

Working the Street: A Developmental
View of Police Behavior^{*}

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I would like to express my appreciation for the generous cooperation of souls like Dave, MC, Doug, Jim and Bill who, like myself, learned what it means to live in the emotionally hazardous police culture. They shared with me the ugliness and humor, tedium and wonder that exist in the sometimes bizarre and paralyzing world of city streets. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the Ford Foundation grant (administered through M.I.T.) and the Organizational Behavior Research Center at the University of California, Irvine for patial support and full encouragement throughout this research effort.

The people on the street would miss us if we weren't there. I mean they expect us out there and we're part of the whole scene too. That's what everybody seems to miss. We've got a say in what goes on in the streets. You just can't give an honest picture of what happens in society without talking about what the cop on the street does.

A patrolman

WORKING THE STREETS: A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF POLICE BEHAVIOR

PRELUDE

In the midst of derogatory epithets, laudatory salutations and apathetic silent-American acquiescence, the "man" acts out a curious societal role. To some, a policeman is a "fucking pig", a mindless brute working for a morally bankrupt institution. To others, a policeman is a courageous public servant, a defender of life and property, regulating city life along democratic lines. To most, a policeman is merely an everyday cultural stimulus, tolerated, avoided and ignored unless non-routine situational circumstances deem otherwise. Yet, virtually all persons in this society can recognize a policeman, have some conception of what it is he does, and, if asked, can share a few "cop stories" with an interested listener.

Fundamentally, a police officer represents the most visible aspect of the body politic and is that aspect most likely to intervene directly in the daily lives of the citizenry. If one considers the President to be the "head" of the political system, then the patrolman on the street

must be considered the "tail". The critical and symbolic nature of the police role in society is perhaps best illustrated by a number of child socialization studies indicating that it is the head and tail of a political system which are its most salient aspects--the features most likely to be learned first as a child develops an awareness of his surrounding environment (Hyman, 1959; Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton and Dennis, 1969, 1967; Brown, 1971).

Given this rather dramatic position in society, it is somewhat surprising that social scientists have, until recently, largely ignored the police. In particular, little research has been devoted to the everyday standards of police behavior. The few studies we do have tend to confirm an occupational stereotype of the police as a conservative, defiled, isolated and homogenous grouping of men bound together perceptually through a common mission (Rubenstein, 1973; Reiss, 1971; Wilson, 1969; Neiderhoffer, 1967; Skolnick, 1966). Indeed, this stereotype seems to run deeply through all societies regardless of social, economic or political orientations. It may be, in the discerning words of Trotsky, "There is but one international and that is the police". And whether or not one views the police as a good or evil force in society does not detract from the prevailing sentiment subscribing to this peculiar form of occupational determinism.

Occupational characterization is, of course, not unknown. Professors, doctors, hangmen, insurance salesmen, corporate executives all have their counterparts in the popular culture. Yet, what is of interest here is the recognition by the police themselves of the implied differences. According to one knowledgeable observer, a former Chief of Police:

The day the new recruit walks through the doors of the police academy he leaves society behind to enter a profession that does more than give him a job, it defines who he is. For all the years he remains, closed into the sphere of its rituals...he will be a cop. (Ahern, 1972:3)

Policemen generally view themselves as performing society's dirty work. Consequently, a gap is created between the police and the public. Today's patrolman feels cut off from the mainstream culture and stigmatized unfairly. In the percussive words of one young patrolman:

I'll tell ya, as long as we're the only sonsabitches that have to handle ripe bodies that have been dead for nine days in a ninety degree room or handle skid row drunks who've been crapping in their pants for 24 hours or try to stop some prick from jump'en off the Liberty Bridge or have to grease some societal misfit who's trying to blow your goddamn head off, then we'll never be like anyone else...as far as I can see, no one else is ever gonna want to do that shit. But somebody's gotta do it and I guess it'll always be the police. But hell, this is the only profession where ya gotta wash your hands before you take a piss!¹

In short, when a policeman dons his uniform, he enters a distinct subculture governed by norms and values designed

to manage the strains created by his unique role in the community. From the public point of view, a policeman is usually treated as a faceless, nameless "Rorschach-in-blue" with persons responding either favorably or unfavorably according to ideological predisposition or situational imperative. Yet, a policeman's response to the cornucopia of civilian manners and mores follows a somewhat more orderly and acquired pattern. Thus, policemen learn--in a manner quite similar to the way in which all occupations are learned--characteristic ways of conducting themselves on the street, devices for organizing work routines about their perceived areas of responsibility, and methods of managing their own careers vis-a-vis the police department. The learned guidelines and rules police officers (in particular, patrolmen) develop to handle these problematic areas define the everyday meaning of policing and, as such, are the subject of this paper.

Contextual Issues

If one takes seriously research findings regarding esoteric subcultures, social scientists' interested in police behavior are somewhat limited in their choice of methodological strategy. The direct approach will not work because the police, like other stigmatized groupings, have invented sophisticated coping mechanisms designed to present a certain front to the non-police world (e.g., special interface divisions like Community Relations or

Public Information, special events such as Officer Friendly programs in the public schools or citizen ride-along programs, extreme bureaucratic red-tape, and, of course, the open hostility displayed by police in general to the critical questioner). Therefore, if we are to gain insight into the police environment, researchers must penetrate the official smokescreen and observe directly the social action in social situations which, in the final analysis, represents the reality of police work.

While observation of the police in naturally occurring situations is difficult, lengthy and often threatening, it is imperative. Unfortunately, most research to date relies almost exclusively upon interview-questionnaire data (e.g., Bayley and Mendlesohn, 1969; Wilson, 1968), official statistics (e.g., Webster, 1970; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967) or broad-ranging attitude surveys (e.g., Sterling, 1973; McNamara, 1967). The very few sustained observational studies have been concerned with specific aspects of police behavior patterns (e.g., Skolnick, 1966--vice activities; Reiss, 1971--Police-citizen contacts; Bittner, 1967; Cicourel, 1967--police encounters with "skid row alcoholics" and juveniles, respectively). This is not to say that these diverse investigations are without merit. Indeed, without such studies we would not have even begun to see beneath the occupational shield. Yet, the

paucity of indepth police-related research--especially from an "insider's" perspective--represents a serious gap in our knowledge of a critical social establishment.²

The data for the following analysis are drawn from a participant-observation study I conducted in Union City.³ In July of 1970, I entered the Union City Police Academy and, upon graduation, thirteen weeks later, joined the patrol division as an armed backseat observer with many training teams each comprised of a veteran and rookie policeman. For approximately the following six months, I worked a regular departmental schedule, alternating my observational excursions among all work shifts and precincts. During this period, my academy classmates concluded their field training and were assigned to a specific district with a permanent patrol partner.⁴

In January of 1973, I returned to Union City for a follow-up study. During this period (lasting approximately two months) I interviewed both formally and informally the members of my Academy class and again spent a good deal of time as an observer in various patrol units. The purpose of this part of the study was to check the accuracy of my original analysis as well as to discover what changes, if any, had occurred in my Academy cohorts two and one-half years down their respective career paths.⁵

In essence, what follows is an account of the organizational socialization process associated with the

patrolman's role in an urban police department. Such a process provides, when efficacious, the new member with a set of rules, perspectives, prescriptions, techniques and/or tools necessary for him to continue as a participant in the organization. In Bakke's (1950, 1955) seminal terms, the fully socialized actor is "fused" to the organization by the structural and interpersonal bonds growing from task, status, communication and reward networks in which the individual is located.

Somewhat arbitrarily, I will treat this fusion process from three distinct perspectives. Part I describes briefly the sequence, pace and associated organizational features of the socialization process. Part II sketches out the critical occupational perspectives developed as the new member passes through his initiation rituals. These career perspectives are not concerned directly with the everyday behavior of patrolmen, but rather deal with certain long-range, occupationally-relevant orientations. In a sense, they provide a sort of occupational ideology or credo which serves to assist the patrolman in developing a conception of who he is and what he is to do. Finally, Part III delineates a few of what I will call patrolmen meta-prescriptions. These are the work-related rules or operating axioms which define the boundaries of the patrolman's activity space. To be sure, like occupational perspectives, they are learned and consensually-validated by most officers, but these meta-prescriptions are more

specific and provide the patrolman with established conceptions as to the "how" of his work.⁶

I. THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: THE POLICE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

The development of a community of purpose and action among police officers is characterized as a four-phase socialization process. While these stages are only analytically distinct, they serve as useful markers for describing the route traversed by a recruit. The sequence is related to the pre-entry, admittance, change and continuance phases of the organizational socialization process and are labeled choice, introduction, encounter and metamorphosis, respectively.⁷

A. Choice

What sort of man gravitates toward and is selected for a police career? The literature notes that police work seems to attract local, family-oriented, military-experienced, high-school educated and working class whites (Neiderhoffer, 1967; President's Commission, 1967; Watson and Sterling, 1969). Importantly, the authoritarian syndrome which has popularly been ascribed to persons selecting police careers has not been verified by empirical study (McNamara, 1967; Sterling, 1972). Generally, the available literature supports the contention that the police occupation is viewed as simply one job among many and considered roughly along the same dimensions as any job choice.

While my research can add little to the above picture, several qualifications are in order which provide a greater understanding of the particular occupational choice process. First, the security and salary aspects have probably been overrated. In police work, a pervasive cultural stereotype involving adventure, romance and societal value (i.e. performing a function that has point, weight, interest and consequence to the community) exists and is shared by virtually all who join the police ranks. Relatedly, the out-of-doors, non-routine and masculine (i.e. "machismo") task aspects of the work--as portrayed by the media--are undeniably strong inducements for young men selecting a police career. All recruits stressed these features as the primary virtues of the occupation. Certainly the choice is buttressed by the security and salary properties--as a sort of necessary but not sufficient precondition--but the occupational choice rests on the more glamorous concerns. Perhaps this pre-entry consensus among police aspirants can best be called a "meaningful-work" expectation.

Second, the stretched-out screening factor associated with police selection is a critical aspect of the socialization process. From the filing of the application blank to the telephone call which finally informs the recruit of his acceptance into the department, the individual passes through a series of events which serve

to impress him with the sense of being admitted into an "elite", "top-notch" or "tough-to-make" organization.⁸ The written and physical examinations, the oral board, the psychiatric interview and, in particular, the background investigation (in which an applicant's friends and relatives are questioned about the most delicate of matters) demonstrate to the would-be officer the department's serious interest in him--i.e., they are willing to spend a great deal of time and money before he is allowed to pass through the organizational portals.⁹ Few men move through all sequential stages of the process--often taking up to a year or more--without becoming committed earnestly to a police career. As such, the various selection devices, if successfully surmounted, increase the person's self-esteem and cement the neophyte's evaluation of the police organization as an important and difficult place to work.

Finally, as in most organizations, the department is depicted to individuals who have yet to take the oath of office in its most favorable light. A potential recruit is made to feel as if he were important and valued by the organization. Furthermore, virtually all recruitment occurs via generational or friendship networks involving on-line police officers and potential recruits. Hence the individual receives personalized encouragement and support which help sustain his interest during the

formidable screening procedure. Such links begin to attach the would-be policeman to the organization long before he actually joins.

B. Introduction

Once the individual has "made it", the department quickly and somewhat rudely informs him that he is now a "probie" or a "greenpea" and until he has served his six-month probationary period he can be severed from the department's membership rolls at any time without warning, explanation or appeal.¹⁰ This sort of "lowest-of-the-low" position reserved for incoming participants is common to many organizations, but in the paramilitary environment of the police department, the ironic shift from 'successful aspirant' to a position something akin to a wartime draftee is particularly illuminating to the new member.

As he stands in long lines with other recruits waiting to receive his departmental issues (rulebook, badge, Smith and Wesson thirty-eight calibre revolver, ticket book, mace, rosewood nightstick and other symbols of police status) or spends several hundred dollars in a designated department store buying uniforms (some of which he will never wear again following his academy training period), the recruit begins to acclimatize himself to the formal, mechanical and arbitrary bureaucratic features which will characterize this career. Indeed, even the swearing-in ceremony is carried out en masse, with the words

of the civil service official barely audible above the din of a busy public building. Thus, the sheath of uncritical attitudes toward the department--which served the recruit well during the arduous screening process--begins to show wear as he gradually develops notions of his role in the organization from personal experience rather than from aggrandizing accounts told him by others.

