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POLICE TASK AND TIME STUDY

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The cover of a major city's annual police report dramatically shows two policemen reaching for their guns as they burst through the doors of a massive black and white police car which is screeching to a halt . . . the flashing red lights and screaming siren complete the illustration. A less dramatic scene on an inside page of the report shows a policeman talking to a grateful mother whose lost child was returned. Which one of these illustrations most accurately describes the police role? How frequently do the events depicted by these illustrations occur? What percentage of police activity is violent and dangerous? What do policemen really do?

The New York Times reports that policemen like to think of themselves as uniformed soldiers in an extremely dangerous war against crime. Experience and common sense indicate that the average patrolman is also involved in non-crime activities such as traffic control, aiding the sick, and returning lost children. What do they really do?

Are the police "on the firing line in the battle against crime," as claimed by O. W. Wilson, former Superintendent of Police of Chicago.

Does the patrolman carry out in police services the functions which are performed by the combat services in military operations as the writer of a current and popular textbook states? Are these points of view closer to the truth than what Leonard Felix Fuld wrote in 1910, "... the policeman's life is a lazy life in as much as his time is spent doing nothing".

These feelings reflect the different points of view of the police function. Polarity is the product and is evidenced by such statements as "Support Your Local Police", "Whose Side Are You On?", and "Disrespect for Law and Order".

Bruce Smith stated that the police problem in America is as old as our system of local government. The problem is still a prominent feature of the American scene because of errors of long

standing in the organization and management of the police and the methods employed to assure popular control.

Stanton Wheeler writes that a striking characteristic of the literature in criminology is the almost total absence of systematic studies or conceptual materials that relate to all those steps that intervene between the commission of a criminal act and a prison sentence. Criminology texts dwell on the subject of crime causation and studies that bear on institutional settings. Yet the process from apprehension through sentencing has until recently been rarely touched. More recently, contributions of various quality have been made to this literature. There is a very great need, in fact, a responsibility for public agencies and particularly the police to lift the opaque veil that hides their activities.

The police, in particular, have not been overly cordial to the idea of social science investigators prying into their organizations. The police are especially defensive because of their fragile public image, their political environment, criticism from minority groups, and other similar reasons. Another factor is the complexity of the criminal justice system, in general, and the urban police system in particular. For example, it takes a long period of contact with police both to establish rapport and to understand the system.

The low visibility of police activity is a fundamental reason why much of the police problem has developed. Even the purpose or mission of the police defies clarification.

It is therefore unwise to attempt to introduce reforms without first identifying and cataloging police activity. This would be akin to adding a racing stripe to an automobile and expect to improve its performance.

This study has probed one area of police activity—the patrol division. The police department of a city, we will call Baywood, with a population

of nearly 400,000 citizens was the object of this study. It was immediately learned that the patrol division comprised only 43 percent of the 900 authorized sworn and civilian personnel strength and only 41 percent of the police department budget. Data processing and computer science were the tools that made it possible to account for and catalog every assignment to which patrolmen were dispatched over a 54 week period. There were a total of 599,211 assignments for the period. Primary assignments amounted to 540,481. There were 58,730 cover assignments.

The time consumed on each individual assignment was also recorded. The primary dispatches consumed 277,475 hours and the cover assignments used 23,652 hours. The total consumed time was 301,127 hours.

Each assignment to which a patrolman was dispatched was coded, such as homicide, assault, stolen car, abandoned vehicle, burglary, a barking dog, or a rest break. Through the process of data reduction the nearly 600,000 assignments were reduced to 109 types of events.

The 109 types of events were grouped into six categories labeled: Crimes Against Persons, Crimes Against Property, Traffic, On-View, Social Services, and Administration. A new perspective on police activity resulted from this analysis. For example, the frequency and consumed time of assignments pertaining to Crimes Against Persons amounted to only 2.82 percent and 2.96 percent respectively of the total assignments. The percent of frequency of assignments and consumed time for all categories is found in Table 1.

