

The Politics of Police Reporting in Indianapolis, 1948–1978*

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Crime statistics from the Indianapolis Police Department are interpreted in light of news reports and interviews. A shift from proactive enforcement (vice, traffic, and juvenile arrests) to reactive enforcement (taking citizen crime reports) begins in the mid-1950s. If they do report offenses, police are blamed for failing to control crime. Eventually, if they fail to report offenses, they are chided for being unresponsive to citizens. Even homicide statistics get manipulated as police are caught in political cross-pressures. It is concluded that police would be better off if relieved of responsibility for defining the size and shape of the crime problem.

INTRODUCTION

The compilation of crime statistics has become an increasingly important function in our society. Broad social policies and specific legal procedures for crime control are based on the national crime trends reported annually in the *Uniform Crime Reports*. These figures are used regularly by politicians, the media, and citizens to support or oppose various issues in criminal justice (e.g., deterrence, the death penalty, community corrections, prisoners' rights, sentencing reforms, etc.). Crime statistics for arrests are important as indices of police practices and enforcement patterns. However, data on the levels of reported crime (offenses known to the police) are of paramount importance since they take on the meaning of "actual amount of crime."

Kitsuse and Cicourel (1963) were the first to make a conceptual shift by arguing that police define the extent of crime more directly than citizens. For many years there had been debate as to the accuracy of officially reported crime, with widespread

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consensus that there was indeed a "dark figure" of crime that was excluded from official statistics. Kitsuse and Cicourel proposed a theoretical framework in which deviance rates (or crime rates) were viewed as the products of persons in the social system who define (legislatures), classify, and record (the police) certain behaviors as deviance (crime or delinquency). From this perspective, crime rates are indices of organizational processes rather than indices of the actual amount of crime. A proper focus then in the study of crime statistics is the police agency with its unique set of organizational, social, and political factors impinging on the crime-reporting process.

This theoretical framework guided the research by Black (1970) on the production of crime rates. The initial study of offense reporting by the police examined complainant-police interactions as potential determinants of reporting patterns. Patrol officers' decisions on whether to file reports were found to have been influenced by several factors: the legal seriousness of the alleged crime, the suspect's deference to the officer, the relational distance between the complainant and suspect, and the complainant's preference for reporting. Another early study in this area reported that the offense-reporting practices of patrolmen met implicit expectations of dispatchers. With isolated exceptions, like sex offenses and assaults, police reported offenses when the dispatchers told them to expect one and a complainant confirmed the call. When dispatchers named no offense, complaints were not reported (Pepinsky, 1976).

Seidman and Couzens (1974) concluded that those who reported crime responded to pressures from supervisors to downgrade crimes. When a chief announced a crack-down, officers used their discretion to report less crime, thereby demonstrating the success of the policy. An illuminating discussion of this issue by Kamisar (1972), however, suggests that more often the pressures are to upgrade offenses, creating crime waves and increasing support for expanded police services. While there are some political risks in this approach, Kamisar notes that police officials have numerous explanations that take them "off the hook," such as understaffing, rampant societal permissiveness, leniency in the courts, improved crime-reporting systems, increased citizen concern and cooperation. The general tendency has been to exaggerate crime (Pepinsky, 1980).

Most of the research on how crime data are reported has focused on measurement problems (e.g., Skogan, 1975). These studies have clearly demonstrated the relationships between different measures of crime. The problem with this line of inquiry, however, is the implication that we can accurately measure the extent of real crime if only the kinks in the system can be ironed out. It is important to keep in mind a warning issued over fifty years ago by Sir Josiah Stamp regarding official statistics: ". . . what you must never forget is that every one of these figures comes in the first instance from the . . . (village watchman), who just puts down what he damn pleases" (1929, pp. 258-259). Official crime statistics must be then seen as dependent on how they are collected and presented.

This study analyzes crime-reporting practices in the Indianapolis Police Department over a thirty-year period (see Parnell and Pepinsky, 1980). During this period of the study (1948-1978), American law enforcement underwent major changes. There were large increases in police personnel and police expenditures. "Professionalism" became a dominant theme. To gain recognition and respect, the police began to emphasize responsiveness and encourage citizen participation in crime control. Most

importantly, the shift from a proactive-watchman style of policing to a professionalized reactive approach led to the police being held more accountable for fluctuations in crime rates (Reiss, 1972). This shift dominated law enforcement in Indianapolis, from enforcement patterns to policy decisions to program evaluations, public relations, and departmental morale. Data for the study came from three sources: newspaper accounts, official crime statistics, and interviews of "knowledgeables." This triangulation highlighted the relationship between response to crime and construction of Index crime rates. A summary of police statistics during the period of the study is presented in Figures 1 and 2.

THE POLITICS OF CRIME REPORTING

Proactivity

Indianapolis Police Chief Rouls, appointed by Mayor Al Feeney on January 1, 1948, announced a "war on crime" early in the year (*Indianapolis Star*, January 10, 1948, p. 4). Later, Feeney declared a war on crime (*Indianapolis Star*, June 30, 1948, p. 4; *Indianapolis Star*, June 30, 1948, p. 11). A "war on crime" meant (a) a crackdown on vice, especially by juveniles, and (b) heavier traffic enforcement, especially against speeders. Thus, the major crime problems of 1948 were young "hoodlums," especially curfew violators, who hung out at "gambling establishments" like the pinball room at the bus station (e.g., *Indianapolis News*, January 23, 1948, Sec. 2, p. 3), and a "soaring" traffic accident rate (*Indianapolis Star*, December 2, 1948, p. 1).

