role. Invisible institutions and unstated informal conventions have an immense impact on the day to day activities. They act as a coordinating instrument, but also as constraint, blockage, agent of cognitive dissonance.

Culture is not only or even mainly shaped by accountability or oversight (i.e., top down), but by experience and interaction at the local level. It is distilled by a large number of actions reinforcing one another: habitualized choices tending to become the norm by imitation, contagion, and as a result of mutual expectations.

Organizational culture is the sum of these habits, norms, expectations that have developed over time as a result of the process of acculturation generated by training, collegiality and governance stories and myths shared by the members of the club. And these habits and norms are nurtured, maintained, and enhanced by their constant invisible presence in day to day activities.

At the micro level, culture, pride, and the like are most powerful agents of effective coordination, accountability and ethics. The need to have challenge and oversight functions within the organization becomes a moot point when the organizational culture is sound. Such add-ons might be seen as efforts to institutionalize distrust.

There are a multitude of ways in which this professionalism has been used in the past. The point here is to understand that these ways may need to be *refocused*: from a sense of blind defense of the club to a redefinition based on a burden of office being defined as more demanding than in any other occupations, and as calling for a higher degree of integrity and ethics than in non-professional work. This might call for an oath of office like the Hippocratic Oath for medical doctors.

H. This centrality of the burden of office might require a massive investment of resources in transforming the mindset of the members of the Force. It will require that the Force be subjected to a socio-analysis and a socio-therapy, not unlike what troubled individuals have to go through in a psycho-analysis and a psycho-therapy.

What is involved is nothing less than a redefinition of the rapports of the members of the Force at all levels with *les autres* – persons that are regarded as aliens as distinct from them, as another species, as animals – into *autrui* – persons with whom they see some commonality, for whom they may have some empathy.

Such transformations have been successfully effected on a smaller scale when some mental health institutions or home for seniors discovered that patients were abused by the staff. What had to be done was to modify the "relationship" with the patient by redefining the patient as *autrui* not *autres*, one of them, and not one of another species.

When one has a capacity to regard persons and groups with whom one has professional relationships like persons of one's own species, one can hope to fathom their needs, and one might be able to change one's own way of acting. Without such extraordinary internal transformation in the mindset, any change in structure in bound to fail.

The culture will not be changed unless inter-personal relationships are transformed. And this transformation is profound and difficult in individuals. In fact, the defense mechanisms are so strong that most members are likely to be in strong denial and to object vehemently to any such process of transformation when it is suggested to them.

Indeed, one must anticipate the same antagonism from members of the Force that one faces when one suggests to an individual that he/she may be in need of psychological help. There is a negative aura attached to psychological disorder and mental illness that leads it to be occluded and denied, with disastrous consequences. The same may be said of disorders at the organizational culture level: they are summarily dismissed as unreal, unimportant, and irrelevant in day to day operations, and therefore as calling for no therapy at all. Much leadership will be required to persuade the members of the Force to accept to take part in this transformational process.

This is where the role of the Deputy Commissioner might be crucial. He/she will have to explain that this is part of the development of critical thinking, of the process of becoming aware of assumptions one is not aware one is making, of better self-knowledge as a way to become a more effective professional. Psychologists have to go through this process if they will to be able to help persons with psychological disorders.

How can this mammoth task be accomplished?

Subtly, and often in an oblique way.

Most often through occasions developed when getting the members involved in training (for they regard it as legitimate and do not feel threatened). On such occasions, transformation can often be successful through *organizational bricolage* or modification of technology, for again this is not threatening.

The use of *vous* instead of *tu* in schoolyards has done marvel to reduce schoolyard violence. The insistence by the New York chief of police that members of the force use the subway to and from work so as to expose them more fully to the citizenry they interact with has transformed their view of the citizenry they work for.

But in the case of the RCMP, such baby steps may not suffice. A vast process of learning and development-centered cultural transformation may be necessary. Indeed, other very large organizations have launched successfully such a process. G. O'Donovan (The Corporate Culture Handbook, Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2006) has shown how the Hong Kong and Shanghai Corporation, the second largest financial institution in the world, now headquartered in London, has engineered such a successful transformation through a five-year strategy. This is not the only way to proceed, but it should indicate that this sort of initiative has proved feasible and successful in an organization of more than 15,000 employees throughout the world.