The functional aspects of most of the 109 types of events were also examined and an effort was made to more accurately describe, along-with the statistical accounting, the reality of police activity.

The practical application of this study is to assist the police administrator to formulate a realistic mission and to provide him with infor-

mation so that he can better allocate his manpower and material resources. A police job description can be formalized enabling the administrator to measure a patrolman's effectiveness. Training programs can be more intelligently designed to meet the policeman's needs so that he can better serve his community.

CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS

The first of the six categories of events into which this study was organized pertains in general to offenses against the person. The events included in this category are criminal homicide, rape, kidnapping, battery, robbery, assault with intent to commit murder, etc.

As previously mentioned, Crimes Against Persons constituted only 2.82 percent of the total assignments and 2.96 percent of the total time consumed on all assignments.

Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter. Patrolmen were dispatched to 46 reported murders and non-negligent manslaughter cases. These 46 homicides represented only .01 percent of the total events and required only 67.67 hours of their time.

Baywood, like other urban police departments which are entrusted with the prevention and control of criminal homicide, finds the task impossible. A California Bureau of Criminal Statistics Study showed that most criminal homicides occur in places such as homes, automobiles, and other locations where surveillance as a measure of prevention or control would not be feasible.

The major contributing factor to homicides in America—both accidental and criminal—is the extremely easy availability of guns. According to Carl Bakal in his book *The Right to Bear Arms* 60 percent of our criminal homicides are caused by guns, knives 23 percent. It is inevitable that an argument that might end with a bloody nose in Ireland ends with a murder in Atlanta. It seems quite obvious that it would be easy to reduce the number of murders if rational and effective gun laws were invoked.

Rapes The Baywood Communications Section recorded 330 rapes. Dispatches for rape constituted .02 percent of the total assignments.

There is a great deal of skepticism among the police of Baywood regarding the offense of rape, and an effort was made through interviews with police personnel to learn the basis of this skepticism. When the subject of rape was mentioned, one lieutenant stated, "They are mostly whores".

TABLE 1

	Fre- quency	Con- sumed Time
Crimes Against Persons	2.82	2.96
Crimes Against Property	13.76	14.82
Traffic	7.16	9.20
On-View	19.68	9.10
Social Service	17.27	13.70
Administration	39.28	50.19

The explanation was that prostitutes use the police to help them collect their business fees. The police are also used by women other than prostitutes to remove unwanted boyfriends. Not all of the forcible rapes are consummated acts. Over half are attempted rapes.

Statutory rape is the other category of rape. Statutory rapes are referred to in the Baywood Police Department as "welfare rapes", since most statutory rape offenses come to the attention of the police through the County Welfare Department.

Rapes, according to the Presidents' Crime Commission, are much like criminal homicides. They occur most frequently between friends and associates and in places where prevention and control by police surveillance is not possible.

Assault and Battery. The police, during interviews, dismissed a large portion of assault and battery cases as "those West Baywood Batteries". West Baywood is a ghetto section of predominantly Negro residents.

The police comment does seem valid however. Under the classification of assaults, white citizens were arrested 513 times, while there were 1,540 arrests of non-whites for this offense. Although one-third of the Baywood population is non-white, the assault arrests of this group were three times as many as the assault arrests for whites.

Robbery. Patrolmen were dispatched to 2,917 reported robberies. This represented one-half of one percent (.51%) of the total number of events to which they were dispatched.

Baywood policemen arrested 449 persons for robbery in 1967 and reported 1,421 actual robbery offenses. This official reported statistic is half the number of events to which the Communications Section dispatched patrolmen as robberies. Police, when interviewed, have stated that the reporting citizen does not distinguish among larcenies, burglaries, and robberies.

Police rarely, if ever, come upon a robbery in progress. The most that can be expected of the police is that they will respond quickly enough to interview witnesses who may have seen the robbery take place and conduct a successful investigation from the evidence they obtain.

CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY

Crimes against property accounted for 12.24 percent of the total number of events and 14.82 percent of consumed time to which patrol units were dispatched in the period this investigation

covered. Dispatches in the categories of Administration, Social Service, and Patrolman Initiated Events all exceeded the category of Crimes Against Property in frequency.

The role of the patrolman comes into focus with an analysis of the complaints pertaining to Crimes Against Property.

Space limitation will restrict my comments to the most significant findings of this research.

Burglary and Burglary Alarms. The Communications Section dispatched patrol units 28,164 times to complaints of burglary and burglary alarms. These dispatches accounted for more than three times the 9,122 "actual offenses" reported in the Baywood Annual Report.

Many of the burglary alarms are false and the complaints of burglary turn out to be a lesser offense such as larceny or trespassing or in fact no burglary at all. The conclusion to draw is that the police are literally spending a great deal of their effort on other than actual offenses.

Burglar Alarms. Correspondence from the Los Angeles Police Department to the Baywood Department included this paragraph. "A recent departmental survey indicated that in excess of 90% of all alarm calls are false and that automatic dialing units have a slightly higher false alarm factor."

Richmond, California, a city of about 80,000 population, had a similar experience with false alarms. This small community averaged almost five (4.8) false burglary alarms every day. The total for 1967 was 1,784 false alarms.

Baywood police have made several surveys of false alarms. However, their data was obtained from the commercial alarm companies in two of the three surveys, and it may be biased toward fewer false alarms.

a. One alarm company stated that over a three month period, from July 1 to October 10, 1966 there were 628 alarms and that 574, or 91 percent, were false alarms.

b. During the month of September 1966, another company reported 22 of 27 alarms, or 82 percent, were false.

c. The Baywood Police Communications Section surveyed 123 alarms during the period of March 2 to March 13, 1966. Their findings for this 12 day period included 2 valid alarms, 121 false alarms, and one arrest. This amounts to 98 percent false alarms as surveyed by the police.

The Presidents' Commission on Law Enforce-

ment and the Administration of Justice reported that in Washington, D.C. in 1965, 4,450 alarms were directed to the police, and 98 percent of these were false. "Since answering each false alarm takes about 30 minutes, these alarms consume about 2,100 car-hours each year."

The frequency of primary dispatches for burglary alarms in Baywood was 8,632 with a back-up frequency of 6,520. This totals 15,152. The total number of patrol unit hours consumed is 4,704.49 hours. If 95 percent, and this appears to be a reasonable figure, of these alarms are false, then 14,394 dispatches of patrolmen, including the cost of man hours, equipment, and hazards in responding to an emergency are open to serious re-evaluation.

The possibility that an average of almost 40 emergency vehicles are dispatched every 24 hour period in response to false alarms is an emergency in itself. A survey may show that a relatively small group of alarm locations may be contributing to a large percentage of false alarms.

Auto Theft. Patrolmen were dispatched to 5,401 reported stolen car cases during the 54 week study period which is .94 percent of total assignments. Total patrol unit time amounted to 3,694 hours and averaged 39 minutes per dispatch. There is a disparity of more than 2,000 auto theft cases between dispatches by the Communications Section and the 2,737 "actual offenses".

Many of the reported auto thefts are solved at the scene by the patrolman who asks the complainant three questions.

1. Could the car have been repossessed because of nonpayment of car payments?
2. Was the car loaned to anyone?
3. Could a relative or a friend have taken it and failed to notify you?

A patrol lieutenant said that citizens often "lose" their cars because they forget where they parked them, members of the family or friends have borrowed the car, or they will report a car missing after work only to remember later that they did not drive their car to work.

Petty Theft. Shoplifting is the major petty theft offense to which the police are dispatched. An event termed "citizen holding a prisoner" also refers to shoplifting. Patrols were dispatched 13,983 times to complaints of petty theft and 534 times to "citizen holding prisoner". 9,637 patrol hours were spent on these events.