Ironically, it was not the autonomous, social-work-oriented Juvenile Aid Division (JAD) (*Indianapolis News*, September 15, 1948, p. 1; and January 4, 1950, p. 1; *Indianapolis Star*, January 14, 1948, p. 1; December 30, 1948, p. 1; and January 5, 1950, p. 26), but other officers who took large groups of "hoodlums" into custody in the first half of 1949, notably for gaming and disorderly conduct (e.g., *Indianapolis News*, January 22, 1949). Pressure for juvenile enforcement (*Indianapolis News*, January 7, 1950, p. 1; March 9, 1950, p. 1) prevailed, and in 1950, the new Mayor Phillip Bayt changed appointments in and expanded the JAD. By the beginning of 1951, the JAD began to acknowledge that it had a delinquency problem (*Indianapolis News*, January 9, 1951, p. 1). There was no visible impact on reports of major crimes. As Dortch (January 9, 1980) reports, vice operations in Indianapolis have traditionally been "penny ante" stuff. Tied as they were to vice operations, juvenile arrests amounted to major concern over little—teenage drinking, gambling, and loitering.

The same applies to traffic crackdowns. The Traffic Division periodically invented new kinds of campaigns, like that on drivers who failed to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians while turning at intersections (*Indianapolis News*, February 1, 1950, p. 1). But speeding was the recurrent pretext for campaigns, as in the summer of 1950 (e.g., *Indianapolis News*, June 7, 1950, p. 1), especially after radar was introduced in the spring of 1951 (*Indianapolis News*, May 2, 1951, p. 1). This obviously had no more effect on major crime reports than vice operations. Meanwhile, the "fix" was notorious, especially in traffic court (Dortch, January 9, 1980), although the newspapers

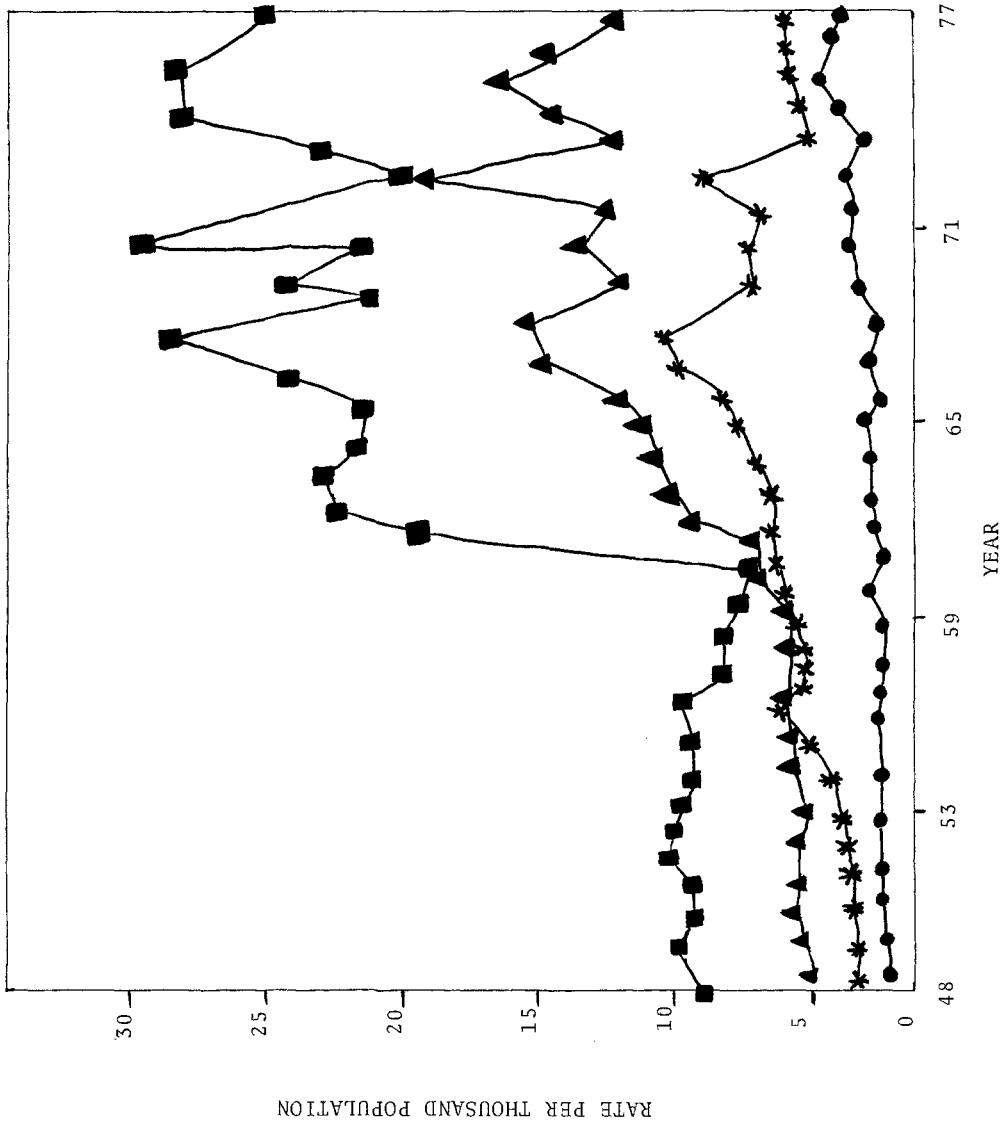


Fig. 1. Index crime in Indianapolis, 1948-1977. ■, Larceny; ▲, burglary; *, auto theft; ●, robbery.