Such cultural change has to be associated with continuous education and must translate into specific changes in day to day practice. Tact and civility are minor virtues that were not present in the RCMP at certain levels. This may be a powerful starting point. But what has to be transformed is the whole set of relationships with partners and stakeholders, the lenses through which they are perceived and defined, the way in which one defines oneself vis-à-vis them.

(4) generative governance

There may be a need to frame the discussion of these structural and cultural changes in such a way that they will not be rejected as abhorrent from the start. This may require that they be explicitly interpreted and understood as ways and means to move to *a new form of governance and leadership,* for these latter goals are regarded as legitimate and imperative after a crisis.

One way to present this ensemble of responses, and to get all to engage willingly and creatively in the process, is to present it as a way to move from a focus on Type I (fiduciary governance) and Type II (strategic governance) toward Type III (generative governance) using the language of R.P. Chait et al's Governance as Leadership (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2005). Type I governance focuses on the stewardship of tangible assets; Type II on partnerships; Type III on leadership. Good governance entails a mix of the three components.

The Brown Report reveals Type I governance failures, and it calls for some fiduciary repairs. Trustworthiness must be ensured through better financial controls and routine oversight, but it may not suffice. The Report also reveals Type II governance failures: these flaws pertain to the definition of what business one is in, what are the core competencies to be nurtured, what is the business model, what is the architecture of the organization that best fits the mission, what are the priorities, what are the benchmarks to use? The structural repairs suggested would remedy some lack of oversight at the macro level, but the governing board and its committees (in consultation with the CEO) may have to set in place a management structure that will ensure that these matters are better handled.

Most importantly however, the Brown Report reveals Type III governance failures: a lack of capacity for generative governance – a capacity to discern problems, to make sense of them, to frame the problems differently, and to look at the business in a different way – because of the stultifying culture of the organization. This in turn calls for a different way of thinking, a different mindset.

Such a new mindset cannot be produced only at the top: then it would entail a perpetuation of the hierarchical governance of the past and of the culture of intimidation and unquestioned obedience… with a few flats and sharps. What needs to be transformed is the way to do business, the framework within which issues are viewed: the mindset.

This is the sort of thinking that led to community policing: broken windows not seen as simple trade marks of crime-ridden neighborhood, but preventing broken windows as part of a larger effort to create order and safety.

The overall strategy might usefully be labeled : toward generative governance.

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Guideposts

A more elaborate study would require a fuller appreciation of the complexity of the context, of the constellation of different interests in play, of the foundation of the power base of the different groups, and of the range of levers available to intervene in subtle ways in processes one can only control partially and imperfectly.

But this may be regarded as a start.

Some general principles are likely to lead to better governance.

- the principle of maximum participation to ensure that as much knowledge as possible is made available, and that any commitment made in inclusive meetings will tend to be honored;
- the principle of subsidiarity that posits that the best decisions are taken by those who are directly concerned, and that a decision should be taken at a more remote level only if it cannot be done well at the local level;
- the principle of multistability simply suggests that the best way to get a stable system is to partition it in sub-systems. This prevents the whole system from having to adjust completely to each perturbation and shock: each sub-system that is most apt to take care of a particular adjustment may then be asked to take care of it.

These principles are not necessarily equally important in each particular case, but they combine to suggest ways in which one may want to design organizations likely to generate the highest level of social learning.

From these principles (and there may be others inspired by the particular circumstances of the RCMP), one may suggest a number of mechanisms that would appear to best serve these principles.

Some mechanisms of a generic sort might prove useful:

- the creation of forums or safe spaces for information exchange, interaction and negotiation;
- the change in the nature of 'relationships' and the development of moral contracts and seemingly innocuous arrangements that often are the root of trust, and making inter-personal relations easier;
- the provision of settings leading to the confrontation of frames of references, to social learning, and to the generation of a basis for reframing that may lead to getting out of what first appeared as an impasse;
- mechanisms of intervention to counter some dysfunctional cleavages between beliefs and reality: cognitive dissonance, and the like;
- the design of fail-safe mechanisms to prevent the multilogue to degenerate in meaningless consensus and to prevent sabotage.

But these general mechanisms have to translate into stratagems to ensure that they are not allowed to remain ineffective. As we mentioned earlier, these stratagems simply impact on the organization through simple avenues: transparency, suasion, incentives, and coercion.