Major department stores employ private police. The procedure is for the private policemen to

watch a suspected shoplifter leave the store without paying for merchandise in his possession. The private policeman then apprehends the suspect and takes one of two courses of action. Either he holds the individual under a citizen's arrest until the arrival of the Baywood patrol, or else he releases the suspect after the suspect surrenders the merchandise and signs a statement relieving the store of all charges of false arrest.

During a six week period from November 21, 1966 to January 1, 1967 there were 391 shoplifting arrests made. The police accounted for only 69 of these arrests. Store detectives and private police arrested the other 322 suspects. Shoplifting arrests greatly improve the police "clearance rate" since almost all complaints made to the police result in clearance by arrest.

Defrauding a Cab Driver, Defrauding an Inn Keeper. On the average of about once a night, the Communications Section receives a complaint from a cab driver saying that someone is trying to defraud him. About half as often a complaint is received from a hotel, motel, restaurant, or flophouse because someone refuses to pay his bill. These two relatively minor offenses occurred a total of 491 times and consumed 253.27 hours of patrol time. The calls averaged about 30 minutes each.

Malicious Mischief. The police receive a large number of calls complaining of malicious mischief. Generally, they are not serious and consist of anything from kicking over a garbage can to breaking a window.

Patrols were dispatched 7,150 times on complaints of malicious mischief.

The public schools, street lights, and transit systems are major targets of vandalism in Baywood. Private property is also damaged by vandals. There is no reliable information available regarding the suspects, but young people are believed to be mainly responsible. There are very few arrests made for malicious mischief.

Suspicious Persons. "The police are as close as your telephone," the Baywood citizens are told. As a result, the police received 7,331 complaints about prowlers, suspicious persons, "someone breaking in," etc. How many of these complaints are valid is hard to judge. Was the prowler frightened off by the telephone call or the arrival of the police? Were the suspicious occupants of a car merely a young neighbor and her boyfriend saying goodnight? Was the report of someone breaking in

actually the report of a tree branch striking the house?

The police have a heavy sense of obligation to the citizen on this type of complaint. It is one of the few opportunities that the police have to provide a beneficial service "of a police nature" to the citizen. The policeman is not citing, arresting, directing, or questioning the citizen, and it is police work, not social work in this case. The policeman knows that if he handles the complaint well, the citizen will hold him in high esteem. Over half of these dispatches have assist or back-up patrols, but they are of shorter duration than most other dispatches.

Bad Checks. Patrolmen were dispatched 2,007 times for forgery and counterfeiting, and this essentially means bad checks. Each event averaged about 48 minutes. Although bad checks constitute only .13 percent of the total consumed time dealt with in this study, the 1,159 hours nevertheless account for 144 eight-hour days.

The victim's interest is in financial recovery alone, and he uses the police as a collection agency, as a threat to effect reimbursement or cause embarrassment.

The citizen could be saved millions of dollars annually in police costs by shifting to the banks, grocers, and other merchants the responsibility for the bad check problem. The banking and retail industries should explore ways and means of taking this problem away from the police and returning it to the private sector, where it properly belongs in a free-enterprise system.

The Institute for the Study of Crime and Delinquency claims the cost of bad check offenses in California to business and government combined is probably over 200 million dollars per year, and nearly 2½ billion dollars nationally. Most fraudulent check violations are committed by check writers with "not sufficient funds". A California survey revealed that false signature checks comprised only \$8,000 of \$112,076 fraudulent checks.

Even more significant is the fact that about nine percent of California's prison population is made up of bad check offenders. A large but unknown number of inmates in the County and City jails are bad check offenders.

TRAFFIC

The most frequent traffic assignments for Baywood patrolmen are responding to complaints from citizens that their driveway is blocked or

someone is parking on their property, automobile accidents and abandoned motor vehicles.

Almost 9,000 assignments were made to patrol units to remove illegally parked cars from driveways or private property as compared to 46 homicide assignments. The 10,935 abandoned vehicle assignments are more than twice as many as the robbery dispatches. The primary and cover dispatches for automobile accidents total 18,112—this is more than three times the 5,234 assignments made for assault and battery.