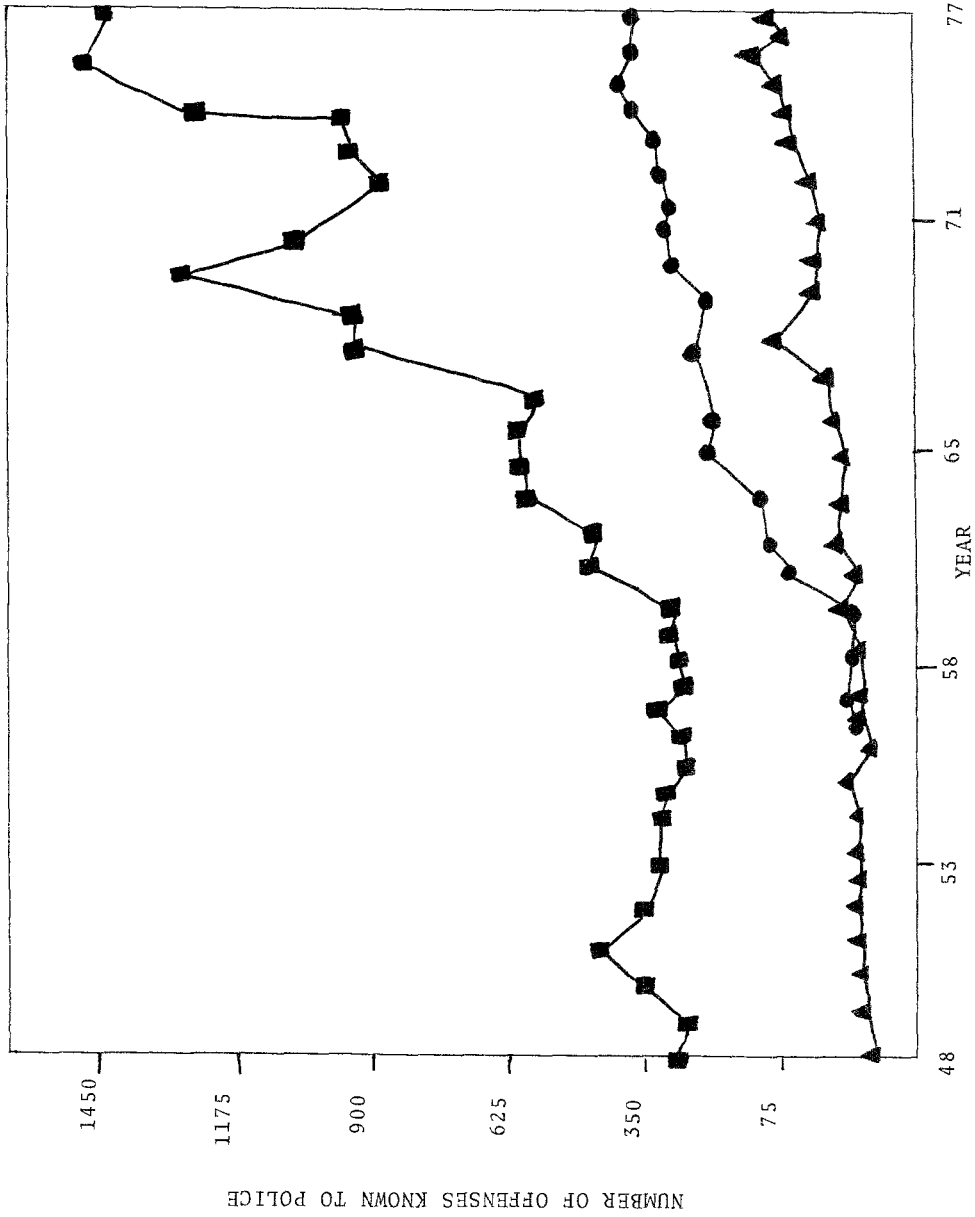


Fig. 2. Index crime in Indianapolis, 1948-1977. ■, Aggravated assault; ●, rape; ▲, murder.

ignored the issue during this period. There were other innovations with no demonstrable impact on crime: creation of a twenty-man Homicide Squad (*Indianapolis News*, January 22, 1948, p. 1), more officers put on foot patrol (*Indianapolis News*, February 6, 1948, Sec. II, p. 1), walkie-talkies (*Indianapolis News*, August 24, 1948, p. 1), tear gas to subdue drunks (*Indianapolis News*, May 14, 1948, p. 22), stripping corporals of rank (*Indianapolis News*, January 7, 1948, p. 19).

Republican Mayor Alex M. Clark was elected in a national wave of rejection of the New and Fair Deals. The character of governmental responses to crime changed little. As he entered office in 1952, Clark had appointed Republican John Ambuhl Chief of Police (*Indianapolis Star*, December 13, 1951, p. 1). Indianapolis had a regular Chief for the first time in half a year. Clark and Ambuhl soon arranged to rotate inspectors without apparent effect (*Indianapolis Star*, March 15, 1952, p. 14; *Indianapolis News*, March 14, 1952, p. 1). Traffic (e.g., *Indianapolis News*, May 23, 1952, p. 1) and gambling (*Indianapolis Star*, December 19, 1952, p. 1) enforcement remained the most visible IPD activities, so much so that the word “crackdown” in traffic enforcement was said to have become meaningless and the emphasis on gambling came under fire. Juveniles remained a leading target; they were arrested more, and now arrests moved from exclusively status violations (notably liquor violations) to burglary (*Indianapolis News*, January 11, 1952, p. 21; and March 10, 1952, p. 1).

We have a picture from 1953–1955 of burglaries steadily increasing and larceny reports generally decreasing. If one notes that an increase in juvenile arrests was again reported in 1954 (*Indianapolis Star*, April 27, 1954, p. 11); that as he was appointed Inspector in March 1953, Noel A. Jones made burglary enforcement a high priority (*Indianapolis Star*, November 28, 1954, Sec. II, p. 1); and that juveniles in particular had been the target of burglary enforcement since 1952, a hypothesis emerges. It may well be that the fluctuations among these property offenses were the result of early experiments, using juveniles as targets, with the politics of reactive enforcement.