For most recruits, their first sustained contact with the police subculture occurs at the Academy. Surrounded by forty to fifty contemporaries, the novice is introduced to the austere and sometimes imperious discipline of the organization. Absolute obedience to departmental rules, rigorous physical training, dull lectures devoted to various technical and organizational aspects of police work and a ritualistic concern for detail characterize the Academy. A recruit soon discovers that to be one minute late to a class, to utter a careless word in formation or to be caught walking when he should be running may result in a "gig" or "demerit" costing a man an extra day of work or the time it may take to write a long essay on, say, "the importance of keeping a neat appearance".¹¹

Wearing a uniform which distinguishes the novice from "real" policemen, recruits are expected to demonstrate group cohesion in all aspects of Academy life. The training staff actively promotes solidarity through the use of

group rewards and punishments, identifying garments for each recruit class, interclass competition, aggregate chastisement for the errors of one or a few and cajoling the newcomers--at every conceivable opportunity-- to "show some unity". It is no exaggeration to state that the "in-the-same-boat" collective consciousness which arises when groups are processed serially through a harsh set of experiences was ~~as~~ refined in the Union City Police Department as in other institutions such as military academies, fraternities or medical schools.

The formal content of the training academy is almost exclusively weighted in favor of the more technically-oriented side of police work. A few outside speakers are invited to the Academy, but the majority of class time is filled by departmental personnel describing the more mundane features of the occupation. To a large degree, the Academy may be viewed as a didactic sort of instrumentally-oriented ritual passage. Yet, the novices' overwhelming eagerness to hear what police work is "really like" results in considerable time devoted to "war stories" (alternatively called "sea stories" by some officers) told at the discretion of the many instructors. Such "war stories" provide the recruit with an opportunity to begin learning, or, more properly, absorbing the tradition which typifies the occupation.

By observing and listening closely to police stories and style, the individual is exposed to a partial "organizational history" which details certain personalities,

past events, places and implied relationships which the recruit is expected eventually to learn. The social psychological correlates of this history are mutually held perspectives toward certain types of persons, places and things which compromise the "objective reality" of police work. Critically, when "war stories" are presented, discipline within the recruit class is relaxed and a general atmosphere of camaraderie is maintained. The near lascivious enjoyment accompanying these informal respites from routine serve to establish congeniality and solidarity with the experienced officers in what is normally a rather uncomfortable environment. Clearly, this is the material of which memories are made.¹²

Despite these important breaks in formality, the recruit's early perceptions of policing are formed in the shadow of the submissive and often degrading role he is expected to play. Long, monotonous hours of static class time are required; a seemingly endless set of examinations on, for example, the organization of the administrative services bureau or the fundamentals of fingerprinting are daily features of academy life. Out-of-date greyish-white documentary films on such topics as childbirth, riot control or the judicial system are shown with boring regularity. Meaningless assignments such as recopying class lecture notes consume valuable off-duty time. Various mortifying events are institutionalized throughout the training program (e.g., each week a class "asshole" was selected and presented with

a trophy depicting a gorilla dressed as a policeman). And, of course, relatively sharp punishments are enacted for any breach of academy regulations.

The net result of such "stress" training is that the recruit begins to alter his high but unrealistic attitudes about the department. Although he learns little about policing per se, he learns a great deal about the formal and informal operations of the department. Importantly, he learns that the formal rules and regulations are applied inconsistently. As in other highly regulated social systems, behavior that is punished in one case is ignored in another. To the recruits, academy rules become normative behavioral prescriptions which are to be coped with formally but informally dismissed. The newcomer learns that when the department notices his behavior it is usually to administer a punishment, not a reward.

C. Encounter

Following Academy training, a recruit is introduced to the realities and complexities of policing through his Field Training Officer (hereafter referred to as the FTO).¹³ Representing the first partner assigned to a rookie policeman, the FTO is a veteran officer who has been working patrol for at least several years and is the single most important person shaping the behavior of the novice. For it is through the eyes of his experienced FTO that the newcomer begins to learn the subtle nuances of the police function and develop notions about the kinds of

behavior which are appropriate and expected of him within his new social setting.

His other instructors in this phase are almost exclusively his fellow patrolmen working the same precinct, shift and district--his squad. While his sergeant may occasionally offer tips on how to handle himself on the "street", the supervisor is more notable for his absence than for his presence. When the sergeant does seek out the recruit it is probably to inquire as to how many hazardous traffic violations the "probie" has written or to remind him to keep his hat on while out of the patrol car. As a matter of formal policy in Union City, the department expected the FTO to handle all recruit uncertainties. Informally, the other members of the squad strictly adhere to the code which delegates training responsibility to the FTO. Certainly among members of the squad there is intense interest on the progress, skill and inclinations of the rookie, but few experienced officers will give specific advice to the newcomer unless requested explicitly to do so by the FTO. Of course, most recruits are bombarded with general advice from "street-wise" officers (e.g., "Now that you're done with that verbal strangulation that passes for training, you can buy a dose of Preparation H and sit back and relax for awhile." Or, "We don't eat in this district 'cause the poison factories will kill ya faster than your tin badge will rust."), but no veteran officer would consider

telling a rookie who was not under his direct charge how to handle a particular call or what to do in a specific instance. To do so would violate the trust and guarded independence existing among experienced officers in the squad.

During the protracted hours spent on patrol with his FTO, the recruit is instructed as to the "real nature" of police work. He is first instructed by word and deed as to the worth of his academy preparation. As one persuasive FTO told me:

I hope that academy didn't get to you. Its a bunch of bullshit as far as I can tell...Most of those guys they've got working there haven't been on the street for ten years. They can't teach ya nothing 'cause they don't know what its like anymore. Only a working cop can teach you that the laws and procedures don't translate very easily to the action on the street.

And, as if behavioral confirmation were required, the rookie discovers on his first tour of duty that he does not have the slightest idea of his district's physical and social terrain or how to handle an unruly drunk or even how to quickly spot a traffic violator. His academy training soon represents merely something that all policemen endure and has little, if anything, to do with "real" police work. Consequently, the academy experience for the recruits stands symbolically as their rites de passage permitting them access to the occupation. That the experienced officers confirm their negative evaluation of the academy heightens the assumed similarity among the recruits and

the veterans and serves to facilitate the rookies absorption into the squad.

For the novice policeman, the first few months on patrol are an extremely trying period. He is slightly fearful, ill at ease and woefully unprepared for both the routines and eccentricities of police work. While he may know the rudimentaries of arrest or search and seizure, the fledging patrolman is perplexed and uncomfortable in his application. Encounters with the hostile public leave him cold and apprehensive. At first, the squawk of the police radio transmits only meaningless static. The streets of his sector appear to be a maze through which only an expert could maneuver. The use of report forms seems inconsistent and confusing. And so on. It is commonplace, indeed expected, for the rookie to never make a move without first checking with his FTO. By watching, listening and mimicking, the neophyte gradually learns characteristic ways to deal with the objects of his occupation--the rowdy bar, the "brass" in the department, the centrally located park, the hippie, the family squabble, the patrol unit in an adjacent district and the criminal justice complex itself.

Critical to the practical on-the-street learning process is the recruit's own developing repertoire of experiences. These events are normally interpreted to him by his FTO and other veteran squad members. Thus the "reality shock" of being "in-on-the-action" is absorbed

and defined by the recruit's fellow officers. As a somewhat typical example, one newcomer, at the prodding of his patrol partner, "discovered" that to explain police actions to a civilian invited disrespect. He explained:

Keith was always telling me to be forceful, to not back down and to never try and explain the law or what we are doing to a civilian. I didn't really know what he was talking about until I tried to tell some kid why we have laws about speeding. Well, the more I tried to tell him about traffic safety, the angrier he got. I was lucky to just get his John Hancock on the citation. When I came back to the patrol car, Keith explained to me just where I'd gone wrong. You really can't talk to those people out there, they just won't listen to reason.

To a determining degree, these experiences are dependent upon the recruit's FTO assignment. If, for instance he is assigned to an "active" central precinct, his learning will occur at a considerably faster pace than an academy cohort assigned to a "slow" suburban (sometimes called "cow") precinct. Not only will his learning proceed at a quicker tempo, but the content will be vastly different. In large measure, the patrolman is tied inextricably to the territory he patrols. His world and related occupational identity therefore rarely extend beyond his assigned police jurisdiction (see Part III).

Yet, patrolmen do have a common set of experiences which thread their way through the fabric of their early police career. These experiences occur, to some degree, independently of the city geometry which determines the boundaries and cadence of police work. And it is from these early "core" experiences that the highly valued

subcultural norms are carved.

In general, the first few months on the "street" is a stimulating, exciting and rewarding period for the recruit. He is busy learning a district and working out solutions for the everyday problems of his field. As one young officer noted:

God, those first couple of months are amazing. You need to learn everything...like how to walk and how to talk and how to think and what to say and see.

While the recruit is busy absorbing a myriad of novel experiences, his partner is appraising his colleague's responses to certain situations. Aside from assisting the recruit with the routines of patrol work, the training officer's main concern is in how the rookie will handle the "hot" calls (or in the vernacular of the seventies, the "heavy" call). In general, such calls represent those situations in which the experienced officer knows may result in bodily harm to himself or his partner. They may be dispatched calls such as "man-with-gun", "tavern brawl", "domestic disturbance" or "in-progress robbery". They may involve a hair-raising automobile pursuit of a fleeing suspect across the length of the city. Or they may be those rare "on-view" situations in which the partnership must take ready action. But regardless of their origin, "hot" calls symbolize everything a policeman feels he has been prepared for. In short, they call for "police work" and such work is anticipated by patrolmen with

both pleasure and anxiety. Clearly, a recruit's performance in such situations is in a very real sense the measure of the man. An articulate patrolman put in the following manner:

The heavy ones are ultimately our only rationale for being. You could give most of what we do around here to any idiot who could put up with the insanity that passes for civilized conduct. But you know that old John Q. Citizen isn't gonna put his ass on the line just to stop a couple of strung-out motherfuckers from tearing each other up. But we're expected to be willing to do it everytime we go out there... Now I don't necessarily enjoy going around putting guys in the hospital and laying my family jewels out for any jerk to kick around. But I'll tell you that any street cop who's worth the taxpayer's money just better be willing to mix it up anytime there's action coming down or that sonofabitch is gonna get walked on by the assholes out there, as well as the assholes inside this department. When I'm jumping outta that goddamn patrol car with my stick ready, any partner of mine better be right behind me or his ass will be in a sling when the whole thing's over.

While hot calls are relatively rare on a day-to-day basis, their occurrence signals a behavior test for the recruit. To pass, he must be willing to use his body as a weapon, to fight if necessary. Or more generally, he must be willing to share the risks of police work as perceived by the experienced officers. Furthermore, he must demonstrate this willingness by placing himself in a vulnerable position and pluckily "backing-up" his FTO and/or other patrolmen. Through such events, a newcomer quickly makes a departmental reputation that will follow him throughout his career.¹⁴

At another level, testing the recruit's propensity to partake in the risks which accompany police work goes on continuously within the department. For example, several FTO's were departmental celebrities in Union City for their training techniques. One officer made it a daily ritual to have his recruit write parking citations in the front of the local Black Panther Party headquarters. Another was prominent for requiring his recruit to "shake-out" certain "trouble" bars in the rougher sections of town (i.e., check identifications, make cursory body searches and possibly roust out customers ala the French Connection). Less dramatic, but nonetheless as important, recruits are judged by their FTO's as to their speed in getting out of the patrol car, their hesitation (or lack of it) when approaching a "suspicious character", their composure during a high-speed chase or their willingness to lead the way up a darkened stairwell. The required behaviors vary from event to event; however, based on an ex-post-facto evaluation of the situation (e.g., Was a weapon involved? Did the officers have to fight the suspect? How many other patrolmen were on the spot? What particular part of the district did the event occur? etc.), a novice determines his acceptance into the cadre of his fellow officers. While some FTO's actively promote these climatic events, most wait quietly for such situations to occur. Such behaviorally-demonstrated commitment to one's colleagues is a particularly

important stage in the socialization process. To the FTO, he has watched his man in action and now knows a great deal more about his occupational companion.

Aside from what I will call (for lack of a better term) this "back-up" test applied to all recruits, the other most powerful experience in a recruit's early days on patrol is his first arrest ("breaking-the-ice"). Virtually all policemen can recall the individual, location and situation surrounding their first arrest. Although unexpected contingencies sometimes interrupt an otherwise orderly progression, a rookie's first arrest is usually based upon his FTO's evaluation of his learned police skills. If progress is normal, the FTO will allow the recruit after a month or so of partnership to take charge of an entire arrest procedure. From the particulars at the scene (e.g., the decision to arrest, the gathering of incriminating evidence, the interviewing of witnesses, the pro forma issuance of the arrestee's rights, etc.), to the booking and jailing procedures (e.g., fingerprinting, report writing, strip searching, etc.), the FTO will remain in silent repose, neither suggesting short cuts nor insuring that all the technicalities are covered. The FTO and even the squad sergeant are almost ceremonial in their conspicuous silence. The recruit is not evaluated during this trial-like process as to his boldness or reticence but is judged on his appreciation for thoroughness and detail--avoiding any "mistake" which might cast

a disparaging light on himself, on his FTO or his sergeant.