Traffic assignments amounted to 7.16 percent of the total and 9.20 percent of the consumed time.

Accidents. Patrols are dispatched on an average of 50 times a day to investigate automobile accidents. The policy of the Baywood Police Department is that all reported traffic accidents occurring on public streets within the city shall be investigated and recorded on the prescribed report forms.

Accident investigations are time-consuming events. Accidents alone account for more than 5 percent of the total consumed time of all patrol activities.

Abandoned Vehicles. The efficiency of the abandoned car program is accomplished at the expense of the other patrol operations. It is essentially an administrative function that consumed 2,339.59 hours of patrol dispatch time. There were 10,935 occasions when a patrol car was dispatched for this event, and the number of abandoned vehicles involved was probably less than half that number.

PATROLMAN INITIATED ASSIGNMENTS

The patrolmen mobilized themselves 117,853 times, or 20.6 percent of the total 599,211 events. Citizens or police headquarters initiated the rest of the patrol dispatches. This, of course, does not include patrolman initiated events such as meals, rest stops, and reporting to headquarters which are included under the chapter on Administration. Only 9.37 percent of the total consumed time of all dispatches was spent on these patrolman initiated events. Patrolman initiated time totaled 27,400 hours out of a total of 292,420 consumed hours.

Black and Reiss have written an exceptionally clear description of "mobilization of police" and their conclusions are strongly supported by the findings made in this study. When they state that

the police are initially mobilized more often by the action of private citizens and police headquarters than by patrol initiative, they are correct.

There is a dilemma in Baywood between citizens' demands for service and the police initiated or preventive patrols. For several years the police have been telling the citizen about the rise in crime and encouraging the citizens to call for police service.

The result is that the citizen, by taking the police too literally, imposes such a workload on the patrols that police initiated or preventive patrols are reduced. The patrol personnel complain because they do not have enough time for patrolman initiated activity. They claim that the demand for service by the citizen is so great that they are too restricted to perform what they call preventive patrol.

A patrol sergeant said the police are "order takers". He arrived at this term simply on the basis that the police spend almost all of their time, according to him, responding to service calls, writing their reports, and submitting their reports to police headquarters.

The patrolman has much more discretion in self-initiated activity than he has in events initiated by the citizens or headquarters. The officer is monitored when he is dispatched in response to a citizen's complaint, both by the citizen and by his superiors through a report. Self-mobilized events, such as on-view situations, have low visibility, and the officer has obviously greater latitude in his actions. He can choose the event, and if it is contact with a citizen, he can choose the citizen with whom he will make contact. Arrests and reporting are also discretionary elements in the police-initiated type of event.

The Baywood patrolman takes the initiative in mobilizing himself for six different types of events, which are:

1. On-View. This code includes those violations of law and other acts which the patrolman observes and which he decides he must investigate or act upon.
2. Walk stop. The stopping and questioning of individuals on foot who arouse the suspicions of the patrolman by their dress, appearance, or actions.
3. Car stop. This includes parked vehicles, both occupied and unattended as well as moving vehicles. Vehicles and passengers that arouse any suspicion by their appearance or actions are checked by the patrolman.

4. Security check. The patrolman checks a commercial establishment to make certain it is secure.

5. Autostatis (Automated Statewide Auto Theft Inquiry System). In Baywood it is known as a "rolling stop" and is a check of vehicle registration against a statewide file of stolen and suspicious vehicles.

6. Warrant check through a Police Information Network. This involves the stopping of a vehicle in hope of apprehending individuals with outstanding warrants. The warrant information is computerized and contains outstanding warrant data from a six county area.

These activities except for the security check do the least good for the community and produce tremendous hostility.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Social services is a natural category into which more than 17 percent of the total dispatches—both primary and cover could comfortably be accommodated. Over 13 percent of the total time consumed by all primary and cover dispatches was spent on events in the social services category.