Reactivity—The Seeds

With the Mayoral incumbency of Democrat Phil Bayt and his appointment of Frank A. Mueller as IPD Chief in 1956, enforcement priorities were to begin to change toward reactive enforcement. The change was gradual, as traffic, gambling, and juvenile enforcement continued to receive emphasis. The modern version of police professionalism had begun to take hold. Communications technology specifically designed to promote response to citizen complaints had been introduced. Reorganization of the Patrol and Detective Divisions took place with an emphasis on “discipline” in crime reporting.

In January 1957, Chief Mueller visited the Kansas City Police Department and came away determined to make Indianapolis equally responsive to the citizenry. Now, one officer instead of two rode in each squad car, newly equipped with three-way radios to allow conversations among cars, relieved by traffic officers whose motorcycles were now equipped with two-way radios to dispatch them to traffic accidents (*Indianapolis News*, January 27, 1957, p. 15; *Indianapolis Star*, August 14, 1957, p. 1). Rates for all index offenses except auto theft (the one offense that seems immune to the politics of reporting) rose in 1957–1958, leveling off and dropping the next two

years. Larceny, then burglary and robbery led this first major rise and fall or reactive reporting activity. The number of police dispatches jumped dramatically first in 1957 (from 740,000 to almost 900,000), and then again in 1958 (to over one million). IPD figures indicate that the dramatic increases were attributable to more reports of theft of auto accessories (from 36 reports in 1956 to 1020 reports in 1957) and bicycle theft (from 1141 reports to 1465 reports). Indications are that most of the auto accessory thefts—petty larceny—were hubcaps (*Indianapolis Star*, December 12, 1957, p. 3), and that the grand larceny increase was attributable to the bike theft reports being taken. A process that in the history of American policing has proved irreversible was set in motion.

By 1960, it was clear that Chief Reilly, who had succeeded Mueller after his retirement, wanted to build up the IPD considerably. It required that a need be shown for IPD services. The police and the citizenry were being locked into a symbiotic relationship in which police funding rested primarily on data about reactive police work supplied by citizens. As the campaign to generate support opened, it was left to former Chief Mueller to announce the new move, with assurance of Reilly's backing. A front-page headline in the *Indianapolis News*, (March 13, 1962, p. 1) read: "If You Smell a Rat, Call Police." Mueller coined two maxims: "Help police and help yourselves," and "You have to be your brother's keeper." He urged citizens to "report anything suspicious," and encouraged them to use call boxes if they were out on the street.

Apparently, the police were overwhelmed by their own success. Crime reporting rates skyrocketed in 1962. Arrest performance could not begin to keep up with the demand. The police generally retreated into old-fashioned harassment of juveniles, as when Chief Reilly announced that all curfew violators (those under 18 out after 11:00 p.m.) would be taken into custody and either sent home or taken to the Juvenile Center (*Indianapolis News*, April 3, 1962, p. 1). Mayor Boswell tried to shift the onus of responsibility to others in a letter to the *Indianapolis News*, (May 15, 1962, p. 30). He exhorted the media to pay as much attention to the disposition of "dangerous offenders"—those released on bond, on parole from Juvenile Court, and from the Indiana Boys School—as to publicizing street crime itself. Regardless of second thoughts among those involved with law enforcement, the alarm over street crime the police had set off had spread too far to be stopped. As Mayor Boswell's term ended, the shift toward reactive enforcement carried Index rates generally higher, but arrest performance and clearance rates continued to decline.

To deflect criticism of their failure to control crime, the police and the prosecutor swung back to proactive policing—taking out after gamblers and prostitutes (*Indianapolis News*, July 9, 1963, p. 17; October 8, 1963, p. 1). Trouble resulted. As Mayor-elect Barton prepared to take office, the U.S. Attorney told him a grand jury had implicated about forty officers in bribery (*Indianapolis Star*, December 24, 1963, p. 1).

The first year of Mayor Barton's term was a rough one for the IPD. Deputy Chief Noel Jones had been selected to be a strong Chief, but the scandals and charges of corruption beginning in 1964 dominated his reign. As the scandals dragged on in 1965, a poor police image was blamed for difficulty in recruiting enough even to build the IPD up to authorized strength (*Indianapolis News*, August 13, 1965, p. 1). Convinced

that the force was in bad way, the City Council finally came through with major new funding. It not only increased starting salaries by another \$200, but increased the authorized strength of IPD by a full one hundred (*Journal of the Common Council*, August 31, 1965, p. 576). Frustrated by continuing recruiting failures (*Indianapolis News*, May 12, 1967, p. 23), the Council thereafter declined to increase the strength further, but increased starting salaries by another \$225 in 1966 (*Journal of the Common Council*, August 1, 1966, p. 491), and by a whopping (for Indianapolis) \$1,225 in 1967, to \$7,000 (*Journal of the Common Council*, August 28, 1967, p. 609).

Recall that burglary reporting had been a priority of the new Chief's when he had first been appointed Inspector in 1953. While other offenses the Department reported (except, again, auto theft) leveled off from 1965 to 1967, burglary continued an almost geometric rise, from 4% in 1964 to 22% in 1967.

The campaign initiated a decade earlier to expand IPD had begun to pay off. Unfortunately, it had also reinforced the notion that the police themselves are able to control crime. The number of reported crimes cleared by arrest had become firmly entrenched as the primary measure of police performance. By 1967, then, the IPD was more than ever committed to what we know as modern policing. Pressures to reemphasize traffic enforcement were resisted (*Indianapolis News*, January 11, 1966, p. 16). The proportion of juvenile arrests was falling off. Only vice enforcement retained high priority. Continued efforts were made to strengthen auto and foot patrol in high crime areas (*Indianapolis Star*, June 23, 1966, p. 32). So while reactive policing was the modus operandi in Indianapolis as it was nationally, a host of unanticipated problems plagued the law enforcement community and city government.

