



# Uniform Crime Reporting and Community Policing: An Historical Perspective

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(#) denotes endnote numbers

## Introduction:

### The Uniform Crime Reports as Social Science and History

The Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police published the first edition of *Uniform Crime Reporting: A Complete Manual for Police* in November 1929 and began collecting crime statistics as of January 1, 1930. On September 1, 1930, the Bureau of Investigation, which subsequently became the Federal Bureau of Investigation, assumed responsibility for collecting, tabulating and disseminating the Uniform Crime Reports. J. Edgar Hoover argued that the Reports represented "...a proper step...in the direction of satisfying a long felt demand for some means of officially measuring the relative activities of the criminal element."<sup>(1)</sup>

In the years since the creation of the system of Uniform Crime Reporting, social scientists have waxed less enthusiastic than Mr. Hoover. Even in 1930, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and its

colleagues--including representatives from the Census Bureau, the New York School for Social Work, Western Reserve University, the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, and the Bureau of Social Hygiene--were acutely aware of the inherent statistical deficiencies of Uniform Crime Reporting.<sup>(2)</sup> Over subsequent years, social scientists have generated a storm of criticism.

Uniform Crime Reports attempt to satisfy ". . . the needs of the police, the demands of the general public, and the concerns of scholars seeking to understand social deviance."<sup>(3)</sup> They possess limited utility as a tool for scholars. They are marred by the failure of victims to report crimes and by the failure of officers to record crimes accurately. The reporting system itself--categorizing police reports into typologies (Part I, Part II crimes)--invites further statistical error.<sup>(4)</sup>

Donald Black has described the complexity of producing official crime reports: Whether or not a complaint, if it ever reaches the police, enters into the official process of reporting is dependent upon its legal seriousness, the complainant's preference for police action, the distance of the relationship between the complainant and the suspect, the complainant's degree of deference toward the officer, and the complainant's social status.<sup>(5)</sup> There is ample evidence to suggest that organizational imperatives also impinge upon the collection of data for the Uniform Crime Reports. David Seedman and Michael Conzens have argued persuasively that police departments show evidence of rising or falling crime rates based upon the political pressures they are experiencing. The Uniform Crime Reports, being merely the summation of a series of local responses to partisan issues, are ". . . highly misleading for what they are said to measure. . . ."<sup>(6)</sup> The UCR system, then, is ". . . useless as a tool for evaluation of social policy."<sup>(7)</sup>

The experience of the past decade, especially in Michigan, lends credence to the observation of Seedman and Conzens. Because of prison overcrowding, for example, criminal justice personnel--including the police--have been experiencing tremendous pressure to reduce charges from felonies to misdemeanors. The logic of reduced charges is that many of those charged with a misdemeanor will serve more time in a county jail than they would spend in a state prison. The net result is the demoralization and cynicism of citizens, who have become increasingly reluctant to report crimes, particularly property crimes. If the criminal justice system cannot, after all, deal effectively with serious assaultive offenders, there is no reason to expect it to respond effectively to property offenders.

To the extent that communities express their frustrations politically, some administrators have been known to attempt "solutions" through manipulations of the charges levied against offenders; a breaking and entering becomes a larceny from a building. The distortion of the Uniform Crime Reports as they pass through the political prism creates an official set of data which may bear little relationship to social reality.

Bankrupt as social science, the Uniform Crime Reports may, however, have some value as historical evidence. On an aggregate level, they may communicate the nuances of broad social trends over a period of time. Alfred Blumstein found that they correlated with the Sellin-Wolfgang indexes relative to patterns of crime for the period of 1960-72.<sup>(8)</sup> Michael Hindelang found similarities between the patterns of crime depicted in the Uniform Crime Reports and those exhibited in the 1967 National Opinion Research Center's Victimization Survey. He also found that the UCR's contained composite information which was consistent with the homicide rates emerging from the Center for Health Statistics.<sup>(9)</sup> In effect, UCR's are capable of transmitting trends which may reveal much about the long-range development of contemporary social existence.<sup>(10)</sup> They are not as useful when individual communities are analyzed and dissected.

From a certain perspective, the relative merits of the Uniform Crime Reports as either a social scientific tool or as historical evidence pales as an issue. They are in themselves an historical phenomenon tightly knit into the developmental fabric of policing. They emerged at a particular point in history as an organizational instrument of nascent police professionalism, as a mechanism of "scientific" and bureaucratic police management.