It is such occurrences that determine the recruit's success in the squad and, by implication, in the department. To a large extent, both the "back-up" test and the first arrest are beyond the control of the newcomer. The fact that both occur somewhat at the discretion of the FTO underscores the regularity of the socialization process. In effect, these knife-edge experiences demonstrate to the recruit his new status and role within the department and denote to his immediate colleagues that he is a member of the working police. For, after passing through this regulated sequence of events the recruit can say, "I am a cop!"

D. Metamorphosis

The FTO period in Union City lasts approximately three months. At the end of that time, each recruit is assigned to a permanent squad in the same precinct but generally not in the same district as he worked with his training colleague. As near as my experience can tell, most of these reassignments are based (like the assignments out of the academy) on the peculiar manpower requirements existing in the department at any particular time. Thus, some men receive permanent assignments immediately following the three month period, while others wait from several weeks to several months before leaving their FTO. Yet as long as the recruit remains with his FTO, his meta-

morphosis, both socially vis-a-vis other officers and psychologically vis-a-vis his own identity, will be incomplete. For the new officer to break the stigma of "trainee" or "rookie", he must be first assigned a role in which dependency ties are not institutionalized and his position in a patrol partnership is more or less equalized in terms of responsibility.¹⁵ As one officer suggested:

In this job, the first time it really hits you that this job ain't so easy is when your working a car with some joker and there's no distinction between just who is senior man and who is junior man. Boy, you realize pretty quick that if something happens it is totally up to you and your partner. No more are you waiting to be told what to do. You're on your own. That's the real stuff 'cause you've got to take responsibility for what happens.

A few officers may be assigned a permanent district car directly following their FTO period (notably those with departmental connections), but most receive what are called relief assignments.¹⁶ A relief assignment means that the officer will work shifting sectors with a variety of partners until his sergeant sees fit to assign him a permanent district car. For most, this assignment comes within the first year on the job. In a way, each time the man receives a new assignment with a different squad he must start the encounter cycle anew. However, he has a departmental reputation which precedes him and now has some experience to smooth over such transitions.

With the reality shock of entry well behind him, the newly assigned squad member has at least six-months invested in his police career. Furthermore, others are beginning to enter the patrol division with the "rookie" label and no longer is he on the bottom rung of the experience ladder. Thus the man begins gradually to settle into the relatively slow-moving steady repetitious monotony that is a special characteristic of police work. He begins to realize that his work consists primarily of performing routine services and administrative tasks--the proverbial clerk in the patrol car.¹⁷ Indeed, he discovers that he is predominantly an order-taker--a reactive member of a service organization. For example, most officers never realized the extent to which they would be "married to the radio" until being on the receiving end of a stern lecture or a formal reprimand for failing to respond to the dispatcher. During the FTO period, the burden of such a blunder would of course fall on one's experienced trainer with the recruit escaping with only a mild warning. But once on the "street" as an equal in a squad car, no such allowances are made for inexperience.

It is important to note however that the distinction between working relief and working a regular district car is critical and real to the patrolman. Moving to a permanent car is a significant career step for all officers for it implies a degree of acceptance and stability within one's own squad. Furthermore, it is only with a permanent car that an officer can ever hope to properly begin

learning the territory in his sector. The critical nooks, trouble spots and social peculiarities that are of manifest importance to policemen cannot be grasped when one spends his time rotating among various locales in the city or even in a district. Such territorial knowledge is critical for the patrolman's sense of safety as well as his perceived comfort. Indeed, he can never be at ease unless he has a clear idea of place and this takes time to acquire.

Despite the relative peaceful and routine nature of much policing, the unpredictable elements of working a regular patrol shift provide self-esteem and stimulation for the officers. To classify the police task as bureaucratically routine and tiresome ignores the psychological omnipresence of the "good pinch" (felony arrest) or "hot call". In fact, it is precisely the opportunity to exercise his perceived police role (i.e., "real" police work) that gives meaning to the occupational identity of patrolmen. Operationally, this does not imply that patrolmen are always alert and working hard to make the "good pinch". Rather, it simply suggests that the unexpected is the primary aspect of the job that helps maintain the patrolman's self-image of performing a worthwhile, exciting and dangerous task. To some degree, the anticipation of the "hot call" allows for the crystallization of his personal identity as a policeman.

Still, one of the ironies of police work is that the recruits were attracted to the organization by and large through the unrealistic expectation that the work role would be exciting and dramatic. Yet, the experienced officer knows that such activities are few and far between. Once the man has mastered the various technical and social skills of policing (e.g., learning the district, developing a set of mutual understandings, with his partner, knowing how and when to fill out the plethora of various report forms, etc.), there is little left to learn about his occupation which can be transmitted by formal or informal instruction. Consequently, the patrolman must then sit back and wait, absorb the subjective side of police work and let his experiences accumulate.¹⁸

Patrolling the street on a regular basis can be regarded from several perspectives. But, for the purposes of this section, it is perhaps best to describe this learned skill first in the words of the police themselves. One officer, a hardened three-year veteran, responded to my query about how he presently patrols his district in the following manner:

That's a rough question. I guess what I've picked up is a certain toughness on the street. I never ask anybody twice to do something. Either they do it the first time or I knock 'em down. I would say that I'm much less inclined to talk somebody in now than I was when I first came on...Not that I still don't do that though. In fact, I talked a guy in just last night. But its more like I know now the kind of guys you can and can't talk to. I guess when it comes right down to it, the

only thing I'm really conscious of and care about is the safety of me and my partner. After a while you don't give a fuck what your sergeant or the department thinks. You just want them to leave you alone and let you get your work done.

Another patrolman, a ten-year veteran, answered the same question in this fashion:

Hell, I just put in my time and hope to get home in one piece each night. I could care less about what the mayor or some sociologist might say about my street manners. If I see some asshole foöling around the district or looking suspicious, I'll either run the bastard out of my sector or take him in. You learn that you can't take any shit on the street and stay healthy. I'd much rather hassle with IID (Internal Investigation Division) than take the risk over my safety. After you've been out there for a while, you realize that it's easy to die and it's awfully final. I'd much rather get another god damn greenie than have some animal break me in two.

Finally, one twenty-two year street veteran summarized his learned adjustment as follows:

I look at it as war, it's us versus them. Sure I know all about that goody-goody crap people are trying to cram down our throats about us having to help the poor and oppressed. But, I'll tell ya, the assholes that are laying on that shit don't have to go out there and work eight hours a day, six days a week. They don't have to see the mutilated bodies, the junkies, the whores, the homos or smell the stink of a skid row john. The niggers don't call them pigs cause they never see 'em. But I do. And tomorrow and the next day and the day after that it'll be the same. The only way you survive on this job is to grow callouses. You put on a shell the beginning of every shift and take it off when you get home. When I'm working, I'm as hard as stone 'cause I gotta be, it's my only defense...You figure you're only friends are gonna be other cops cause they're the only ones who have been there and know the score. Even the department don't help ya much. The desk jockeys inside are so damn chickenshit that they figure they got to appease every jerk whose got a beef. And you know who gets it everytime? It's us, the lousy patrolman. Shit,

I've just learned to let it roll off my back. I got my time in now and there ain't a god damn thing anybody can do about it. I can draw my pension in prison if I had to.

These quotations suggest pointedly that disenchantment has two edges. One, the police with the general public--the "cynical" cop; and two, the disenchantment with the police system itself--"abandoned" cop. Both develop rather quickly as a recruit passes along the path of structured socialization. First through proverb, then by example, and finally through his own experiences, the patrolman comes to the realization that it is his relationship with his immediate street companions--his squad--which protects his interests and allows him to continue on the job; without their support he would be lost.

In most ways, the patrolmen--particularly those in a squad--represent what Goffman (1959) calls a team. In Goffmanesque, a "team" is:

A set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected definition of a situation is to be maintained. (p. 104)

The fundamental situational definition to be maintained in the patrol setting is simply that "all-is-under-control". Yet the setting is multifaceted and hence the definition must be partialled into several more explicit counterparts. For example, to the so-called law-abiding public, the situational definition is translated roughly into "don't-worry-we-can-take-care-of-everything". To persons with whom the patrolman encounters in what can only be

termed adversary relationships--the "street" people-- the definition becomes, "watch-your-step-because-we-can-do-whatever-we-want-to-you". To the department, the patrol situation is defined as "all-is-going-well-and-there-are-no-problems". Without question, each newcomer comes to fully accept and project these situational definitions if he is to be a "team" member. Indeed, as he discovers the importance and value of his squad, he also learns the corresponding "team" definitions of his patrol situation.

An example of the manner in which the "team" works is given below. It is concerned with an incident which occurred to a recruit during his third month on the "street".

The material is quoted from my field notes.

...approximately 2:30 a.m. we were requested by another unit to meet in the parking lot behind the Crazy Horse (a local nightclub). The other unit was working an adjacent sector in Charlie Three. We parked and waited. After a brief delay, the requesting officer, apparently working a solo shift, approached our vehicle on foot carrying a clipboard. Talking to Marty, Dick's FTO, he stated that there had been some trouble and he'd 'coldcocked' some 'obnoxious little nigger'...This officer also stated that he'd 'sluffed' a knife into the other party's coat after the ambulance had 'taken him away'. The officer said he expected some shit from the department unless we'd sign a report essentially stating that we'd seen the man causing a disturbance earlier in the night. This other officer then handed a blank report form to Marty and asked him to sign. Marty signed first, then handed the clipboard to Dick and Dick signed...At no time did we observe the reputed offender. The solo officer told us he'd type in the report and explain the details to us later. (October 23, 1970)

While this is only one of many similar incidents I observed (i.e. falsification of information), it was one of the more serious. While the specific recruit involved expressed certain misgivings to me at a later time, it was apparent that if he wished to remain a squad member of good standing, he had little choice but to sign the report form. It would seem therefore that by increasing one's vulnerability to sanction, the sine qua non of the "team" is made quite conspicuous to the newcomer.

In a similar vein, others have observed that the rules and regulations which typify police departments are so numerous and patently unenforceable that no one will (or could) obey all the canons of "professional" conduct (Reiss, 1971; Radano, 1968; Skolnick, 1966). This situation was evidenced in Union City where, for example, patrolmen were supposedly prohibited from smoking in public, borrowing money from another police officer, criticizing orders from superior officers, seeking notoriety, excessive drinking off-duty, carrying their weapons beyond the city limits, accepting any gratuity including the symbolic free cup of coffee, and so on. The result of such departmental prescriptions--which delve deep into a patrolman's private life--is to place the individual in great need of colleague support. The existence of such regulations--alongside their widespread violation--makes most officers extremely susceptible to departmental discipline. Ergo, the value of the "team" is again reified by its members.

To summarize briefly, the adjustment of a neophyte in police organizations is one which follows the line of least resistance. By becoming similar in word and deed, sentiment and behavior to his peers, a recruit can avoid censor from most of his audiences and continue more or less successfully in his chosen field. Although the timetrack may vary according to assignment, the process itself represents the deformation professionelle which occurs to virtually all upon entrance into the police occupation.

II. OCCUPATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: KINSMEN IN REPOSE

Workers in all occupations develop ways and means by which they manage certain structural strains, contradictions and anomalies of their prescribed role and task. In police work, with danger, drudgery and dogma as prime occupational characteristics, these tensions are extreme. Correspondingly, the pressure on new members to bow to group standards is intense. Few, if any, pass through the socialization cycle without being persuaded--through their own experiences and the sage-like wisdom passed from generation to generation of policemen--to accept the occupational accepted frame-of-reference. This frame-of-reference includes, of course, both broad axioms related to police work in general (role) and the more specific corollaries which provide the ground rules of the work-a-day world (operations). In this section, the label "occupational perspectives" is affixed to the former. It is intended merely to imply that my concern is with the

wider, institutional view of policing shared by patrolmen rather than the explicit "how-to" work prescriptions which are considered in the next section.

Although occupational perspectives are connected intimately to the stages of recruit socialization described (albeit tersely) in the preceding section, interest here is tied primarily to what Becker et al. (1960) called the final perspective. As such, the focus is upon the characteristic view patrolmen eventually come to hold regarding their organizational and occupational milieu--using a dramaturgic metaphor, the "backstage" views of police. Occupational perspectives represent the solution to what Schein (1961) has suggested is the critical problem of organizational socialization, namely, "coping with the emotional reality of the job". In the police world, these perspectives provide the perceptual filter through which a patrolman views his work life. In a sense, they provide him with something akin to an occupational ideology. Such an ideology--rooted in common experience and knowledge--serves to support and maintain the codes, agreements and habits existing in the work place.

Two distinct occupational perspectives are crucial for our understanding of patrolmen. Together they form a definitive credo which shapes the personal identity of policemen and regulates the pace, style and direction of "on-the-street" police behavior. The first perspective grows from the patrolman's unique role in the social world

and concerns his "outsider" position in the community. The second perspective develops from the nature of the patrolman's task requirements and deals with the survival dictums of his occupation.