Reactive Renaissance

After twelve years, a Republican, Richard Lugar, finally became Mayor again. His second day in office, Lugar made it known that he held the Chief of Police responsible for clearing up crime, especially rising house burglaries. The Chief would be replaced if he did not "do the job" (*Indianapolis Star*, January 3, 1968, pp. 1, 15). Chief Daniel Veza generally made a point of appearing tough on street crime. He called on citizens to report anything suspicious and to cooperate in prosecution, and pledged that crime reporting by the IPD would be "honest." He held that the police would be successful in fighting crime so long as they maintained "superior manpower and firepower" (*Indianapolis News*, January 11, 1968, p. 27). However, by the beginning of March, Winston Churchill, who had just been promoted to lieutenant in early January, had been named Chief, and the top ranks had been reshuffled (*Indianapolis Star*, March 5, 1968, p. 12).

Trends in incidence of Index offenses and in arrests during Mayor Lugar's first term moved as on a roller coaster. Everything rose in 1968. All categories except burglary incidence and larceny incidence and arrest held steady or dropped in 1969. Everything but murder and nonnegligent manslaughter rose again in 1970, and except for marginal increases in robbery offenses and arrests, dropped in 1971.

By now, the IPD was caught on the horns of the basic, recurrent dilemma of modern policing. By trying to show citizens how responsive they were to crime, they produced official evidence that the crime problem was getting worse. Thus, the police

were “damned if they do, damned if they don’t.” Reporting increased crime rates meant they were not controlling crime and reporting decreased rates meant they were not being responsive to citizens. At first, Mayor Lugar tried to explain the 1968 increase away as a statistical artifact, arguing that the IPD had merely corrected previous “irregularities” in crime reporting. The IPD force, now grown to over 1,000, had become “rigorous” in its crime reporting. He cited one example of prior practice in particular to illustrate the point that the police formerly had been remiss both in reporting offenses and in inflating their clearance rate. As he told it, not long before his administration, one suspect had been persuaded to “clear” fifty offenses, though many of them had never been reported in the first place. Now, Lugar hoped only for more “rapport” between the police and courts (*Indianapolis News*, December, 1968, p. 25).

Police depend on the credibility of Index trends when they go down, a trend which usually coincides with higher clearance rates, to show that they are succeeding in crime control. The police have lost a powerful political weapon if the public comes to believe that crime statistics are susceptible to manipulation for political purposes. About a month after Lugar’s explanation, the approach to the figures was shifted, and Major Spallina expressed “alarm” over the 15% rise of Index crime in 1968, requiring “redeployment” of forces (*Indianapolis News*, January 9, 1969, p. 2). The Planning and Research Division was assigned the new task of compiling daily crime reports, and immediately reported a decrease in the highest-crime sector (*Indianapolis Star*, April 5, 1969, p. 25). Churchill attributed the drop in crime in 1969 to his take-home squad car program (*Indianapolis Star*, October 7, 1969, p. 12). Riding high, Churchill later claimed that even corruption had ended at I.P.D. (*Indianapolis Star*, May 10, 1970, Sec. II, p. 1).

Having relaxed discipline in the compilation of crime statistics, the IPD was once again “alarmed” to discover that Index crime had climbed 16% in 1970. Now, narcotics use and street crime suddenly become inseparable in the eyes of officials. Perhaps, too, Indianapolis was just caught up in a national trend among big cities. With crime perhaps moving from the inner city to the suburbs (note well: Vietnam veterans were later reported to have brought narcotics to the white middle class about this time; *Indianapolis News*, May 25, 1976, p. 4), patrol reallocation might be needed. Then, in addition, it was claimed that the IPD also suffered from a lack of personnel. Finally, and opening the door to widespread questioning of the impact of federal funding and new programs, Public Safety Director Alan Kimbell attributed some of the rise to “a new crime reporting process involving use of a computer,” the system having been introduced on the new computer the preceding July (*Indianapolis Star*, January 27, 1971, p. 1).

Under the new Uni-Gov Law, consolidating city and county government, Mayors were for the first time permitted to run for reelection. Lugar did so, and won handily. Still, police performance, which was later to become acknowledged as the worst feature of his two-term administration (*Indianapolis News*, July 15, 1976, p. 11), was scarcely a campaign asset. The progress the IPD had made since 1968 in becoming a modern, reactive department again proved to be a two-edged sword. Initially, the press was inclined to take its claims to professionalization and progress in the fight against crime at face value. The IPD drew further attention to itself by touting new, federally

funded programs. With Uni-Gov, it appeared that the IPD might expand to take over law enforcement functions from the Sheriff. But as the Sheriff mounted opposition to the takeover, and as crime rates rose and fell as on a roller coaster, skepticism of IPD claims to progress rose to politically significant proportions by 1971. The reputation was to fall much further in Lugar's second term.

Chief Churchill had actually felt impelled to buy into the hope that the police could eliminate crime. This was a reflection of the national mood that led to passage of the Omnibus Crime control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, and was followed by a massive infusion of federal funding into local policing. The transition to massive federal funding was so rapid that no one had a chance to work out the kind of independent accounting methods that had been developed for private enterprise in the wake of the stock market crash of 1929. The police were thrust into an enormous conflict of interest: to hold themselves accountable for figures they themselves produced. On the one hand, they were pressed to shape these figures to make themselves look good. On the other hand, their success in this effort depended on the belief that their figures were sacred indicators of the "true" state of the crime problem. This kind of situation is bound to produce cognitive dissonance among the police and mistrust by citizens and the media.