Historically, the conceptualization of crime statistics within the International Association of Chiefs of Police was intimately related to managerial imperatives. Command officers sought methods of disciplining the rank and file and *limiting discretion* and *community-based interactions*. They sought to invest the command structure with all the prerogatives of policing. Their effort was a response to the decline of "island communities" and the needs of a society in the process of modernizing. They attempted to create organizational structures, of which the Uniform Crime Reports became a tool, consistent with the pace and priorities of industrialism.

Unlike social scientists, the chiefs never sought purity in crime statistics. The statistics were viewed simply as a mechanism for efficient, reactive management. They were a tool command officers could use to establish deployment objectives, to communicate with the rank and file, and to gauge organizational responsiveness to identified community crime problems. Crime statistics were the means of measuring and achieving "efficiency." They also served the purpose of providing command officers, those individuals who saw themselves as professionals, with a standardized and common language, a jargon. The jargon itself was unique in that it could be distilled for public consumption, giving the crime statistics a symbolic value, making them a reference point for crime control and the allocation of resources.

This publication will attempt to analyze the Uniform Crime Reports as a phenomenon, not as a set of statistics. It will discuss their historical purposes and origins. What the UCR's actually measure is not as relevant as the organizational needs which prompted their creation and sustained their existence for well over 50 years. The relationship of Uniform Crime Reports to innovative modes of community policing which have emerged recently will also be discussed. The Flint Neighborhood Foot Patrol experiment will serve as a focus for the discussion.

## **Police History: An Interpretive Framework**

Urban police departments as we know them were a creation of the mid-nineteenth century. Their quantity and organizational development accelerated after the Civil War. The Progressive Era, the period of reform and bureaucratization, injected into policing its contemporary quality and character.

The literature exploring the historical development of modern police organizations usually focuses on the reform period. Samuel Walker's *Critical History of Police Reform* and Robert Fogelson's *Big-City Police*, for example, intersect at the Progressive Era, a period which they see in traditional terms. Political corruption and poor quality of urban life at the turn of the century, they argue, impelled well-intentioned reformers to seek institutional changes, including the professionalization and reorganization of the police.<sup>(11)</sup> They assume that the experience of large, established urban centers--New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit--was a universal pattern of history. They consciously exclude those "industrial compounds"--Lynn, Massachusetts, and Homestead, Pennsylvania, are good examples--which urbanized rapidly and wove themselves into the fabric of national reform.

From a national perspective, the Progressive Era can be seen as the deterioration of preindustrial "island communities" and the emergence of bureaucratic institutions--including the police--associated with contemporary "political capitalism."<sup>(12)</sup> "Island communities" were relatively homogeneous, autonomous and self-contained. Artisan production and moderately scaled agricultural enterprises insured intimate relationships among individuals and an absence of extreme social distinctions. The household was the unit of community-based production. The ideology of equality, as it emerged from the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian traditions, synthesized the basic units into a coherent political whole.<sup>(13)</sup> Only with the expansion of markets did commodity production and, eventually, industrialization become possible.<sup>(14)</sup> Modernization--that process by which industrialization, urbanization and institutional reform emerged at the turn of the century--disrupted the "island communities" by undermining traditional social role, establishing class distinctions and challenging traditional concepts of equality. Much of the social conflict evident in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be viewed as an attempt on the part of some groups--artisans, journeymen, householders, and

small shopkeepers--to preserve the traditional social order from incursions on the part of capitalism as represented by merchants, railroads and monopolies.

Law enforcement agencies were frequently bound to the traditional order--the "island communities"--from which they emerged. In Lynn, Massachusetts, the center of shoemaking as it underwent industrialization, a police department was formed in 1862. It became a heated political issue in the contest between artisans and industrialists until 1890. In 1878, Lynn workers elected a government which represented their interests and assumed command over the police department.<sup>(15)</sup> During the 1885 strike against Jay Gould's southwestern system of railroads in Sedalia, Missouri, the police department refused to deputize Pinkerton agents and hired ninety extra officers drawn from the strikers themselves. The only arrest throughout the strike came when A.M. Hager, a Gould official, was charged with disturbing the peace when he profanely objected to favoritism in law enforcement.<sup>(16)</sup> Sedalia was not the first police department to hire strikers. The New Stratisville, Ohio police department "deputized" strikers during the 1874 action of the Miners' National Association.<sup>(17)</sup>

The posture adopted by law enforcement officials during strikes illustrates the extent to which police at the turn of the century identified themselves with local communities in opposition to "external" agents of change. The police shared the same assumptions and forms of consciousness as other inhabitants of "island communities." Even the ambience of police work paralleled the pace of agricultural and artisanal production. Just as farmers and artisans alternated bouts of intense productive activity and relative inactivity based upon both the seasons and whim--a characteristic preindustrial pattern--so police officers thought nothing of socializing on the beat or letting the weather dictate their duties.