A. The Outsider--Separate and Apart

A young patrolman soon learns that in uniform he is a very special sort of person. Not only does he have a low visibility vis-a-vis his superiors, but he has a monopolistic grip on the legal application of force. Amplifying this societal trust is the awesome responsibility of deciding virtually on his own and in sometimes terrible situations when to and when not to exercise this force. This feature alone places him in a solitary and somber position compared to the rest of society. Certainly there are legal and administrative guidelines set up which presumably govern his actions. Yet, in by far the majority of cases in which his right to force and violence may be utilized, the decision must be made in the emotional fever of fear or anger, the immediacy of danger and in the flicker of an instant. In these powerful and dark moments, there is not time to ponder the alternatives. Such is the ultimate responsibility of a patrolman.¹⁹

Of course, situations of the extreme are rare. Some officers progress through their entire career without once having to draw their weapons or physically subdue an obstinate suspect. But among those who spend their days on the street, they are few. Uncommon indeed are those

officers who have not come within a hairbreath of "squeezing-off-a-round" or who have not been through the bruising give-and-take of street battle. For most, these experiences are the defining characteristics of their occupation and it distinguishes them from other gentler ways of life.

While it would be a mistake to view police work from this danger aspect only, the symbolic importance of this feature cannot be underestimated. In large measure, these experiences (and in their not infrequent retelling) set the tone for patrol work. As one young patrolman who had been on the street for several years explained:

Most of the time this job is boring as can be. You just sit behind the wheel and go where they tell you. When you're not bullshitting with your partner, your mind kinda wanders and some nights it's a bitch to stay awake...But somehow you never forget that the next call you get or car you stop might be your last. Mentally that's hard to accept but it's real. When I first came on I felt like I had a target painted on the back of my head. You know there's one hell of a lotta people out there who'd love to off a cop. I've gotten over that pretty much by now because you just gotta live with it. If anybody wants to kill you, there's no way you could ever stop 'em...But what really gets you is that whoever it was probably wouldn't even know your name, he'd just be out to kill some cop. To the people out there we're just faceless blue suits. You sure begin to wonder what kind of crazy bastard you are for getting into this job in the first place.

The danger inherent in police work is part of the centripetal force pulling patrolmen together as well as contributing to their role as strangers to the general public.²⁰ Importantly, however, the risks of policing also provide real psychological satisfaction to men who spend

most of their time performing activities of the more mundane or routine variety (e.g., report taking, service calls, preventative patrolling, and so on). Without danger as an omnipresent quality of the work setting, patrolmen would have little of the visceral pleasures that contribute to their evaluation of performing difficult, important and challenging (if unappreciated) task.

The "outsider" perspective arises as well from the unforgetably indifferent or antagonistic manner in which he is treated by the public. The rookie painfully discovers that wherever he is to go, his presence is bound to generate anxiety. People stare at him and scrutinize his movements. While driving through his sector, he finds that a major problem is avoiding accidents caused from the almost neurotic fashion in which other drivers react to his perceptually nefarious squad car. Soon he appreciates the relatively few places where he receives a warm and friendly welcome. All-night diners, hospitals, fire stations, certain niches in the courthouse, the precinct locker room and even a private recess where a patrolman may park his squad car unnoticed become havens from his totem-like existence, providing him an opportunity to relax.

In general, there is little to link patrolmen to the private citizen in terms of establishing a socially satisfying relationship.²¹ Small businessmen have perhaps something to gain in terms of the protection a rapid response might provide. However, businessmen know

that there is little likelihood that the patrolman they are friendly with today will respond to a call for help tomorrow. Similarly, patrolmen recognize accurately that few civilians are likely to return favors. For mutual concern and friendship to develop, some sort of exchange relationship must be sustained--the quid pro quo of Romans (1950). In the police world, patrolmen rarely see the same people twice unless the contact is of the adversary variety. And such encounters are not apt to prove rewarding to the patrolman regarding the development of friendships.²²

Thus, it is a lonely, largely friendless world the patrolman faces. The only assistance and understanding he can expect comes solely from his brother officers who, as the police enjoy saying, have "been there". In light of his public receptivity, it should not be surprising that policemen in general have assumed many of the characteristics of other stigmatized groupings.²³

I suggested in the analysis of recruit socialization that the rules and regulations of police work are so numerous and immobilizing that from the patrolman's point of view, no one could ever obey all of them. In effect, this implies that police officers, to be protected from their own infractions, must protect others. While rule violations run from the trivial to the serious, no officer is free from the knowledge that in his past (and no doubt in his future) are certain acts which, if reported, could cost him his job and perhaps even his freedom. From a

failure to clear with his dispatcher for lunch, to perjury on the witness stand, police must live each day with the knowledge that it is the support of their brother officers who insure their continuance on the job. Thus, it is his colleagues who represent the only group to whom he can relate. As one patrol veteran suggested:

How the fuck can I tell anyone who ain't a cop that I lie a little in court or that sometimes I won't do shit on the street 'cause I'm tired or that I made some asshole 'cause he was just all out wrong. If I told people that they'd think that I'm nothing but a turd in uniform. The only people that can understand are people who've had to pull the same shit...and there just ain't nobody in this department, from the Chief on down, who hasn't pulled some tricks in their time on the street.

When this officer speaks of "tricks" there are, of course, important matters of degree involved. Nevertheless, the point remains that all officers are indebted heavily to their patrol colleagues. In the last analysis, it is this two-way obligation which forms the basis of a relationship which can never be approximated with persons from the non-police world.

These features along with the more salient aspects of the occupation--the shift work, the uniform, the 24-hour nature of occupational responsibility, etc.--provide a perspective on the world which will last for as long as the patrolman remains with the department.²⁴ Behaviorally, all outsider groupings tend toward isolationism, secrecy, strong in-group loyalties, sacred symbols, common language and a profound sense of estrangement from the larger society.

It is these subcultural properties which underpin the common understanding among police that they are different.

The cynicism popularly attributed to police officers can, in part, be located in the unique and peculiar role police are required to play. Treated shabbily, hated or feared by many of the contacts they have, police are asked frequently to arbitrate messy and uncertain citizen disputes. In such disputes, all concerned generally construct a particular account which exonerates them from blame. After a few years on the street, there are few accounts patrolmen have not heard. Hence, whether a claim is outrageous or plausible, police react by believing nothing and distrusting everything at the same time. Only one's colleagues can understand and appreciate such skepticism.²⁵

The hardness commonly thought to be the mask of many policemen arises to fend off the perceived curse of doing society's dirty work. To be a sponge, absorbing the misery and degradation that pass daily through a patrolman's life, is an untenable position which would soon drive one from the police midst were it accepted. Therefore the proverbial "shell" is constructed which protects the patrolman from the effects of nasty encounters which would leave most persons visibly shaken. But in the patrol world such coldness becomes almost a legendary personal property.

To wit, one inexperienced patrolman related the following story:

Man that Sergeant Kelly is something...Remember the night that David Squad nailed that shithead coming out of Mission Liquor Store? Blew him up with a couple of rifle slugs and the guy's brains were splattered all over the sidewalk. You couldn't even tell if the dude was white or black 'cause of blood he was swimming in. Anyway we're standing there waiting for the coroner to show, when Sergeant Kelly decides its time to eat. So what does he do? He goes back to his unit, grabs his brown bag and proceeds to come back and start chowing down on an egg sandwich. Jesus!! You shoulda seen the face on the kid working in the liquor store.

Only the police could understand the hardness implied in such stories. While many sordid tales are no doubt organizational fictions, they serve to denote the peculiar attributes of the police occupational code and also serve to detach patrolmen from the more polite social world of their origin.

In essence, the "outsider" perspective crystallizes the patrolman's occupational identity. It sets him off from others and provides an anchor to which he attaches his interpersonal relationships. Since the private interests and concerns of one are the interests and concerns of most others in the patrol setting (e.g. avoiding injury and disciplinary action, displaying the proper amount of commitment and aggressiveness on the street, developing "pat" testimony for courtroom use, etc.), they form a common source of appeal and support. This can be summarized neatly by referring to a bond of sympathetic understanding

existing among the police.²⁶ As one officer remarked succinctly:

To most people we seem to be inhuman, somehow separate and apart. Almost like another species. Maybe they're right but I'll tell you, I'd trust even my worst enemy in this department before I'd trust the people out there.

B. Survival: Lay Low and Avoid Trouble

Although police know that the unanticipated and non-routine event may occur at any moment, they nonetheless have firm expectations about what work will consist of on any given shift.²⁷ An experienced officer establishes therefore his own tempo and style of work. Like any occupation, patrol work falls into set patterns: take a burglary report, meet complaintant, interview victim, investigate open door, direct traffic, and so on. The discovery of certain organizing devices by which to categorize the myriad of work duties is a major task for young officers and--as with the perspective developed in response to their perceived declass  social position--follows the socialization paradigm as one learns what it is like to work the streets.

Importantly, the young officer learns that there is a subtle but critical difference between "real" police work and most of what he does on patrol. "Real" police work is, in essence, his *raison d' tre*. It is that part of his job that comes closest to the romantic notions of police work he possessed before attending the police academy. In short, "real" police work calls for a patrol-

man to exercise his perceived occupational expertise-- to make an arrest, save a life, quell a dispute, prevent a robbery, catch a felon, stop a suspicious person, disarm a suspect, etc. In terms developed earlier in this essay, "real" police work involves the "hot" call, the unusual "on view" felony situation or the potentially dangerous "back-up" predicament in which an officer may have to assist a threatened colleague.²⁸ During such encounters all the contradictions and humiliations that accompany most of what the patrolman does evaporate as he, for example, pursues someone he believes to have committed a crime or defends his fellow-officers (and himself) in the chaos of a tavern brawl. Yet, because of this narrow definition of police work, little of his time on the street provides the opportunity to accomplish much of what he considers to be his primary function. Thus, "real" police work to the patrolman is paradoxical--a source of satisfaction and frustration.²⁹

At another level, one can divide the patrolman's dispatched (radio) calls into a rush, non-rush dicotomy. Rush calls are those involving "real" police work. Statistically, however, non-rush calls are much more common.³⁰ The decision to rush is, of course, a learned one, developed as a patrolman learns his territory (see Section III) and gains knowledge of the patrol lexicon. There is not a universal code for rush calls. They are

dependent upon the dispatcher's choice of words, the time, the place, the particular unit receiving the call and perhaps even the mood of the officer. For example, to some officers, a 220 (in Union City, a so-called "dangerous mental case") represents a call demanding lightening speed; to others it is treated simply as a "normal" call and handled without undue rush or concern.³¹ Only those situations calling for "real" police work are treated seriously by all officers.

The "back-up" responsibilities of patrolmen present an interesting amendment to the limited definition of "real" police work. Back-ups are those situations-- dispatched or not--in which one patrol unit will proceed to a particular sector location to assist, if necessary, the patrol unit which has been assigned to the call. Certainly, most of the time back-ups amount to simply sitting in the squad car waiting to be waived off by the other unit; yet, the symbolic importance of "back-ups" can not be dismissed.

There are several classes of dispatched calls which almost automatically guarantee the presence of a back-up, providing the sector work distribution at the moment is not overloaded. For example, the "help-the officer" call is treated most seriously. Almost always such calls result in the rapid appearance of all officers in the district. In another class, less critical, yet nonetheless sure to receive at least one back-up, are calls such as the felony-

in-progress or man-with-gun. Other calls such as the bar disturbance or the family fight in the ghetto neighborhood also generate pro forma back-up units. To a large degree these back-up situations help young officers establish their street credentials as squad members in good standing. Patrolmen note the presence (or absence) of their peers as well as the speed with which they arrived. Such behavior demonstrates to all present the mutual concern and loyalty police feel they must have for one another. It is also the measure of one's commitment and motivation to share the risks involved in working the street. In the police world, such behavior is not overlooked. One officer suggested pointedly:

I'll put up with a hell of alot from guys working this sector. I don't care if they're on the take, mean or just don't do anymore than they have to... But if some sonfabitch isn't around on a help-the-officer call or shows up after everybody else in the city has already been there, I don't want him working around me. Those cops are dangerous.

In Union City, as in all large city departments, the work of patrolmen is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate. There are the required annual patrolman performance ratings submitted by the sergeants but these are essentially hollow paper exercises in which few men receive low marks.³² The real task of evaluating patrolmen falls on the squad sergeant and he is most concerned with the "activity" of his men.³³ However, activity is judged differently by sergeants. The same activity that is appreciated and perhaps

demanding by one sergeant is treated indifferently by another sergeant. For example, one patrolman who had worked the same sector under several sergeants noted:

Now you take Sergeant Johnson. He was a drunk hunter. That guy wanted all the drunks off the street and you knew that if you brought in a couple of drunks in a week, you and he would get along just fine. Sergeant Moss now is a different cat. He don't give a rat's ass about drunks. What he wants are those vice pinches. Sergeant Gordon wanted tickets and he's hound your ass for a ticket a night. So you see it all depends on who you're working for, each guy is a little different.