Ups and Downs

Reported offenses (except rape, which henceforth was to climb until 1975, then level off, as I.P.D. took measures to support victims) declined again in 1972, began to swing upward in 1973 (although arrests dropped even more than they had in 1972), jumped in 1974 (with arrests, except for auto theft), and started to level off in 1975. Robberies led the trend, from marginal declines in incidence in 1972-73, to a 73% jump in 1974, and a 32% increase in 1975. Robbery arrests declined by 47% in 1973, then increased by 107% in 1974, increasing 18% in 1975.

The IPD was in trouble with the press over mismanagement especially in use of Federal funds (*Indianapolis News*, January 20, 1972, p. 1; *Indianapolis Star*, February 9-16, 1972, p. 1) and from the Sheriff, who was fighting to retain patrol territory after Uni-Gov. In fact, the Sheriff and the police were investigating each other (*Indianapolis Star*, June 15, 1973, p. 15).

It is also interesting to look at homicide data during this time. Figures for this offense are often presumed to be the most valid and least vulnerable to manipulation. Every year since 1972, the IPD has reported more arrests for homicide and nonnegligent manslaughter than offenses, and considerably more arrests than cases cleared. Sixty-six homicide offenses were reported in 1972, 65 cleared, and 91 arrests. By 1974, there were 73 reported offenses and 76 arrests. This year more offenses were also cleared (74) than reported and the clearance rate reported by IPD was even higher than the 74 to 73 ratio at 105.5%! In 1975, 95 offenses were reported, 65 cleared, and 97 arrested. At least these were the initial figures. The IPD revised 1975 figures the following year to 99 reported offenses and 92 arrests. For 1976, 1977, and 1978, the figures for reported offenses and arrests were 67 and 77, 81 and 82 (revised to 83 in 1978 reports), and 76 and 95, respectively.

While it is possible that more than one person can be arrested for a homicide

offense, evidence was not available to document that this was necessarily the case. To the contrary, Indianapolis has a relatively low homicide rate and most homicides appear to result from heated interactions with acquaintances. There are several important quirks in the production of homicide rates—gleaned from an interview at the I.P.D. recordkeeping office—that may help explain the strange statistics above. When there proves to be insufficient evidence for prosecution, an arrest may remain on the books while the clearance may or may not be eliminated. If a homicide is determined to have been justifiable, the clearance “by exceptional means” may be recorded even though the offense report is unfounded. Clearances of offenses reported the preceding year are not carried back. Arresting officers are prone to inflate arrest figures, which departmental statisticians have no mandate to correct; and statisticians deflate the incidence of offenses resting on the authority of prosecutorial decisions. The simple point to be made in this confusing paragraph is that all things are possible, even with respect to homicide rates.

The year 1974 proved disastrous to IPD. On February 24, 1974 the *Star* began an investigative report in IPD corruption that was on its front page nearly every day until the beginning of July, and sporadically thereafter through September. Three reporters, Richard E. Cady, William E. Anderson, and Harley R. Brice, had begun the investigation the preceding summer, aided by information from as many as 45 disgruntled IPD officers. If morale was low, charged the *Star*, it was largely because honest IPD officers knew that corruption was rampant and neither the Chief nor the Prosecutor could be trusted to do anything about it. Payoffs, case fixing, and shakedowns were said to be a routine part of vice enforcement, and allegations extended to the skimming of police charity funds and associations with known burglars and a fence.

Within a month of the onset of the *Star* series, Lugar fired Churchill as Chief and William Leak as Public Safety Director. Lugar’s new appointment as Chief was Kenneth Hale, a former federal law enforcement officer and currently head of a local criminal justice program. The appointment of an outside Chief with at least five years’ law enforcement experience plus prior administrative responsibilities had been newly allowed by the Uni-Gov Law. But to Lugar’s embarrassment, he overlooked another Uni-Gov innovation, that the Chief must be appointed by the Public Safety Director. Leak refused to sign a predated letter of appointment. Outraged at the lack of confidence the outside appointment reflected on the IPD, FOP counsel John C. Ruckelshaus threatened to file suit to void the appointment of Hale. In a flurry of activity, Hale was sworn in as Chief on the morning of March 15, following which Lugar appointed Deputy Director of Public Safety David A. Russell Acting Director, who in turn appointed Hale Chief, which was followed by a second swearing-in ceremony the afternoon of March 15 (*Indianapolis Star*, March 15, 1974, pp. 1, 17; and March 17, 1974, p. 1).

The new Chief tried mightily to improve the image of the IPD. He promptly obtained major grants from the Indiana Criminal Justice Planning Commission, including \$123,300 for continuation of the Youth Services Bureau (*Indianapolis Star*, April 28, 1974, Sec. II, p. 5). He set up a new liaison with the Sheriff and reported “extraordinary progress” in solving problems between the two departments (*Indianapolis News*, May 9, 1974, p. 1). He thoroughly reorganized the administrative structure of the IPD: (a) once again downgrading Traffic to a Branch in the Operations

Division, (b) creating a Service Division to include communications, management of the property room, identification and records, and data processing, (c) establishing a Quality Control Branch to report directly to him, (d) moving the Vice Squad from Investigation to Operations, (e) eliminating "penalty posts" which previously had included the city Lockup, and (f) adopting the evaluation system designed by the Ohio State Patrol (*Indianapolis News*, June 9, 1974, p. 19). He put 30 of 44 recruits on the streets, and increased the number of officers on the streets in all to 672 (*Indianapolis News*, July 2, 1974, p. 41). He had the Mayor order that officers who lived outside the City could no longer take home squad cars. For this, and for allegations that he picked on patrol officers instead of corrupt superiors, he was rewarded by a work slowdown in arrests (*Indianapolis Star*, July 31, 1974, p. 1; *Indianapolis News*, August 3, 1974, p. 1). Also, throughout the first half of the year, hundreds of charges were dismissed in Municipal Court because IPD officers failed to appear (*Indianapolis News*, August 21, 1974, p. 1).