Like all individuals cast in the preindustrial mold, the early police officers were task oriented; they permitted the task to determine the length of time devoted to it rather than permitting the available time to dictate the order of tasks. Only with time-oriented industrial and bureaucratic discipline did artisans become workers and police become "professionals."<sup>(18)</sup>

On one level, the historical problem facing reformers was to construct the social loyalty and consciousness of the police; "political neutrality" became the conceptual framework within which the problem was discussed. In this sense, it is *inaccurate* to argue that "While the *form* of policing has changed considerably over time, depending on changes in the mode of production from an agricultural to industrial economy, the class control functions of the police in capitalist society have always remained paramount."<sup>(19)</sup>

## The Historical Development of the Uniform Crime Reports

Founded in 1892, the International Association of Chiefs of Police--then calling itself the National Union of Chiefs of Police--was instrumental in restructuring police institutions in a manner consistent with the needs of industrialized society. Within the Association, the discussions of *discipline* and *crime reporting* proceeded concurrently and became identified with one another.

At the 1883 meeting of the Chiefs, the efficacy and utility of crime statistics were discussed. A resolution calling for a Bureau of Identification using the Bertillon system passed.<sup>(20)</sup> The 1896 convention saw a resolution to create a voluntary bureau of identification funded by participating police departments and using the Bertillon system.<sup>(21)</sup> A five member board of governors drawn from the Association's members was organized to manage the bureau. At the same meeting, W.J. McKelvey, Superintendent of the Brooklyn Police Department, argued in a paper that "...the rank and file should be governed by strict discipline."<sup>(22)</sup>

At the 1897 convention, Chief Eldridge of Boston assured everyone of his "...great faith that improvement in appointing policemen, and improvement in controlling them, will develop from time to time."<sup>(23)</sup> Chief Connolly of Atlanta felt that the police officer, unlike preindustrial groups, should "...be ever so alert to prevent crime. He may be ever so watchful of the affairs of his beat..."<sup>(24)</sup> Chief Deitsch of Cincinnati added that in

order to make a police force "...effective in all its branches, rigid discipline must be enforced and a sense of duty impressed upon the mind of every officer."<sup>(25)</sup> Constantly reinforced discipline, he argued, "gives every commanding officer...the assurance that the officers under their command...are used to his word of command and obeying his orders...."<sup>(26)</sup> He too decried the task oriented, preindustrial approach of many officers: "The habit of police officers talking to citizens while patrolling a beat should under no circumstances be tolerated....It certainly does not look well to see a patrolman holding up a lamp-post, the corner of a house, or talking with people in front of a saloon...."<sup>(27)</sup> Aside from worrying about the discipline of officers, Dietsch argued strenuously for a repository for national crime information: "A National Bureau of Identification would greatly facilitate business...."<sup>(28)</sup> The convention, apparently concurring, approved a final organizational structure and a funding strategy for the bureau.<sup>(29)</sup>

Despite the formalization of the bureau, David S. Rose, Mayor of Milwaukee, reminded the 1898 convention that "...There are no statistics at hand showing the criminal population of the country."<sup>(30)</sup> Chief Dietsch called the 1898 body's attention to the fact that, because of financial constraints, "...we simply have the means to carry the bureau forward in a sort of crude state...."<sup>(31)</sup> After some heated debate about the bureau, the convention finally began to define the purposes served by the collection of national crime information. Such information "...would enable the departments to work more in harmony, and more successfully in the interest of one another; having a uniform and general supply of information concerning the criminal class, accessible to all ... would engender the enthusiasm which is now to a great extent absent in our various departments." In effect, national statistics were to form the basis for decision making: "The only reason a police department can have for thus dealing with any particular individual, is on account of the record and character of that individual as known to them." The argument continued along logical lines: "...it would seem that the greatest channel for efficiency in police service would be the discovery and knowledge of as many such individuals as possible of this (criminal) character, and by their expulsion from the locality, or by subjecting them to close surveillance, prevent them from committing crime."<sup>(32)</sup>