To patrolmen, such idiosyncratic policies, while sometimes difficult to understand, provide a margin of safety in what can be a very uncertain work environment. By satisfying the sergeant's rather unambiguous demands (tickets, drunks, vice, juveniles, field investigation reports, etc.) a man can insure a harmonious relationship with the department.³⁴ If he provides the activity his sergeant desires, he will be left alone to do his work. If not, he may find himself working his days off or transferred to another, less desirable sector. To the men, these activity guidelines are received with some grumbling. But, in the main, they are acknowledged as simply a fact of work life. Furthermore, they are, to some degree, valued as the lodestar of their day-to-day work activities. Patrolmen realize, of course, that these activity measures have little to do with "real" police work. Yet, when one's patrol log contains evidence of activity for the Sergeant,

a patrolman is provided with a certain degree of comfort as well as the gratification that follows a job completed successfully.

It is important to recognize, however, that providing one's sergeant with his required activity can be done with relative ease. Whether it is tickets, car stops, drunks or vice, patrolmen have little trouble nor spend much time accomplishing the required task. In fact, most officers in Union City would simply remark sometime during a shift something to the extent of "well-let's-go-do-our-bit-for-the-sergeant" and proceed to casually make whatever the quota might be. One FTO explained his particular job requirement to his recruit partner in the following manner:

Here's our little duck pond (a busy but poorly marked intersection in Union City). Just sit here for five minutes and you can write all the tickets Sergeant McCallion wants. Just bag five of those illegal left turners and you're done for the week. Keeps him off your back.

Aside from producing activity for the sergeant and the infrequent opportunities to perform "real" police work, most of the patrolman's work time is dominated by what the officers call "staying-out-of-trouble".

Essentially, this means that the officer will do what is assigned to him and little more. The novice patrolman soon learns that there are few incentives to work hard. He also discovers that the most satisfactory solution to the labyrinth of hierarchy, the red tape, the myriad of rules and regulations, the risks of street work, and

unpleasantness which characterize the occupation is to adopt the group standard, stressing a "lay-low-and-don't-make-waves" work ethic. And the best way in which he can stay out of trouble is to minimize the amount of work he pursues.³⁵ One veteran officer remarked caustically:

The only way to survive on this job is to keep from breaking your ass...you just don't want to work hard on this job 'cause if ya do you're sure to get in trouble. Either some civic-minded creep is going to get outraged and you'll wind up with a complaint in your file; or the high and mighty in the department will come down on you for breaking some rules or something.

In particular, working hard implies that one will-- without being cajoled either by radio or a sergeant-- actively search for real police work. Thus, making street stops, checking for stolen cars, searching a neighborhood for a possible burglar, filling out a number of Field Investigation Reports and performing cursory searches on suspicious persons and automobiles are examples of the behavioral meaning of working hard. It should be clear that working hard increases the number of citizen contacts an officer may have and, therefore, represents an opportunity to make both serious and banal mistakes. Citizen contacts are always delicate when an officer is on uncertain or merely suspicious grounds. Such encounters are strained interpersonally, troublesome legally and almost always invite disrespect. In other words, aggressive patrol tactics are bothersome. Since working hard offers few occupational rewards, the logical solution for the

patrolman is to organize his activities in such a fashion as to minimize the likelihood of being sanctioned by any of his audiences. The low visibility of the patrolman's role vis-a-vis the department (i.e., his sergeant) allows for such a response. Thus the pervasive adjustment is epitomized in the "hang-loose-and-lie-low" advice frequently heard in the Union City department.³⁶

Rookies were always accused of what was referred to as a "gung-ho" attitude (rushing to calls and pushing eagerly for action). They were quickly taught, however, the appropriate perspective toward their work.³⁷ For example, the aggressive patrolman who constantly was seeking out tasks to perform was the butt of community jokes. In fact, many police expressed the sentiment that it was wise to spend as much time off the street as possible for, as they claimed, "you-can-get-in-trouble-out-there". One experienced officer noted:

Those god damn rookies are dangerous. I worked with one guy who was so gung ho that every time I got in the car with him I figured I was gonna get killed. This ass used to drive like a bat outta hell just to go to lunch...he wanted to always be looking for stolens or stopping everybody on the street. He settled down eventually when he found out that he wasn't getting anything done except make the other cops in the squad laugh.

While staying out of trouble occupies a great deal of the patrolman's working hours, it is to be distinguished sharply from "loafing". While one may or may not work hard on any given shift, he is always to do his share by

covering his district and answering his dispatched calls. Taking a call in another man's sector is occasionally acceptable. However, to do so consistently is personally insulting and considered by all policemen to be unjust. To the squad, answering a call for another indicates that the neglectful officer no longer cares or is committed to his "team" for he will not pull his fair share of the work. Relatedly, an officer who regularly fails to appear as a back-up on a call or arrives well after the potential danger has passed is considered to be either fearful or loafing and will, if possible, be expelled from the squad. The definition of loafing is therefore quite specific.

I have suggested earlier that during a newcomer's first few months on the street he is self-conscious and truly in need of guidelines as to his actions. A whole folklore of tales, myths, and legends surrounding the department is communicated to the novice by his fellow-officers--conspicuously by his FTO. Through these anecdotes--dealing largely with "mistakes" or "flubs" made by policemen--the recruit begins to adopt the perspectives of his more experienced colleagues. He becomes aware that "nobody's perfect" and the only way in which one can be protected from his own mistakes is to protect others. Among members of a particular squad, this "no rat" rule has deep and meaningful roots. Violations of the rule are met with swift (albeit informal) disapproval.³⁸ Since all

officers have at sometime in their career broken a rule or regulation, the conspiracy-like network of support remains intact. The tacit norm is to never do something which might embarrass another officer. To draw critical attention to a colleague is strictly taboo in the police world. On the other hand, it is acceptable--and often demanded--that one cover for the mistake of another. While citizen complaints are felt to be unavoidable occupational hazards, fellow officers go to great lengths to insure such complaints against one of their squad members will be ruled unfounded.³⁹ The sergeant plays a critical role in this regard for he screens all reports written by his men. If an account on, for example, an arrest report contains an ambiguous phrase which could possibly be interpreted negatively by the court or the report fails to mention a detail (factual or otherwise) which might keep an officer (and, by implication the squad and the sergeant) out of trouble, he will have the man rewrite the report until it is flawless in his eyes. Let me quote a passage from my field notes for illustrative purposes:

When Blazier was placed under guard in the hospital (after a rather brutal encounter in which Blazier, a black homosexual, was severely beaten in the back of a patrol wagon), we returned to the precinct station to handle the paperwork. Officer Barns filled out the many reports involved in the incident and passed them to his sergeant for approval. The sergeant carefully read each report and then

returned the "paper" to Barns saying that he better claim he was kicked in the face before he entered the patrol wagon or Barns would get a heavy brutality complaint for sure. He also told Barns to change the charge on Blazier to felony assault from refusal-to-obey and add drunk-in-public to the disturbing-the-peace charge Barns had originally thought appropriate. According to the sergeant, the heavier charges were necessary to protect Barns from IID (Internal Investigation Division). Finally, after some discussion and two re-writes, Barns finished a report which the sergeant said "covered their asses".

(February 1973)

This "cover your ass" perspective prevades all of patrol work. In a sense, it represents a sort of bureaucratic paranoia which is all but rampant in police circles. Again, the best way for patrolmen to "cover their ass" is to watch carefully the kind of activities in which they engage. It is best therefore to not take the initiative on the street but rather react primarily to departmental direction. In this way, one seldom becomes involved in those potentially explosive situations which might result in disciplinary action for the patrolman.

The "lay low" occupational perspective also develops as officers gradually discover that the external rewards of a police career are more or less fixed. The patrolman knows for example that he will be at top salary within three years after joining the department. Advancement through the hierarchal network is a realistic expectation to only a few. In Union City, almost eighty percent of the men remain at the patrolman level for the extent of their careers.

At times, patrolmen feel as if the department goes out of its way to make things uncomfortable for them. For instance, Union City patrolmen are not provided parking spaces for their private automobiles and must spend considerable time locating spots on the busy and crowded city streets. Locker room facilities are dirty, cramped and new officers often wait a year or so before they are assigned a space. The administrative detail in checking certain records or requesting information from one of the detective bureaus is almost prohibitive. An officer must also dig into his own pockets to cover many occupational expenses such as having his uniforms cleaned or replaced after a duty-related accident. Critically, patrolmen discover that the department answers very few of their requests--e.g., assignment shifts, new equipment, car repairs, expense reimbursements, etc. And when the organization does act, it is usually after a long delay.⁴⁰

In response to their situation, patrolmen assume a "don't-expect-much" stance. They begin to realize that it is the rewards of camaraderie and small favors granted to them by their sergeant that makes their daily task either pleasant or intolerable. A few extra days off, a good partner, enjoyable squad parties, an agreeable assignment or an extra long lunch become important rewards offered by a police career. It would appear consequently that the following advice given me by an older street veteran in Union City represents a very astute analysis of the

patrolman's work role. He suggested cryptically:

Being first don't mean crap around here. You gotta learn to take it easy. The department don't care about you and the public sure as hell ain't gonna cry over the fact that the patrolman always gets the shit end of the stick. The only people who do care are your brother officers. So just lay back and take it easy out here. Makes things alot smoother for us as well as yourself.

The survival perspective is strengthened finally by the fact that patrol work prepares one for very few other occupations in this society. The knowledge and skill involved in working the street (and these are considerable) have meaning and value only in the police world. Thus, the only alternative a man has to his patrolman position is to return to the work he did before joining the department. To most, this would be unthinkable. For patrol work remains, in the last analysis, far more interesting and stimulating than most occupations open to young men in the police environment. Even after an officer discovers that the work is much duller than he had imagined before his initiation into the occupation, the simple pleasures of warm fellowship and working in the heterogeneous unpredictable world of city streets is enough to bind most men to their career. As one officer remarked:

If I ever quit, the only thing I guess I could do would be to go back to the market where I used to work. But the thought of stacking Del Monte tomato cans on aisle six at exactly ten o'clock every morning would drive me nuts. This job may be slow most of the time, but at least the routine doesn't get you down. Besides, once police work gets into your blood, that's it! You can never really go back out there again as a civilian.

III. METAPRESCRIPTIONS: STREET CODES

This section concerns the more specific groundrules of the police occupation--the explicit working codes adhered to by most patrolmen when on the street. In a real sense, the platitudinous police job description--to protect life and property, arrest law violators, prevent crime, regulate public conduct, preserve the peace--means little. What we need to know is how police actually decide to carry out their task.

The analysis is in part dependent upon the occupational perspectives discussed in the preceding section. Thus, some overlap is unavoidable. Yet one should keep in mind that, whereas occupational perspectives provide the work ideology followed by policemen, they do not provide the everyday guidelines needed in the situationally contingent world of the streets.

Two critical aspects of police work are used to organize this section. First, the meta-prescriptions that grow from the interrelated characteristics of territory and autonomy are considered. Second, meta-prescriptions arising from and in response to street work and public interaction are examined. Together, these work codes provide an individual with the experientially-developed and consensually-approved knowledge necessary to take action as a police officer.

A. Territory and Autonomy

Among the first lessons learned by a recruit after graduation from the police Academy is how little he really knows about the geographical peculiarities of the city. Even if he has lived his entire life in the community, he will have little of the needed territorial grasp which typifies his more experienced colleagues. As one rookie, a native of Union City, was told by his FTO when preparing for his first night on the street:

It don't matter whether or not you've lived here since year one, you don't know the city until you become a cop. Particularly you're gonna have to learn your sector inside and out. You gotta know every street and alley, every building and vacant lot. You gotta know where the people are on a Friday night. Believe me, your life might depend on it someday. You learn not to take chances on this job and you'll start by memorizing every fucking driveway in this sector 'cause if you don't know where you are all the time, you're a lousy cop. And I don't train lousy cops.

Patrolmen are tied inextricably to their district and sectors and a solid working knowledge of the terrain requires anywhere from six to twelve months to acquire. When a man receives a new assignment he normally only knows that area by reputation. First hand knowledge is however required. Thus, he will spend a great deal of time pushing his patrol car wherever it will go to learn his new territory.⁴¹ The city does not represent a scatter of neighborhoods and civic symbols to police; it represents, as Rubenstein (1973) suggested, "a mosaic of linked districts".

Knowledge of each district includes the spatial geography as well as the social demographic patterns of place. The inexperienced officer soon begins labeling places good and bad. For example, the corner of First and Main is bad because of the "blood pit" bars located there. Whereas, Third and Main is good, the taverns are quiet and the clientele well-mannered. Thus the patrolman gradually learns his district and such learning provides him with the behavioral guides he believes appropriate to each locale--to be rough and aggressive on Connecticut Avenue, cautious and stealthful on Broadway Street, or relaxed and easy-going on Park Boulevard.⁴²

Associated closely to the patrolman's notion of place is his notion of time. He develops in essence a personalized watch which tells him whether the public use of public place is proper or improper, suspicious or not suspicious, noteworthy or not noteworthy according to the time of day. Thus, territorial learning involves space and time and the interaction of the two coupled with observed behavior provide the symbolic calculus which determines police action.