The Reverend William Hudnut assumed the Office of Mayor in 1976 as Lugar headed for the U.S. Senate. Mayor Hudnut sought to improve the IPD image by bringing previously unknown figures to high ranks: Dr. Murrill Lowry to Director of Public Safety, Eugene Gallagher (whose name had only once before appeared in the press, as a Lieutenant announcing plans for the new computer in 1969; (*Indianapolis Star*, March 16, 1969, Sec. II, p. 1) to Chief, and J(oseph) Glen McAtee to Deputy Chief of Operations (*Indianapolis Star*, January 2, 1976, pp. 1, 6). Jack Cottey was made Deputy Chief of Investigations (*Indianapolis Star*, February 3, 1976, p. 17). The extremely bad weather gave the IPD and the Sheriff a respite—a honeymoon period for IPD reorganization—as few calls for service were received (*Indianapolis Star*, January 26, 1976, p. 21).

A much-heralded nationwide decrease in Index offense rates occurred in 1976–77, followed by an increase in 1978. Indianapolis followed the trend. We suspect it is no accident that Indianapolis shared federal funding of crime prevention—as for block watches and burglary prevention. This time, the press caught on readily and embarrassed the police repeatedly.

Reported rape remained steady from 1976–78. Rape arrests fell sharply (36%) in 1976, rose 17% in 1977, fell 3% in 1978.

Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter dropped sharply in 1976, rose partway back in 1977, dropped again in 1978. Arrests dropped in 1976, and climbed just past 1975 levels by 1978.

Larceny reports increased only in 1978 by 3%. Arrests in 1976 declined by 11% according to 1976 figures, but in 1977, the 1976 arrest figure was reduced from 2312 to 2282. Larceny arrests rose by 4% or 5% in 1977, then by 27% percent in 1978. (The new State Penal Code had made "shoplifting" a category of felony "conversion," which term had also replaced "theft.")

Aggravated assault reports behaved strangely. While reports climbed by 22% in 1976, fell 10% in 1977, and rose 11% in 1978, arrests increased by only 5% (to 416), then fell drastically: 26% in 1977, and 69% (to 93) in 1978.

Otherwise incidence and arrests for Index offenses all fell during the period.

As the first year of the new administration closed, the *Star* offered the first sign that the "new" IPD would soon fall from grace again. For the first time, the *Star* began

to question IPD crime statistics. It noted that total Index crime reported to the F.B.I. had actually increased by 11% in the first 11 months of the year (from 44,003 to 45,492), but that IPD's report of a 5.9% decline had been based on subsequent un-founding of offense reports. The un-founding rate had been 5.4% in 1971. By 1975, it had climbed to 12.9%. In the first 11 months of 1976, the un-founding had risen further, to 19.8%. Gallagher admitted that reports had been reclassified, leaving the offenses at the Index level marked "unfounded." He attributed the change to the analysis of an employee hired in October 1975, who was "doing a more thorough job" (*Indianapolis Star*, December 17, 1976, p. 1).

Toward the end of the study period, Deputy Chief (now Chief) McAtee was beginning to disclaim IPD responsibility for crime control. "Additional police won't stop crime." Instead, citizens have to "get involved" (*Indianapolis News*, March 2, 1976, pp. 1, 14). A half year later, the Chief picked up the theme about the fruitlessness of having more police fight crime. Although the number of police on the street would not be reduced, deteriorating economic conditions and failure to increase federal revenue sharing might require police layoffs from a force now down to 1069. This came after a vain protest by officers of the City-County Council's salary offer for the coming year. Officers had left their patrol cars abandoned in the streets, and the Council simply retaliated by eliminating the take-home car program entirely (*Indianapolis News*, November 16, 1976, p. 24).

Other than the extension of team policing, the only significant innovation in IPD operations in 1977—to get police "involved" with citizens—was to give all patrol officers walkie-talkies (*Indianapolis Star*, December 15, 1977, p. 79). Reorganization had caused a breakdown in communications, both within sectors and citywide, due primarily to the elimination of roll calls. The system also promoted buckpassing on who was responsible for reporting and investigating crime across sectors. For his part, Gallagher acknowledged a decline in police morale, but attributed it to a recent disciplinary crackdown and to the loneliness and boredom of beat patrol (*Indianapolis Star*, July 23, 1978, Sec. III, pp. 1, 2). Unrelenting in its attack, the same day as its critique of team policing, the *Star* exposed another feature of IPD crime reporting. The report began:

City police may be in for a bit of a surprise later this year when their annual game of "make the statistics look good" begins with teens admitting to hundreds of crimes at a time in order to boost the crimes-solved rate.

The "surprise" was due from the Prosecutor, who was convinced that the police exchanged confessions for promises of light sentences. For example, there was the case of one youth who in the preceding week had admitted to committing 30 crimes, followed by detectives' claim that his gang was responsible for at least 250 crimes on the Near Northside. Kelley promised to look closely at such cases in deciding on sentence recommendations, and suggested that youths be given lie detector tests of their confessions. Lt. Derrickson, still heading the team policing program, responded that the tests would be illegal, at which Kelley expressed surprise, asserting that the tests had been administered regularly in the past (*Indianapolis Star*, July 23, 1978, Sec. V, p. 5). As in the past when under attack, the IPD reverted to tradition, announcing a vice crackdown in City parks on "panhandlers, pushers, drunks, homosexuals and drug users" (*Indianapolis News*, August 8, 1978, p. 1).