The discussions of *discipline* and *criminal statistics* became fixed agenda items within the Association of Chiefs after 1898. At the 1900 convention, Superintendent Sylvester of Washington, D.C., enlightened his colleagues with a series of anecdotes about his efforts to eliminate from the force those "shirkers" who slept beneath porches, killed time in stables and sat on stone copings.<sup>(33)</sup> The same convention passed a resolution favoring the Sylvester Bill, which asked Congress to fund the National Bureau of Identification by incorporating it into the Department of Justice.<sup>(34)</sup> The 1901 convention received a report from Sylvester, who chaired the Association's Committee on Legislation for the National Bureau of Identification, concerning the bill's progress.<sup>(35)</sup> It also heard Chief Benjamin Murphy of Jersey City, New Jersey, argue that "...a police force must be thoroughly organized, well uniformed and equipped, rigidly disciplined and supplied with all modern electrical appliances."<sup>(36)</sup>

At the 1902 convention Sylvester, who had assumed the presidency of the Association, again reported on the efforts to entice the federal government to assume responsibility for the National Bureau of Identification. He also reminded everyone present that "another matter of importance in this advanced age is to have the rank and file of the police force in thorough accord with the policy of the head of the department."<sup>(37)</sup> Chief Hopper of Newark, New Jersey, concurred that "Another essential to an efficient police department is proper discipline."<sup>(38)</sup>

The 1903 convention heard continued and uneventful discussion of discipline and national identification systems. At the 1904 meeting, Francis O'Neil of Chicago argued that the constant interaction between officers and "the sordid sides of life" made "...it necessary for the conscientious and energetic Chief of Police to exercise unflagging vigilance to see that his honest efforts are not thwarted by his subordinates."<sup>(39)</sup> Those attending the 1905 session once again heard President Sylvester lament the absence of national police information:

It is unnecessary for me to tell you of the difficulties encountered in obtaining correct statistics concerning police subjects throughout the United States. Figures concerning police forces and violations of law are published annually in some cities, but the manner of preparing and issuing these reports differs so in various places that in an endeavor to compile or aggregate, misleading and deficient results are obtained. There has never been adopted a general and satisfactory scheme for collecting police statistics.

He added that:

There are no statistics showing the extent of the social evil throughout the cities and towns of the country and as to how the matter is governed or controlled by the authorities.

The numerical strength of police organizations in all cities and towns is information much sought after, but complete and reliable statistics on the subject, as I have stated, have never yet been had. It is very desirable that members of this Association do all in their power to afford correct figures and statements, should the government make effort to carry the idea into practical effect.<sup>(40)</sup>

Subsequent annual meetings sustained the parallel questions of discipline and crime statistics. The report of the Bureau of Identification to the 1908 meeting included a brief synopsis of the "Finger Print System of Identification"<sup>(41)</sup> In 1909, the Bureau began to lobby for fingerprints to accompany the Bertillon photographs and measurements.<sup>(42)</sup> Sylvester once again took up the cause of uniform statistics at the 1911 convention:

I also have to refer to the want of uniformity in the preparation of annual reports and statistics. It is especially important that the members of this Association should adopt as a criterion some form of statistical arrangement of their reports which should include population, social conditions and other facts whereby students and officials may aggregate, compare and deduce information that may have some degree of reliability. Comparisons purporting to be authentic are too often made upon reports that are misleading and to injustice of the police generally.<sup>(43)</sup>

At the 1912 convention, Major C.G. Kizer of Norfolk, Virginia, correlated organizational effectiveness and national crime reporting when he argued that the National Bureau of Criminal Identification reports "...added largely to the efficiency of every office that receives them."<sup>(44)</sup> Chief W.E. Giffen of Kansas City, Missouri, encouraged the 1913 convention to develop uniform statistics beyond the Bertillon system. He argued that:

The following information is of great value to all cities for the purpose of comparison, and all annual reports should contain that information; total number of arrests for the given period subdivided into state, or felony and misdemeanor cases, and city, violation of ordinance and minor cases. The nativity of the subjects arrested, occupation of the males, occupation of the females, their educational and social condition, respective ages, arrests in juvenile cases, homicides and the reports of the municipal courts. Annual reports should also contain, for the use of other cities for the purpose of comparison, the number of men on the department, extent of territory covered, and such other information as might be of general use.<sup>(45)</sup>