Events that did not meet the general criteria of crimes against persons, crimes against property, patrolmen initiated activity, traffic, or administration were considered for the social service group.

Social service includes family crisis, incidents involving drunkenness, suicide, and mental illness, ambulance service, and public nuisances, etc.

Family Crisis. "Social surgery" is the term James M. Slavin, former Chief of Police of Denver, Colorado used in reference to the police role in family crisis. He claimed that "65 percent of all aggravated assaults, which occur more frequently than murder, rape, and robbery combined take place in the privacy of the home".

Drunkenness. Baywood police made 15,590 arrests for drunkenness in 1967. Total arrests for all offenses other than traffic were 34,362. Drunkenness constituted 45.3 percent of all arrests. There was an average of 42 persons arrested every day in Baywood for being drunk.

Startling as these figures are, a special study revealed that two-thirds (66.4) of the arrests for drunkenness involved citizens who were arrested two or more times for that offense. Specifically, 2,537 individuals accounted for 10,361 of the arrests for drunkenness.

Mental Illness. The 1,676 calls for police as-

sistance in handling mental illness cases was 255 more than the 1,421 actual robbery offenses.

The author of a recently published book on the subject of Community Relations and Riot Prevention states, "One might ask why the policeman should be concerned, for the primary responsibilities of the police do not include the solving of sociological problems". This is consistent with the general theme of most police officers which is, "We're not social workers, we're law enforcement officers".

It is unfortunate for the Country that the police are imbued with this totally wrong perception of themselves. The police do perform social work. In fact, they perform more social work than they perform law enforcement. Regretfully, as social workers, most police are poorly trained and incompetent.

ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES

"What do patrolmen do?" The answer to this question is that they spend more than 50 percent of their time on administrative tasks. Traffic, police initiated events, social service, and crimes against property account for about 47 percent of their time. Less than three (3) percent of the Baywood patrolman's time is spent on dispatches concerning crimes against persons.

The events that have been classified under the heading of administration include such items as coffee breaks, meals, community relations, taking reports, running errands, attending court, serving warrants, and performing as police technicians.

There are several other time-consuming tasks that were assigned to other categories that could very easily be placed in the category of administration. For example, in crimes against persons and crimes against property, the patrolman functions as an "order taker". It is very seldom that a patrolman will be dispatched and arrive at the crime scene while the crime is in progress.

In some cases such as larceny and burglary and even in some crimes against persons such as assault, the citizen may not notify the police for several hours or days after the event. Bad checks cases may be 45 days old before the citizen re-

quests a patrolman to write up the complaint. The spotting and towing away of abandoned vehicles is an excellent example of a purely administrative task.

SUMMARY

Police departments are about the most poorly managed organizations in our society. No business—government or private—could survive very long without knowledge of the functions it performs. The only record of activities most departments maintain is the FBI Uniform Crime Report of the seven index crimes, and the police come to perceive themselves as crime fighters when in fact the police are more social worker and administrator than crime fighter.

Training programs would devote less time to weapons training and judo and more time to human relations if the training was geared to actual needs. Police departments would not purchase Stoner rifles, Mace, tanks, or high performance automobiles if they better understood their social worker and administrator role.

The quality of living in American cities has deteriorated and the police must assume its share of the responsibility. The city parks and streets have become unsafe while police management has debated the question of one or two man cars—the question is not appropriate—the policemen should be on foot to provide protection to the citizen in the parks and on the streets.

The Police is probably the only organization in our Country that attempts to blame its ineffectiveness on Communists. A West Coast Chief is an outstanding example of this syndrome. A recent issue of *The Atlantic Monthly Magazine* revealed he could not control his own police personnel. Neither was he very effective in other areas of police management, but he did manage to parlay himself into a \$100,000 a year newscaster job reading script that will identify the police problem as a Communist conspiracy.

It used to be said in police circles that if one can't be good—one should look good, but now if both options are closed, one can always become a TV commentator.