The case of the RCMP is interesting because of the generational cleavage that is likely to stand in the way of an abrupt transition from the old order to the new one. The paramilitary and hierarchical nature of the old order is bound to continue to have an impact on the "acceptable" strategies in the short run. If what is proposed tends to be perceived as laxity and lack of effectiveness, or "soft", it will fail.

On the other hand, if it maintains assumptions about the optimal regime having to remain authoritarian, there will be no buy-in from the younger generation.

The new culture has to build on what both generations have in common: pride and *esprit de corps.*

It also has to start with a reframing of the vision and mission in a manner that puts much emphasis on power *with* and not power *over*, learning, on a police corps that is intent on remaining at the frontier of new scientific, physical, and social technologies in its efforts to meet effectively the challenges of modern policing, and on a police force that is ready to experiment to get there … even with reframing completely the notion of policing – from coordination by the use of force to coordination with the use of as much force as necessary but as little force as possible.

Preliminaries for a strategy: a summary view

As mentioned earlier, after a crisis of the sort the RCMP went through, nothing less than a transformation of the whole governance process is required. Generative governance is the objective sought.

This transition might require a two-tracked effort.

First, a modification of the structure of governing: a strong civilian governing board, connected fully to the operations of the organization through many channels – the reports of the CEO, the intelligence of an ombudsman process reporting to both the CEO and the Board, and the various committees charged with managing but also monitoring the terrain in all sorts of ways.

Second, a transformation of the mindset: through an ambitious and systematic process that will swamp the whole organization and transform the culture through a massive exercise in continuing education.

Track (1a) Implementing immediately transparency and openness

The central rule might be that each official should be kept fully informed, and that disloyalty will be interpreted as not having fully informed one's superior of anything untoward. Thus the sins are deception and misinformation.

But it is unreasonable to presume that modern governance can be built exclusively on the principles of transparency (panopticon) and accountability (generalized distrust).

Track (1b) Putting in place the structural repairs suggested above

Concomitant with the new philosophy of transparency and openness, one would put in place a new governing board, and an ombudsperson process, with the clear mandate of reviewing the management, accountability and oversight structure within one year.

Track (2)

This second track might aim at implementing generative governance at the RCMP.

This would mean evolving from the traditional notion of accountability (TA) to a more relational notion of accountability (RA).

TA is a mechanical top-down *ex post facto* rendering of account mainly as a tool of control and with a view to punish mistakes. RA is a more encompassing continuing disclosing of what one is doing or intends to do as a tool of learning and with a view to negotiate the best possible ways.

But this will not occur unless there is a transformation of the culture.

The only way for this to work might be to get from the Commissioner and from the Chair of the Board a clear message that nothing less than this will do, for nothing less than such a cultural change will allow the RCMP to regain the trust it formally had.

Such trust might be regained by two important bottom-up changes: the refurbishment of the burden of office as professionals so as to ensure that excellence in performance will ensure respect will be regained; but also the refurbishment of all relationships so as to build on power with, empathy, and the rule of civility first – as much force as necessary, but as much civility as possible in dealing with all … as a part of the refurbished notion of professional member of the Force.

This might constitute a major challenge for the Deputy Commissioner or whoever shoulders such functions to operationalize such a cultural transformation strategy based on the continuous education component that would be presented as absolutely fundamental in the on-going conceptual refurbishment required from any professional.

Conclusion

Mapping the terrain is what we have tried to do.

A few key points deserve particular attention.

- the importance to deal with the symbolic/theory dimension frontally and to avoid counting exclusively on structural change;
- the importance to be weary about challenge functions, whistle-blowing and other such instruments that are likely to institute distrust;
- the importance to move to distributed governance as much as possible;
- the need to re-define *esprit de corps* explicitly and frontally for this will be the rampart behind which much deception will be engineered; it has been done well in the case of drunk drivers – a real friend takes away his keys;

- the importance to think about the Deputy Commissioner (or a process akin to it) as a positive complement to the negative role of the ombudsman (or a process akin to it): the latter is there to detect and correct mishaps, the former works actively at experimenting with new ways like the VP-R&D in an industrial firm;
- the importance to flesh out the notion of relational accountability;
- the importance to spell out fail-safe mechanisms;
- the importance to find a way to make massive socio-therapy palatable, and to make it fit naturally into the process of continuing professional education and a strategy of generative governance.

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