Chief H.W. Hammil, Giffen's successor at Kansas City, was even more adamant about the necessity for "...an accurate daily, weekly, monthly and annual account of the business that is being done by the Police Department." In his 1915 address to the Association he insisted that:

Efficiency is what we are striving for in all lines of business activities and the development of institutions. It has put all institutions and business on the basis they are today--providing they are progressive and successful financially and in our particular line of business, productive of better results than were obtained by our predecessors.<sup>(46)</sup>

The 1915 meeting also heard Chief J.L. Beavers of Atlanta, Georgia, remind the assembly that "One of the most important things for a police officer is absolute obedience to those who are in authority, and a rigid observance of every regulation made for his conduct. He is not responsible for that order, but for obedience to that order."<sup>(47)</sup> Beaver also assumed that a good officer "...should not hang around and gossip the hours away, when the public is entitled to his services."<sup>(48)</sup>

Emerging from World War I, the Association increasingly occupied itself with the issues of traffic control and "anarchism." The issue of crime statistics never left the agenda, however. In 1921, August Vollmer's presidential address reasserted the need for centralized and uniform crime statistics. He also felt encouraged by the work of the subcommittee which had been appointed in 1920 to review the problem.<sup>(49)</sup> The 1923 convention assessed the negotiations the Association had initiated with the Department of Justice through J. Edgar Hoover, who was enthusiastic about having the Bureau of Investigation assume responsibility for crime reporting.<sup>(50)</sup> Hoover's efforts won him Vollmer's 1924 nomination for honorary membership in the Association.<sup>(51)</sup> By 1927, William Rutledge could address the inherent problems of standardizing crime statistics.<sup>(52)</sup> With the monetary support of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, later collapsed with sundry reformers, the Association published the first edition of *Uniform Crime Reporting: A Complete Manual for Police* in November, 1929.

*Uniform Crime Reporting* is an interesting document. It clearly recognized the statistical limits of the Uniform Crime Reports.<sup>(53)</sup> The statistics were "...intended merely to show the number of offenders committed in each jurisdiction, thus providing both police and public with reliable information concerning the current crime situation."<sup>(54)</sup> The absence of such information "...has made *scientific police management extremely difficult*."<sup>(55)</sup>

The genesis of the Uniform Crime Reports provides an interesting example of institutions which attempted to adjust to a rapidly changing social existence. The chiefs frequently conceptualized their mission as a business. Just as they borrowed their imagery from the rapidly industrializing private sector, so they defined their *raison d'etre* as efficiency. Efficiency became synonymous with disciplining the rank and file to the point that officers became viewed as passive entities possessing absolutely no discretion. The chiefs simultaneously invested themselves and their command officers with all the prerogatives of decision making. By centralizing discretion within the command structure, the chiefs sought an "objective" basis to exercise authority. The Uniform Crime Reports became an attractive measure for the chiefs, one through which they could communicate with both the public and the rank and file.

Given the historical development of the Uniform Crime Reports, their utility is limited. Even within law enforcement organizations, they do not serve as an adequate basis for evaluation community policing program. The Neighborhood Foot Patrol in Flint, Michigan is an excellent example of the limits of Uniform Crime Reporting within a policing experiment.

## **Community Policing: The Flint Experiment**

The Flint Police Department operated solely with motorized or preventive patrols until January 1979, at which point the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation provided funding for the implementation of experimental community-based foot patrols. Flint's Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program was unique in a variety of ways. It emerged from an initiative which integrated citizens into the planning and implementation process through citywide neighborhood meetings in 1977 and 1978. It attempted to ameliorate three distinct problems: (1) the absence of comprehensive neighborhood organizations and services; (2) the lack of citizen involvement in crime prevention; and (3) the depersonalization of interactions between officers and residents. The program began in 1979 with 22 foot patrol officers assigned to 14 experimental areas which included about 20 percent of the city's population. The activity and efforts of the foot officers addressed seven basic goals.<sup>(56)</sup>

1. To decrease the amount of actual or perceived criminal activity.
2. To increase the citizen's perception of personal safety.
3. To deliver to Flint residents a type of law enforcement service consistent with the community needs and the ideals of modern police practice.
4. To create a community awareness of crime problems and methods of increasing law enforcement's ability to deal with actual or potential criminal activity effectively.
5. To develop citizen volunteer action in support of, and under the direction of, the police department, aimed at various target crimes.