After spending considerable time becoming familiar with one's territory, policemen develop some startling notions related to being "out-of-place". Once a patrolman crosses over certain boundaries into strange surroundings he feels uncomfortable, uneasy, and his actions are no longer grounded by the firm set of expectations he has

developed in his "home" district. It is as if the ground has shifted so dramatically that the figure becomes distorted and unrecognizable. Thus, the patrolman has a vested interest in remaining within a district he knows well. That sergeants use this fact in maintaining a degree of managerial control is taken for granted by patrolmen. To be transferred to an unfamiliar district is by and large not a welcome prospect to most patrolmen for they know they must begin anew to build the all-important map of their territory.

Tied to the geographical knowledge patrolmen possess is the accompanying knowledge of the people that frequent their district. Yet the understanding and labeling of the population proceeds at a much slower pace than the development of his territorial expertise. Aside from a few regulars in his sector whom he sees almost daily (e.g., the so-called "habituals" whom he may have arrested numerous times such as the winos, prostitutes, addicts, gypsies, and various small-time hustlers, "uniform girls" such as waitresses and nurses, and a few "business" people such as bartenders, pool hall managers, ticket takers and gas station employees), patrolmen have little contact with the people of their territory. Thus, in most encounters on the street, he must rely primarily upon his knowledge of place and time to guide his action. As one officer told me:

If I see someone cruising around the waterfront between seventh and ninth street when the bars are closing, I'll stop him. I don't give a shit how well dressed he is or the fancy car he's driving. If he's down there late at night, he's either up to no good or is about to get himself taken. First, I'll stop him on some chippie thing like a faulty tail or license plate light and politely ask him what he's doing. If he ain't got a good reason for being there, I'll tell him, 'look mister, as far as I'm concerned you don't have any constitutional rights down here; maybe you do up on the north end, but not down here. So you get your ass outta here if you don't want trouble'. That usually chases 'em right out.

A discussion of territory is, however, not complete unless the autonomy patrolmen demand in their sector is made salient. Essentially, the basic unit of analysis in police work is the sector and within a sector it is a partnership (or a "solo" officer) who claim territorial rights on the sector during any particular eight-hour shift. Within their sector boundaries, patrolmen are fiercely independent and consider themselves to be their own boss over all action they may or may not take.⁴³ More often than not, sergeants will defer to their judgement, leaving them alone to do their work. Thus, during most working hours, the partnership is set apart, in some ways isolated, from the remainder of the department.

Such separateness is the preference of all patrolmen. In fact, great care is taken in guarding one's sector boundaries from the possible "poaching" of another patrol unit. One enraged officer told a colleague from an adjacent sector:

Listen you prick, if you jump another one of my calls I'll personally see to it you get your teeth jammed down your throat. You and Mike stay on the west side of Spring unless we specifically invite you over. We don't fuck with your calls and we don't want you to fuck with ours!

Such a code holds for one's sergeant as well. Most patrolmen feel that the mark of a good sergeant was the fact that, unless requested, he would "leave-you-alone". An itchy sergeant who continually "jumped calls" was considered a menace to the squad's integrity. In such cases, the men may covertly agree to stop supplying the sergeant with his "activity" until he again leaves them alone. Of course, such a tactic could work only if all squad members acted together. Yet, such unison was relatively easy to obtain when a squad's autonomy was threatened. Sergeants finding themselves faced with such mutinous behavior on the part of their subordinates had little recourse other than to back down; since, to bring this conflict to the attention of his superiors placed him in the awkward position of admitting that he was unable to properly control and direct his men.⁴⁴ Although patrolmen will, for example, accept quotas, special duty or extra paperwork, to meddle in their perceived area of autonomy--the sector--resulted in a stiff and immediate reaction.

The autonomous code extends as well to people and information spheres. Among squads (and even between

members of the same squad), patrolmen feel no necessity to exchange bits and pieces of information concerning informers or criminal activity in their district. Indeed, the men hoard information as if it were their own personal property. For example, one officer explained:

I'm not gonna tell anybody but my partner about where those guys are living now (two suspected burglars), not even the dicks...Why should I? I weaseled it outta my crummy little informer so why should I pass it on for somebody else to get the credit? I want those guys myself even if it takes ten years.

Information, like territory, belongs to the patrolman who possesses it. It was standard practice in Union City for two patrol teams working the same sector, but different shifts, to never discuss with one another the various activity occurring in their sector. Furthermore, virtually no information of value was exchanged between patrolmen and detectives. From this perspective, the Union City police department resembled a feudal kingdom in which each patrolman was lord of his fief-sector.

The source of this secretive behavior lies in the territorial assumptions made by the patrolman, as well as the small rewards (primarily self-satisfaction) that resulted from an arrest. Yet, even the latter category is contingent upon the "turf" an officer works, for all patrolmen know that there are good sectors and bad sectors regarding arrests. If, for example, an officer works a "last-out" shift (12 p.m. to 8 a.m.) in a suburban, middle-class district, he will have little opportunity to ever arrest

anyone other than perhaps an occasional clumsy burglar.

In short, one's territory and the autonomy that accompanies it provide a basic work code that is respected by all policemen. It has been said by other observers that patrolmen react most violently to a challenge of their authority. Yet, it is not so much their authority that patrolmen protect as it is their autonomy in a particular sector.⁴⁵ For it is the autonomy that gives meaning to their work role. Hence, to do one's work in one's sector and little more is among the most important operating maxims of the patrolman's job.⁴⁶

B. Street Work and Public Interaction

Most policemen recognize the mythlike quality of their powerful image. While persons on the street may find him an omnipotent figure, the patrolman knows he is merely a city employee who can be pushed around and fired at the whim of his superiors. The patrolman realizes therefore that he must delicately manage his appearance on the street, maintaining, as best he can, the respect and fear he feels necessary for him to do his job. And he must accomplish this without overstepping what he considers to be the narrow limits on his public behavior. He must also satisfy those above him in the department by at least occasionally arresting someone--as well as performing his required tasks with proper diligence and speed. Finally, when working the street, he must guard against the careless mistake which, in the violent world he inhabits, might cost him his life.

The most basic ground rule for an officer on the street is, in the police vernacular, "maintain-the-edge". Fundamentally, this means one must be decisive in all situations. To many patrolmen, it is considered better to make a wrong decision rather than to make no decision at all. Hence, the officer learns to push when others would pale and this hard-edged aggressiveness marks the patrolman's working behavior. In the words of one young officer:

You've gotta be tough out here. If you're not they'll walk all over you and you may as well hand them over the keys to the city...When I came on I figured you could be nice and still get your way. But I found out fast that if you don't look mean, talk mean and act like you know exactly what you're doing, nobody'll ever do what you say. Out there you gotta think fast and make decisions quick. Detectives maybe have the time to sit around and ponder their belly buttons before they act, but we can't and the guy on patrol who can't handle the snap decision part of his job ought to get himself transferred inside to some nice jackoff desk job.

Many officers believe that one way in which one maintains his edge is to always have the first and last words in street confrontations. This everyday working theory is premised upon the assumption that to meet and leave a "civilian" abruptly, without opportunity to start, question or terminate the encounter, gives one the upper hand and denotes the patrolman's right to initiate, direct and close all conversation. On a proud note, one officer stated:

I normally try to surprise them first and then leave them with their mouth hanging open. Like last night, we'd noticed this guy behind us kind of weaving around and driving in a reckless manner

for a couple of miles. So we jerked him over, ran a check on him and talked to him for awhile. He seemed OK so just as we kicked him loose I told him: 'Sir, we've written out a Field Investigation Report on you for suspicion of 'interfering' which, in plain language, means minding other people's business. I'd advise you to stay out of the police business from now on sir...Good night.' Then I turned around and split. God, I thought he was gonna have a heart attack.

Let us now examine another important street code of patrolmen. Reiss (1971) pointed out that the use of force is not a philosophical question to the police, rather it is a question of where, when and how much. On the street, these decisions must be made quickly and once made are irrevocable. However, to the majority of patrolmen, the use of force is always a last resort for it can get them in serious trouble. It comes only when the officer believes that there is no other route open to protect himself, safeguard his autonomy or maintain his edge. In most threatening situations, the officer attempts to maintain his edge by managing his appearance such that others will believe he is ready, if not anxious, for action. The policeman's famous swagger, the loud barking tone of his voice, the unsnapped holster or the hand clasped to his nightstick are all attitudes assumed to convey this impression. Decisiveness is readily apparent in such a posture, although the officer himself may have little, if any, idea of what he is about to do. For example:

You can't look like a boy scout when you're on the street. You've gotta make them think you'd just as soon blow their head off as talk to them...

Not everybody of course, but it's not you're average creep you've got to worry about. It doesn't take long to figure out who the assholes are out there and they're the ones you gotta put on the I-chew-nails routine for.

Although all policemen develop somewhat idiosyncratic characteristics when working the street, most tend to first evaluate any person encountered in terms of whether or not they will be able, if necessary, to physically overpower them. As one officer suggested, "I always check out a guy to see if I can take him". Thus, one's age, height, weight, muscular development are important clues to a patrolman's behavior. If it appears that he can "take" the man then the patrolman may be more patient and reserved than would be the case otherwise.

To some degree, this represents a class of working habits which can be labeled "safety patterns". Others would include: sitting in a public place where one has a clear view of other patrons and both the exit and entrance; watching the hands of a suspicious person for telltale movements when approaching him; never leaving the patrol car without a nightstick; standing to the side of a door when knocking; requiring a suspect to lay spread-eagle on his stomach when searching him for weapons; approaching a suspicious vehicle with one's right hand around a small two-inch revolver (aimed at the driver) hidden inside the pocket of the officer's jacket; and so on. These safety patterns vary, of course, according to the personal style of the officer. But each and every patrolman develops a

set of these habituated devices which he believes increase the probability of his avoiding injury.

Finally, it is important to at least briefly discuss the labeling of persons by patrolmen. For my purposes, three classes of people will be of interest: suspicious persons, assholes and know-nothings.⁴⁷ The three classes are not mutually exclusive but the categories do provide a useful way of examining the differential manner in which persons are accorded on the street. First, suspicious persons are those individuals who patrolmen have reason to believe may have committed a felony offense or serious misdemeanor. Depending on the severity of the particular crime, police treat such persons with great care in what is almost a parody of the "professional" manner. Thus, suspicious persons are approached and treated carefully. They are labeled for a specific past act and not for their immediate behavior. In those situations in which the suspicious person is not known but may be in the general vicinity (e.g., the robber fleeing from the scene), the patrolman will slowly cruise through his sector looking for a person who, for reasons related to time and space, appears de trop or out of place. One officer suggested that in these situations:

What I look for is someone who seems kinda jumpy and edgy. If he's walking, he'll usually look over his shoulder or stare straight ahead, walking

either slower or faster than everybody else on the street. Mainly, what I look for is somebody who looks wrong, like he shouldn't be there. I guess it's just something that a policeman's sixth sense picks up. You gotta really work the street for a couple of good years before you start being able to make people.

On occasion, officers will stop a "suspicious person" for no other reason than the impression he made on them while passing. More often, however, the label arises in relationship to a person's appearance in a particular location (e.g., a person loitering on a corner known to be the approximate "drop point" for drug sellers; or a man aimlessly strolling through a garage in which a number of cars had recently been stolen). Thus it is some unique combination of time, place and peculiar characteristics of a person's behavior or general appearance that result in the label "suspicious".⁴⁸

On the other hand, the "asshole"--from the perspective of the patrolman--creates the label for himself while in the presence of the officer. The label is affixed to the person after a street stop has been made (usually the stop is for a petty misdemeanor such as a traffic violator, the corner lounge, the curfew offender, etc.). However, a "suspicious person" can also quite readily become an "asshole" as well. In essence, the "asshole" is one who refuses to accept (or, at least, remain silent) the officer's definition of the situation (see Part I). Hence, the person complains loudly, attempts to fight or flee, disagrees with the officer, does not listen, and, generally, in the officer's eyes, makes a nuisance of

himself. Clearly, the behavior of most student protestors, drunks, militants, foreign speaking, jesus freaks, or politically inclined would be perceived by policemen to fall into this category. Furthermore, the confused often are labeled assholes, as are those who claim to "know-their-rights". From the patrolman's view, the asshole is one who makes his job more difficult and such actions are not looked upon kindly. In fact, if the asshole persists in his actions and pays no heed to an officer's repeated warnings to "shape-up", he may find himself charged with considerably more than he first thought. Or, in the extreme case, he may be severely "thumped" if the officer is so inclined. In the patrolman's world, such physical retaliation for the antics of an "asshole" is justified according to the doctrine of "street justice". While not reserved strictly for the asshole, this form of police action is designed to both punish the offender immediately and to re-establish the officer's control of the situation. As one ten-year street veteran put it:

Shit, after you've been on this job for as long as I have, you get to know some of these assholes and realize that they're never gonna get what's coming to them...Even if you haul them in, they'll get kicked loose with a warning. So you figure that teaching them a little respect on the street ain't gonna hurt things none.