At the end of this study, the *Star* continued with its attack. It was reported that IPD morale was as low as ever because of (a) weak leadership, (b) failure to do anything about the problems of team policing, and (c) the "limbo status" of police promotions, although some "upper brass" had recently gotten title changes "that look like promotions but have nothing to do with merit" (*Indianapolis Star*, October 1, 1978, p. 5). And in a parting shot for the year, the *Star* staff reported:

When we last left the weekly thriller "Police Statistics," a couple of patrolmen told stories of how crimes that really happened never made their way into the log book.

It should be noted that the Indianapolis newspapers are generally known for their strong support of law and order but were simply expressing frustration over the inability to control crime.

DISCUSSION

Several lessons can be drawn from the experience of the Indianapolis Police Department. Perhaps the most important is that once crime statistics are touted as indicators of police successes, it can be expected that they will be viewed as indicators of failure when they happen to add up in the wrong direction. In becoming reactive and dependent on calls from citizens, the police have put themselves in a no-win situation. If reported crime is up, the police are criticized for not deterring and preventing crime. When on occasion rates go down, it is argued that the police are not adequately responding to citizen complaints. Also, the police are in the unusual position of having to demonstrate they are failing in the control of crime to seek additional resources. Given the way the role of the police is currently defined, funding is unlikely to be increased (and maybe even decreased) unless there appears to be a major crime problem. Police and others perpetuate the dilemma by suggesting that police are primarily responsible for regulating crime.

To avoid the use of crime rates as the main measures of police performance, it will be necessary to expand the role definition of policing to include the numerous service and order-maintenance functions performed by the police. It is well known that the police spend most of their time doing things like community relations, crime prevention, responding to calls for assistance, providing information, resolving informally conflict situations, etc. These are facets of law enforcement understood and appreciated by citizens, and they provide legitimate measures for assessing the performance of the police. The problem is that these components of law enforcement do not fit the "cops and robbers" perception of policing. It is surprising that the police have not placed more emphasis on touting measures of these activities as indicators of performance given the energies expended along such lines.

The lesson to be learned here is that more attention needs to be directed toward developing positive crime prevention and service measures. A first step in this process would include citizen input for articulating community and neighborhood expectations (Pepinsky, 1975). In order for these new objectives to be taken seriously by patrolmen, the media, and others, performance of such duties must be incorporated within the reward structures of the organization. Once this is accomplished, these data can begin to be used in conjunction with crime statistics to demonstrate effectiveness and gener-

ate support for law enforcement. Indeed, it would appear that support created in this manner would be more positive and long-lasting than that generated through the creation and perpetuation of fear over rising crime rates. Also, by using various measures of performance there might eventually develop a more realistic understanding of the actual nature of police work.

Another lesson to be drawn from this study is that the police cannot and should not be expected to be objective about the compilation of reported crime statistics. This field is one of the few where those who are evaluated are responsible themselves for gathering their own evaluation data. As we have seen, this can be advantageous in the short run by making new policies and programs appear effective by manipulating crime rates downward for a brief period of time. However, the police can only be expected to manipulate crime levels upward when increased funding is dependent on there appearing to be a "serious crime problem." The problem is further compounded by the willing cooperation of the media in overdramatizing crime and sensationalizing crime news. In the end, this results in distorted perceptions and exaggerated fears of crime as portrayed by television and the print media (see, for example, Davis, 1953). Society loses in this process because of the widespread insecurity and intolerance that is bred; the police lose because citizens come to be cynical and lack confidence in the criminal justice system.

It is clear that any attempt to measure levels of "actual crime" should be the responsibility of someone outside the justice system. While there will always be political and professional differences with respect to defining and measuring crime, private and public organizations other than the police would certainly have less direct vested interests in manipulating crime rates. The victimization studies undertaken by the Census Bureau over the past decade are generally considered to be more reliable and accurate measures of crime trends (e.g., Penick, et al., 1976). Yet these data rarely find their way into media presentations and political debates about crime. It would benefit the field of law enforcement if the F.B.I. took the initiative for eliminating reported crime from their data collection system. Arrest statistics would still be compiled along with service and order-maintenance measures to indicate the enforcement policies and practices of police departments.

The overall politics of city government and law enforcement observed during the study provide lessons for those interested in developing professional, responsible police departments. Political candidates who overemphasize the crime problem with tough law-and-order rhetoric lock themselves into the same trap as the police. A new disciplinarian chief or public safety director is appointed and the vicious cycle of failure is put in motion again. Fear is rekindled among the public and increased reporting ensues, officer morale sags because of departmental changes, arrest/clearance rate plummet, and citizens and the media are angered and become even more cynical. It is unfortunate that crime issues are such politically potent tools since crime is probably the most intractable problem a new officeholder faces. The politician, of course, can rally support around other issues but the police time and again are used as scapegoats and continue to be held singularly responsible for crime. Attempts to professionalize and improve law enforcement are severely hampered under these conditions.

The most disconcerting aspect of the problem described in this paper is that it

precludes a realistic assessment of the crime problem and a reasoned approach to crime control. Continued reliance on misleading crime statistics and placement of blame on the police and justice system allow us to ignore the social, economic, and political factors related to crime. It is not surprising then that simplistic and ineffective crime control policies emerge under these conditions. An initial step toward addressing this issue is to remove the police from the double bind of generating statistics used to document the need for additional support and simultaneously to assess the effectiveness of police operations. Until we begin to generate more meaningful data about crime and law enforcement, we will continue to create rampant fear and misdirected policies.

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