6. To eliminate citizen apathy about reporting crime to police.
7. To increase protection for women, children, and the aged.

The Flint program's salient features were a radical departure from both preventive patrol and traditional foot patrol models. Flint's foot patrol officers did not limit their activities to downtown or business areas. They were based in and accessible to all types of socioeconomic neighborhoods. Their crime prevention efforts went beyond organizing neighborhood watches. They attempted to serve as *catalysts* in the formation of neighborhood associations which articulated community expectations of the police, established foot patrol priorities, and initiated community programs. Foot patrol officers also worked in partnership with community organizations and individual citizens to deliver a comprehensive set of services through referrals, interventions, and *links* to governmental social agencies.

The foot patrol officers reconciled their role with the reality of policing; they not only provided full law enforcement services, as did their motorized counterparts, but they made a conscious effort to focus on the social service aspects of their job, bringing problems to a resolution. Since they patrolled and interacted in the same areas day after day, week after week, they developed a degree of intimacy with residents which translated into an effective cooperative relationship.

The Flint Police Department's two forms of patrol operated on the basis of relatively distinct organizational objectives and managerial patterns. Foot officers mobilized citizens in order to provide a matrix within which communities could identify and deal with many of their own problems, including--but not exclusively--crime. With the advice, consent, and direction of citizens, foot officers targeted, addressed, and resolved specific community-level concerns--juvenile alienation, victimization of the aged, neighborhood safety and security, and so on. By comparison, motor officers continued to adhere to the narrowly oriented preventive strategy of "crime control," reacting to events after they occurred.

Motor patrol officers still perceived social service as an annoying interlude between periods of "real" police activity--pursuit, investigation, arrest; foot officers enjoyed a comprehensive, integrated and realistic sense of their role in their emphasis on social service as part of community-based crime control.<sup>(57)</sup> Where motor officers were subject to alternating bouts of inactivity and intense, frenzied periods, foot officers were able to maintain a consistent level of activity. During "down" periods, motor officers did not utilize their skills on a proactive basis; foot officers not only exercised their proactive skills continuously, but they developed and nurtured new talents in their community organizer, linkage and catalyst capacity.

Supervisory personnel within the Flint Police Department adapted their methods of command according to the form of patrol for which they were responsible. Motor patrol supervisors continued to measure performance primarily in numerical terms, response time, and crime reports. They adhered to the semi-military model of authority, with some supervisors infrequently interacting with officers, either individually or collectively. Roll call remained an impersonal exercise which usually lasted approximately 10 minutes and involved all officers and sergeants on a given shift. Sergeants did not necessarily assume responsibility for a stable pool of officers because shift rotations and sector assignments changed frequently. Sergeants reviewed officers monthly. They were compelled to interact with individual officers directly only when performance seemed to be deficient.

Sergeants responsible for foot patrol officers developed a participatory mode of supervision. Supervisors met daily with the eight officers assigned to a specific sector. The 30-minute briefings were used to exchange information and to develop community-based strategies. The sergeants were familiar with the individual officers and knew their accomplishments well. When necessary, sergeants assisted and supplemented individual efforts, but did not interfere with the autonomy each officer enjoyed in defining community problems and programs. The decision-making freedom which sergeants permitted foot patrol officers was reflected in the availability of flexible or "flex" time. Although scheduled for either morning or afternoon shifts, foot patrol officers could elect to work an evening or two instead. The only constraint on such flexibility was that the officer's alternate schedule had to be responsive to the community's needs.<sup>(58)</sup>



The supervisory and management role in foot patrol was less directed and uniform. Supervisory and command personnel served as resources and conduits for foot patrol officers and their communities. They became the repository of citywide information, which facilitated community involvement in the crime prevention and solving process. Under ideal circumstances, the supervisors coordinated and prioritized community activities according to available resources and community needs. They did not impose cumbersome bureaucratic procedures on either foot patrol officers or on community residents.

The Foot Patrol Program bore some striking similarities with policing in "island communities." Line officers exercised tremendous control over their work. Although they were not atheistic in the sense of reverting to a preindustrial mentality, they were more task oriented than their motor patrol colleagues. They adjusted their schedules according to the needs of their neighborhoods, and they nurtured intimacy with their communities and citizens.