Street justice is of course administered quite discreetly. Most patrolmen feel that they are sophisticated enough to effectively calculate just who will and who will not be in a position to charge them with "excess force"--

as well as being able to accurately decide just who is deserving. Furthermore, street justice is reserved for those settings in which it is unlikely that any non-police witnesses will be on hand. By and large, patrolmen make few mistakes in this regard.

It should be made clear that as the term implies, there is a notion of justice involved in such street "thumpings". Policemen rarely react physically without--in their eyes--good cause. Reiss's (1971) data indicate that there is something of the "golden rule" involved in an officer's street behavior. In other words, the more deferential the person, the more polite and restrained the patrolman. And, of course, the opposite holds as well. Hence, the more of an "asshole" the person, the more likely he will be to be the recipient of "street justice".

Finally, the "know-nothing" category (most certainly representing the largest number of people) is restricted to those contacts a patrolman may have with persons who cannot, by any stretch of the collective imagination, be labeled either "suspicious" or "assholes". The "know-nothing" distinction applies simply because they are not police officers and therefore cannot know what the police are about. The officer's behavior when dealing with "know-nothings" is rather detached and circumspect. Providing the person does not cross-over into the "asshole" category (which is not as difficult as one may first assume), the officer's air will be casual, perhaps somewhat bemused, and altogether polite.

This discussion indicates the range and type of street codes followed by patrolmen. While not inclusive, the point here was to delineate some of the everyday operating standards of police work. Only in this way can we hope to discover the parameters of criminal justice in this society for, in the last analysis, the police are the gatekeepers of the system. And, if one needs to be reminded, the task has just begun.

CODA: A NOTE ON REFORM

Three premises formed a kind of critical membrane inside which the considerations of this paper were confined. The first premise upon which my view of the behavioral system of patrolmen rested was simply that when individuals are introduced into any organization they are subject to a powerful process of internal (i.e., within the organization) influence. In fact, it is during the "breaking in" period that an organization may be thought to be most persuasive, for the person has little, if any organizationally-based support for his "vulnerable selves" which may be the object of influence. Regardless whether or not this socialization is undertaken consciously or unconsciously, formally or informally, collectively or singularly, it represents an extremely prominent factor contributing to the organization's institutional stability, continuity of mission, social structure and climate, normative orientation and adaptive abilities. Thus, the institutional conservatism of police systems is preserved in

part by the manner in which patrolmen pass to each generation of incoming recruits the conventional wisdom necessary to work the city streets.⁴⁹

The second premise can be summarized adroitly by the open-system metaphor which emphasizes the external (i.e., outside the organization) environment as a potent factor regulating the behavior of individuals within the formal boundaries of an organization. Indeed, in the police world, the primacy of this often neglected variable in organizational studies cannot be overlooked. Therefore, the unexpected, precarious and territorially-dependent realm of patrolmen represents another factor contributing to the character of the institution.

The third premise was of a more methodological nature. Essentially, this premise was based upon the need to outline the patrolman's frame-of-reference. Most police studies view the behavior of policemen as a "problem" for the department or society, not vice versa. I have tried, in a small way, to remedy this bias by describing the point of view of patrolmen themselves--in particular, the development of that point of view. This approach accentuates the situationally-constrained character of the street officer's behavior as he works out solutions to his unique occupational problems. In short, we "looked-out" at the network surrounding the patrolman rather than applying the usual perspective which, in the past, "looked-in" on him. The elitist biases and

distortions which result from a "looking-in" approach have been demonstrated vividly through the failure of management-oriented change programs. - Such programs have floundered precisely because they have not understood empathetically the more pragmatic and earthy characteristics of the patrolman's occupational problems.

The analysis resulting from the use of these three premises suggests that the intelligibility of social events requires that they always be viewed in a context which extends both spatially and in time. Relatedly, social actors must be granted rationality for their behavior. In the case of the urban police, is it any wonder that, faced with impossible demands and a pariah-like social position, they often lash out with bone-cracking urgency to defend their zone of self-esteem or seal themselves off interpersonally behind a blue curtain? Indeed, we seem to have reached what psychoanalyst R.D. Laing (1968) called the "theoretical limit of institutions". According to Laing, this paradoxical situation is characterized by a system which, when viewed as a collective, behaves irrationally, yet is populated by members whose everyday behavior is eminently rational. Perhaps this construct indicates the profound dilemma in which our police are indeed trapped.

The police response to this dilemma has been an attempt to infuse the occupation with a type of professionalism based on the paramilitary model. This conception of pro-

professionalism values efficiency, integrity and the impartial application of the law. On the surface, such goals are hardly questionable. But, in practice, this sort of professionalism has resulted in a technical emphasis ignoring the restraints presumably built into a democratic polity --providing patrolmen with more mobility and power without adequate restrictions. The concern for managerial effectiveness associates new cars, improved response time, better communication networks, improved internal reporting systems and more firepower with professionalism. Yet there has been no evidence that these advances have resulted in any greater appreciation for the human dimensions of police work or, for that matter, have in any way reduced the level of urban crime. If anything, the professional edict has increased the polarity between watchers and watched.

On the other hand, the reform movement (located primarily outside the formal departmental boundaries) has promoted another sort of professionalism. Reformers tend to equate professionalism with an underlying humanistic attitudinal or value system. Such a value system is, as the writers of grant proposals are fond of saying, to be "inputted" into police officers. Thus, from this angle, education and training provide the solution to the arbitrary use of police orb and scepter. Furthermore, by concentrating upon the attitudes and values of individual officers it is believed that a greater understanding between the police and the community will grow.

These reform tactics include: minority recruitment; encouraging officers to obtain a college degree; demilitarization (i.e., organizational development programs aimed at reducing interpersonal distance among those within the police hierarchy); revising the reward systems within the department to recognize and compensate officers for acting more humanely; team policing concepts which build in formal police-community interactions; civilianization of managerial and clerical staff designed to bring new values into the police subculture; ad infinitum. Again, there is no evidence to date that any of these reform programs have been effective--at least in terms of "impacting" the on-the-street behavior of patrolmen.

What both approaches fail to recognize is the nature of the police function itself. As long as the prescriptions such as maintaining law 'n order, crime stopping and crook catching remain the primary goals of police departments, little change is apt to come about within the system. What is required is a structural redefinition of the police task (e.g., along the lines of creating a community-based, service-oriented and internally-democratic institution). Ways must be found to strengthen the external control principle so central to the rule of law. Of course, methods to make the patrolman's lot somewhat

more tolerable--both to himself and to the general citizenry--must be explored. However, it is doubtful that, without deep alterations in the definition and structural arrangements surrounding the police task (and in the implied values such arrangements support) significant change is possible. It would seem therefore that only by concentrating less on the individual and more on the external configuration surrounding the patrolman can we ever begin to anticipate substantial alteration in the long embedded patterns of police behavior.

NOTES

1. All police quotes unless otherwise stated are taken from my field study in Union City. Since I employed no recording device and took no notes during my Academy and street experiences, each quotation is as accurate as my memory and ear allow. I have not eliminated any of the profanity in the police language because I believe it to be an important part of the occupational milieu. Furthermore, an empathetic understanding of the police perspective requires that we listen to patrolmen for, in many respects, talking is being. For a further discussion of my methods, see Van Maanen (1972).

2. There are two notable exceptions to the bibliographic report listed in the text. One is Rubenstein's (1973) brilliant report on the working life of patrolmen in the Philadelphia Police Department. In this work, Rubenstein provides a general ethology of the police world. The other exception is Wesley's (1951) insightful study of a midwestern police department. However, both studies are devoted mainly to the description of the more salient sociological features of the occupation and are concerned only peripherally with the "learning process" associated with the police career. My effort here is to locate individual action within the subcultural sea of the patrolman's surroundings and to demonstrate the developmental nature and source of such action.

3. Following a research agreement, Union City is a pseudonym for a sprawling metropolitan area populated by more than a million persons. The police department employs well over one thousand uniformed officers, has a traditional training program (following the guidelines suggested by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967), provides a salary slightly above the national average

and is organized in the classic pyramidal fashion.

4. Union City's Police Department, like virtually all large departments in this country, divides up patrol responsibility among various precincts. Within each precinct are numerous districts which are further divided into sectors. For each of the three shifts in Union City, a particular district is patrolled by a squad -- consisting of a sergeant and anywhere from ten to twenty five patrolmen. Thus, a single sector covered by one patrol unit (comprised of either one or two officers) represents the basic territorial unit of analysis in the police world.

5. Certainly, the in situ method of naturalistic observation is unsystematic, biased and to some, unscientific. Yet, as a partial defense, I know of no other method to explore and begin to describe the "backstage" orientation of actors to their work than to join with them and share both the objective and subjective "becoming" experience. As Goffman (1971) noted perceptively, variables which emerge from rigorous research designs tend to be creatures that have no existence beyond the room in which they were invented. My feeling is simply that in a study such as this, where as understanding of ordinary behavior is crucial, the method of study must be one which reduces the distance between researcher and researched. In this manner, concepts are developed directly from observed social activity.

6. The use of the term meta-prescription comes from Brim (1966). He used the term to denote those rules individual's learn to apply to situations in which conflicting demands make choice difficult. Therefore, meta-prescriptions provide a person with a way to resolve potential conflict arising from situational and immediate pressure to take some type of action (i.e. withdraw, avoid, compromise, etc.).

7. This discussion is based upon Van Maanen (1973) and is believed to be sufficiently general as to apply to most urban police departments.

Of course, the training sequence may be shortened or extended from place

to place. But the key experiences are virtually the same. My personal experience with three different departments bears this out. Furthermore, confidence in the ordering is increased via my personal communication with police administrators, interviews conducted with police personnel from a number of different departments, and, most importantly, critical readings of my work by experienced patrolmen. For a similar view noting the structural correspondence among training programs, see Westley, 1951; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967; Berkeley, 1969; Niederhoffer, 1969; Ahern, 1971; and Rubenstein, 1973.

8. In Union City, the percentage of those applicants selected for service was roughly about ten percent over the past ten year period. See Van Maanen (1972) for a further discussion of the police selection process.

9. No doubt the perception of this background investigation is dependent upon the eye of the beholder. To those officers in charge of the selection process, the investigation is barely adequate. However, to the entering recruits, the investigation is an awesome ordeal which penetrates deeply into their private spheres. It also demonstrates very effectively to potential recruits that there are a few facets of their lives (both work and non-work) not of pressing concern to the department.

10. Probationary periods apparently vary according to department -- from a minimum to six months to a maximum to two years. The importance of such marginal status to the recruits in Union City seemed, however, quite low. For example, most recruits I encountered were unaware of completing their probationary period unless explicitly reminded by another. Although the probationary status was important to the men upon

joining the department, they quickly learned that few veteran officers (or, for that matter, few supervisors) attached much value to it and consequently they too became relatively unconcerned.

11. The following Union City Training Division "greenie" (i.e., disciplinary memorandum which is placed in the man's permanent personnel file) illustrates the arbitrary nature of the dreaded "gigs" issued during the Academy phase of training:

"You were observed displaying un-officer like conduct in the academy class. You openly yawned (without making any effort to minimize or conceal the fact), (this happened twice), you were observed looking out of the window constantly, and spent time with your arms lying across your desk. You will report to Sergeant George in the Communications Division for an extra three hours of duty on August 15." (parentheses theirs)

The result of such "stress" training is that the recruit soon learns it is his peer group rather than the academy "brass" which will support him and which he, in turn, must support. For example, the newcomers adopt "covering" tactics to shield the tardy colleague, develop "cribbing" techniques to pass exams and become proficient at constructing consensual ad hoc explanations for a fellow-recruit's mistake (e.g., when a recruit accidentally blew a hole in the roof of a shed with his shotgun, it was because he had been "jostled" by those close to him although no one was within ten feet of the blushing recruit). In short, such events impress upon the newcomer that he must now identify with a new group -- his fellow officers.

12. Another aspect of Union City training should be mentioned in this regard -- the two weeks recruits spent on the firing range learning to use a whole arsenal of police weapons (e.g., revolvers, shotguns, mace, various gas handgarnades, fist loads, sap gloves, truncheons and even a machine gun). To the recruit, this period was strikingly different than

the typical drone of the academy classroom. On the range, discipline was lax and the instructors were primarily old hands with a vast storehouse of war stories to entertain the recruits. Yet, the symbolic importance of this aspect of training was not lost on the recruits as attested to by the many hours each man spent at home "dry-firing" -- pointing his emptied service revolver at some imaginary spot and squeezing the trigger repeatedly to steady this aim and rid himself of the almost automatic quiver of the novice. For a similar view of the differences between the "academic" and "applied" academy staffs and routines, see McNamara (1967).

13. The term FTO is essentially an arbitrary one. It refers to the first officer a recruit works with following his academy experience. However, most departments formalize this relationship by including an "on-the-street" period as part of a rookie's training program. In some ways, the FTO portion is similar to what Inkeles (1968) referred to as a "second wave" of socialization. He describes this phenomenon in the following manner:

"The second wave in the socialization process occurs where and when the individual learns the detailed role contents which are socially necessary to behave in a previously acquired basic disposition and where new dispositions and social skills couldn't have been learned earlier." (152)

14. Rubenstein (1973) points out that all policemen learn to keep quiet about their colleagues who are short-tempered, lazy, vicious or dishonest. But they do not keep silent about a colleague who is considered dangerous. This "back-up" test represents therefore a real opportunity to discover if the newcomer has, as the police say, "balls".

15. Many young officers referred to this leave-taking as finally "climbing-from-the-womb". To most, the choice of words implied that they were soon to take their first breath as an autonomous police officer

in a world still somewhat novel and strange.

16. As in all police departments, internal politics plays a powerful role in the distribution of the relatively few rewards available to patrolmen. Thus, rookies would talk of their "man" or their "hook" in the department -- a well-placed departmental connection who would presumably aid the newcomer in receiving a desirable assignment. Such "hooks" were higher ranking officers linked to a recruit via kinship or friendship ties. In New York, this informal allocation system goes through one's "Rabbi" (Radano, 1968). However, in Union City, few connections seemed to have been made since only a few officers were pleased initially with their first permanent assignments. Further evidence for this rather uniform lack of "pull" can be found in a cursory survey of 124 rookies who reported that fewer than ten percent received their first choice of precinct and shift when leaving the academy. (Van Maanen, 1972).

17. By far, the majority of calls answered on patrol are of the service variety -- estimates vary from around eighty to ninety percent. Furthermore, most of the time spent on patrol is of the routine preventative variety in which officers simply drive through their respective sectors presumably looking for evidence of criminal activity. The best statement on the task and time characteristics of the patrolman's role can be found in Reiss (1971) and Webster (1970).

18. Reiss (1971) noted perceptually the atypical routine enjoyed by patrolmen. After examining the police "straight-eight" -- the tour of duty -- he said "no tour of duty is typical except in the sense that the modal tour of duty does not involve the arrest of a person."

19. One of the standing jokes among police officers is that they were taught at the academy -- from the department's point of view -- that they had little discretion on the street. According to their classroom

instructors hard and fast guidelines cover all police actions. Yet, as they discovered quickly on the street -- indeed knew instinctively at the academy -- police rules and regulations offer few solutions to the intricate, dynamic and specific situations in which patrolmen become involved.

20. For another perspective emphasizing the danger inherent in police work, see Skolnick (1966).

21. It should be noted that the issue of police corruption is not covered here. Indeed, if I were to include an analysis of "taking", the discussion would go well beyond the suggested length of this paper.

22. Whyte (1943) first noted the dilemma in which street officers are caught. If the officer takes a formal, no-discretion, duty-only position in his sector, he cuts himself off from the personal relationships necessary to receive information or settle disputes in the area. On the other, hand, if he becomes close and involved in the personal affairs of his sector, he must necessarily utilize much discretion and is unable to act vigorously in situations which may demand such action. While the use of the automobile for patrol purposes has sealed-off most officers in a sort of urban spaceship (with few contacts in their sectors), it is still clear that discretion occupies a central place in the day-to-day environment of patrolmen and can not be kept in the sub-rosa position of being a simple management control issue. For a most interesting discussion of social traps similar to those in which patrolmen are caught, see Platt (1973).

23. This argument is made forceably by Bayley and Mendlesohn (1969). See also Goffman (1963) for a sparkling theoretical treatment of stigmatization.

24. Police officers are legally bound to take action off-duty in the presence of a felony offense and can, in fact, be fired for a failure

to do so. Few patrolmen go anywhere off-duty without first arming themselves -- whether it be to the corner market, out "on-the-town" or to play golf. While the "off-duty" gun is more symbolic than functional, it is but another factor isolating patrolmen from the mainstream of social life.

25. An interesting analysis of the role patrolmen play as street-corner politicians is provided by Muir (1971). Also, the quasi-fiction of Joseph Wambaugh (The New Centurions. (1970) Boston: Little, Brown and Co.; The Blue Knight. (1972) Boston: Little, Brown and Co.; and The Onion Field (1973) New York: Delacourt Press, provides an excellent, if sentimental, account of the patrolman's view of the street.

26. Certainly this bond is strongest among members of a particular squad. But it exists to some degree among all police officers. To wit, the unwritten code of never ticketing or arresting another police officer regardless of where he may be from unless the offense is very serious indeed.

27. Officers soon learn that there are quiet Sundays, busy Fridays and crazy Saturdays. There are those days when welfare or unemployment checks are distributed and certain sectors seem to be considerably faster than usual -- drunk and disorderly calls, family fights, muggings, and so on. Of course, there are also those ubiquitous evenings of the full moon when, as one officer put it, "those demons wreck havoc until the sun rises." Whether or not such perceptions are backed by statistical evidence does not matter for most officers nonetheless have firm expectations of public conduct fixed in their minds. And, to paraphrase W.I. Thomas's famous dictum, a man's actions are attributable to his perceptions of reality and not to reality per se.

28. In most ways the popular notion of "street crime" is a misnomer. The vast majority of crime takes place inside buildings, in entrance-ways, in alleys, in the dark and silent public parks, in living rooms of private homes and so on. Policemen know this and their expectations of catching a criminal "in-the-act" are consequently quite low. Thus, they wait patiently for the serendipitous "on-view" situation to arise if, in fact, it ever will.

29. It is interesting to note that I rode with many officers who claimed -- when relaxing after a busy shift answering some ten calls or so, handling several traffic stops, assisting a few citizens and driving fifty to seventy miles in and out of their respective sectors -- that the night had been a "total waste" since they had not accomplished any "real" police work.

30. Again, see Webster (1970) and Reiss (1971).

31. For an analysis of the sociological meaning of "normal", see Sudnow (1965).

32. An example of just how pervasive such aggrandizing performance ratings are in Union City is provided by an analysis I conducted on the formal FTO progress reports. Of over three hundred report forms, only one contained an even slightly negative evaluation. Uniformly, all other forms were characterized by high praise for the recruit.

33. I am indebted to Rubenstein (1973) for coining the term "activity". However, in Philadelphia, where Rubenstein's work was done, activity had a specific referent in that it applied to the number of vice arrests a patrolman made. In Union City, no such department wide focus existed. Each sergeant was more or less free to emphasize whatever activity he individually felt important, hence, activity is used here in a much broader fashion.

34. These demands are probably most important when a man is new to the squad. For the newcomer's behavior provides the sergeant with valuable information as to the ease or difficulty in which he will accept direction. If the man responds, the sergeant will slack-off, only occasionally suggesting activity to the man. Usually, a casual remark by the sergeant is enough to promote action.

35. An example of the disdain patrolmen feel toward the "rate-buster" is provided by Whittemore's (1973) romantic account of Batman and Robin, the so-called "supercops" in New York City. These officers met their biggest problem inside, not outside, the department. Most often, this pressure came from their fellow patrolmen who actively resented their aggressive approach. At various points in their early career, both officers were told point blank to "stop making waves and just do what you're supposed to do." Another similar account is found in Maas's (1973) superior biography of Serpico, a New York officer who -- aside from his violation of the police code of secrecy in front of the Knapp Commission -- was distrusted by his colleagues for his "working ways".

36. Verification for this ethic can be found among sergeants who in Union City spent an enormous amount of time simply attempting to locate various patrol units under their command. Humorously, the sergeant's referred to this aspect of their job as the game called "finding your men."

37. This "gung-ho" attitude was a real source of irritation to most veteran officers in Union City. The "gung-ho" patrolmen were thought to be overly aggressive. In police argot, they wore "big-badges". It was felt that their presence in a squad created difficult situations in which other officers would have to assume needless risk untangling. Thus, most officers did not follow a "work-hard" rule. As noted, most learned

to sit back and patiently answer their calls ,rarely venturing from their squad car unless otherwise directed.

38. See Westley (1951) for a more extensive account of just how deep this code runs in police circles.

39. Complaints, as well as commendations in the police world are viewed somewhat sardonically. To patrolmen, a complaint is more a sign of where an officer works than his particular policing style. For example, if an officer works a central city,black, lower class sector, complaints are felt to be simply a taken-for-granted feature of life in the area. Reciprocally, citizen letters of commendation will be extremely rare. On the other hand, if a man works a suburban, white middle-class sector commendations will be more frequent and complaints relatively few. Patrolmen know this and therefore assign little importance to either of the two catagories. Apparently, the only exception to this rule of unimportance are those extreme cases where an officer may be under investigation as a result of a serious complaint (e.g., a shooting, extreme brutality, a felony, etc.). In such cases, patrolmen, if they are allowed to remain on the street, will act discretely until the department resolves the complaint. As patrolmen say, "they go hide because they have a big one hanging."

40. Police officers often mentioned that all precinct headquarters seemed to be encased by that "special grey air hanging over the ugliest building in town." The point here is simply that police sense a lack of concern for their role in the community. To most, the lack of facilities and their run down nature is degrading and hard evidence of their collective neglect. And, if no one else seems to care about their occupation, why should they?

41. The patrolmen I observed took particular pride in knowing every accessable passageway in their sector. For example. I spent many hours

on patrol driving across parks, down railroad easements, under bridges, along dirt roads, through storage yards and parking lots, traversing twisted hiking paths in the city's foothills, weaving through the backroads of the warehouse district, and so on. It would seem that anywhere a patrolcar can conceivably be driven (pushed or pulled) will eventually be attempted by the officer as he explores his sector.

42. In many ways, the old policeman's adage about knowing his sector better than he knows the police headquarters is not an exaggeration. And many policemen feel far more comfortable among the transient population and decaying seaminess of skid row than they do in the functionally clean and well lit corridors of their own headquarters.

43. The autonomy of a patrolman within his sector is for all intensive purposes an unwritten commandment among the police. For one officer to criticize the actions of another is virtually forbidden. As one veteran patrolman suggested bluntly:

"I never second guess another cop about what he did in a particular field situation. If there's one thing that's sacred it's that you're the boss over what happens out there ... You know what you shoulda or shouldn't a done at ~~the~~ the time you do it. Only the guy that's there knows or could ever know."

44. It should be clear that sergeants generally attempt to play the role of "good guy" with their men. Since power is more or less equalized between superior and subordinate, a sergeant realizes that the maintenance of a synergetic relationship within the squad is his most important function. Thus, even the use of his power to transfer men is severely restricted by the necessity to maintain squad morale.

45. I have personally witnessed on several occasions officers absorbing verbal harangues or watching behavior in another sector that would be cause in their own sector for immediate action.

46. The notion of territorial perogatives as they relate to the analysis of police behavior suggests that the classical "chain-of-command" model used to describe police departments is woefully inadequate. On the street, patrolmen ethics resemble more the "do-your-own-thing" youth philosophy than any "follow-orders" militaristic philosophy. For excellent discussions on the neglected sociological dimension of territoriality, see Goffman (1971) and Lyman and Scott (1970). A most extensive analysis of its role in the police world is provided by Rubenstein (1973).

47. These three classes are meant to be only suggestive. Their somewhat cavalier presentation here is not to be taken as a definitive statement on public labelling by police. Nor am I trying to make light of a serious concern. Rather, my purpose is simply to make salient an important factor of police behavior and to describe several relevant dimensions along which a complete typology eventually might fall.

48. Although the abstraction called "probable cause" does not concern us directly in this analysis, it is important to note that rarely do patrolmen stop a "suspicious person" without some reason which they believe can be sustained in a court of law. Even though an automobile or pedestrian may appear highly suspicious (i.e., to be a "good shake"), a patrolman knows that he may have difficulty in court articulating this suspicion. Hence, something more tangible must be found to support his claim to probable cause in the event an actual felony arrest is made. Such "tangibles" most often turn out to be relatively frivolous violations like "faulty tail light", "loitering", jay-walking" or the tried and true "no rear plate illumination."

49. Support for this position comes from a wide variety of studies indicating that a person's early organizational learning is a major determinant of one's later work-relevant beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Essentially, the theory suggests that when a neophyte first enters an organization, that portion of his lifespace corresponding to the specific role demands of the organization is blank. Depending on the person's entering values and desires, he may feel a strong need to define the expectations of others (e.g., the colleague groups, the supervisor, etc.) and develop constructs relating himself to these perceived expectations. In a sense, the individual, during his early days in the organization, builds a psychological map of his surroundings. For a deeper analysis of this topic, see Van Maanen (in press).

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