Evaluating the Foot Patrol Program was a challenge to the Michigan State University researchers who were sponsored by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Originally, the success or failure of foot patrol, the performance of the experimental program, was defined and conceptualized in terms of the Uniform Crime Reports, the historical legacy of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The research team diligently collected, classified and counted crimes according to the UCR system. In order to do so, it also had to separate out, store and tally from police reports all the calls for service and miscellaneous activities which engaged officers daily.

Although the Foot Patrol Program reduced crime rates by 8.7 percent, the reductions in calls for service were more dramatic. Such calls dropped by 42 percent over the period 1979-82.<sup>(59)</sup> Citizens began handling minor problems themselves or the foot officers acted as informal mediators, negating the need for a formal complaint. In effect, the traditional performance measurement--the Uniform Crime Reports--was not very useful for the researchers simply because it emerged from an historical context entirely different from the operational and management objectives of the Foot Patrol Program. Service calls, which were more consistent with the program's goals, became a more accurate measure of success. In this sense, the logic which had permeated the International Association of Chiefs of Police as it struggled for more than three decades to establish a uniform crime reporting system was inverted by the Flint Foot Patrol Program: statistics were not in themselves important; the absence of statistics--service calls--was critically significant.

## Conclusion

The historical legacy of police professionalism invested command officers with the full range of prerogatives and responsibilities associated with law enforcement.<sup>(60)</sup> The Uniform Crime Reports epitomized and facilitated the process of centralizing discretion within a command structure. The Reports' utility as a management tool was far more important historically than their statistical accuracy. In dialectical fashion, the Reports were simultaneously an expression of police reorganization and the basis upon which command officers, among others, reorganized the police. Uniform crime reporting became the prism through which all organizational judgments refracted. The crime reporting mentality began to preoccupy itself with numbers-quantities, and generated a scurry of statistics designed to measure the performance of line officers--response time, arrests, case closures, etc. The Uniform Crime Reports and associated measures dictated forms of structural change and technological innovation which had little to do with the dynamic, boundless social environment of policing and much to do with insular criteria as defined by command officers. Statistics served as one of the bases for the development of preventive patrol--a form of law enforcement which has quantitative considerations at its ideological core. In effect, Uniform Crime Reports have contributed significantly to the alienation of police institutions from the communities which they serve.

Since the Reports were designed to complement the authoritarian model of policing which emerged in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they are of little value in measuring the success of innovative police programs such as foot patrol. To the extent that experimental programs attempt to delegate responsibility to line officers to solve problems at their lowest levels and to develop productive relationships with communities, the Uniform Crime Reports do little more than inhibit innovation, particularly since they are reactive by nature.

At best the centralization and political distortion of crime statistics reifies social problems and dilutes reality to the point that the police react only to symptoms, not causes. Vandalism, for example, could represent any number of social realities, including community self help.<sup>(61)</sup> Where motor patrol would attempt to target the problem, a proactive form of policing would make an effort to identify and manage the problem. If, hypothetically, racism were the source of some vandalism--a neighborhood trying to dissuade a minority family from moving in--motor patrol would simply attempt to modify its route; a community police officer would make an effort to reassure the community that its integrity would remain intact--its normative patterns would sustain themselves, but that attacks against the new members of the community would not be tolerated. From this perspective, community policing would be less concerned about either generating or responding to disembodied statistics. The Uniform Crime Reports, although useful as *one* indication of community trends, are not a measure of the quality of life.

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## ENDNOTES:

1. The Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Uniform Crime Reporting: A Complete Manual for Police*, 2nd edition (New York, J.J. Little and Ives, 1929), p. vii.
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6. David Seedman and Michael Conzens, "Getting the Crime Rate Down: Political Pressure and Crime Reporting," *Law and Society Review*, 8 (Spring 1974), p. 484.
7. Ibid., p. 485.
8. Alfred Blumstein, "Seriousness Weights in an Index of Crime," *American Sociological Review*, 39 (December 1974), pp. 854-864. See also: Peter Lejins, "Uniform Crime Reports," *Michigan Law Review*, 64 (April 1966), pp. 1011-1030.
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  58. The authors would like to acknowledge the help of Dennis Payne, who generously shared field notes and observations in developing these comparisons.
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