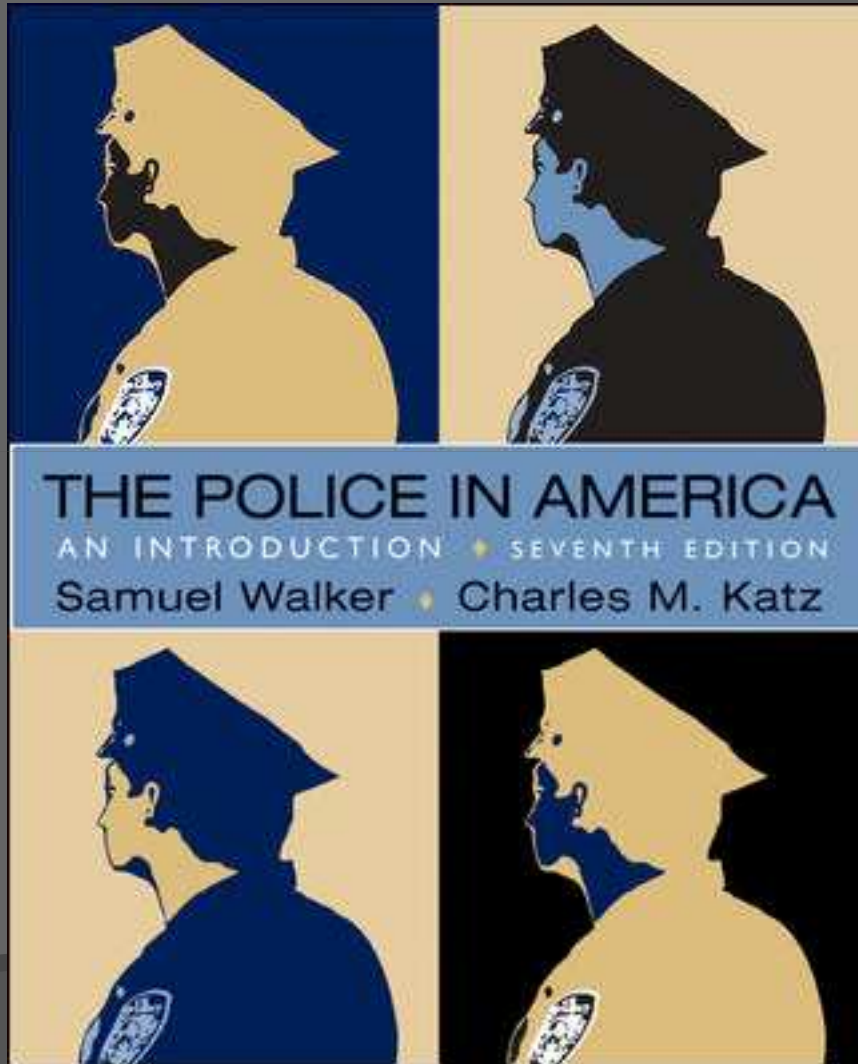


# Police in America



## Chapter Seven Patrol: The Backbone of Policing

# The Central Role of Patrol

- Majority of police officers assigned to patrol
  - Patrol officers are a visible public symbol of police
  - Gatekeepers of the criminal justice system and therefore most important decision makers
  - Experience on patrol is a formative part of police officer's career
- Why is it usually considered the least desirable assignment?

# Basic Functions of Patrol

As defined by Robert Peel:

- To deter crime
- To enhance feelings of public safety
- To make officers available for service

# The Organization and Delivery of Patrol

- Factors affecting the delivery of patrol services
  - Number of sworn officers
    - Police-population ratio
    - Is this a good measure of police services, or crime control?
  - Number assigned to patrol
  - Distribution of patrol officers by area and time of day
  - Type of patrol used
  - Work styles of officers
- Types of Patrol:
  - Foot patrol
  - Automobile patrol
    - 1-2 officer units
- Staffing Patrol Beats
  - On any given night, some beats have no patrol coverage
  - Police patrol is very expensive

- Crime is heaviest in low-income neighborhoods
- Low-income population are heaviest users of police services
  - Crime reporting
  - Order maintenance
  - Medical emergencies
  - Non-criminal activity calls / general assistance
- “Hot Spot”
  - An area that receives a disproportionate number of calls for police service/ has a high crime rate

# Styles of Patrol

## ■ Individual Styles

- Citizen-initiated activity
  - Officers respond to calls for service
- Officer-initiated activity
  - Includes stopping, questioning, frisking suspicious citizens; making contact with ordinary citizens; stopping vehicles, writing traffic tickets, making arrests, etc.

# Supervision

- Supervising Patrol
  - One sergeant per approximately eight officers.
- Styles
  - Traditional: expect aggressive enforcement and measurable results
  - Innovative: tend to form friendships with officers, encourage officers to embrace new methods
  - Supportive: inspirational and protective of officers
  - Active: lead by example, work in field alongside officers

# Organizational Styles of Patrol

James Q. Wilson identified three distinct organizational styles.

1. The watchman style emphasizes peace-keeping without aggressive law enforcement and few controls over rank-and-file officers.
2. The legalistic style emphasizes aggressive crime-fighting and attempts to control officer behavior through a rule-bound, “by the book” administrative approach.
3. The service style emphasizes responsiveness to community expectations and is generally found in suburban police departments where there is relatively little crime.

# 911

- Nerve center of modern police communications
  - Citizen-driven, reactive, incident-based
- Dispatchers
  - Receive calls for service
  - Obtain information from caller
    - Incoherent
    - Vague
    - Incorrect / inaccurate
    - Caller-->operator-->dispatcher-->officer = misinformation and uncertainty
  - Make a decision regarding level of response
  - Initiate response by sending officers to scene
- Use penal code, police department code to communicate

# Operator-Citizen Interactions

- Need to provide officers with as much accurate information as possible
- Interactions lengthy, involving many questions
  - Some questions are a threat to caller's trustworthiness
  - Others are a threat to caller's personal character/judgment

# The Systematic Study of Police Patrol

- Most police-citizen interactions occur through patrol
- Studying patrol is difficult and expensive due to decentralized nature of the job
  - Studies of police patrol include:
    - American Bar Foundation Survey (1956-1957)
    - President's Crime Commission (1965-1967)
    - Police Services Study (1977)
    - Project on Policing Neighborhoods (1996-1997)
- Standards for Systematic Social Observation
  - Designed to provide accurate, representative picture
  - Trained observers follow officer everywhere the officer goes
  - Take field notes which officer can then read

# The Call Service Workload

- Volume of Calls

- Depends on the area and time of day

- Types of Calls

- Crime (29.1%)

- Violent crimes: 3%
- Non-violent crimes: 15%
- Morals violations: 1.3%
- Suspicious circumstances: 9.8%

- Non-crime (70.9%)

- Traffic: 24.1%
- Nuisances: 10.7%
- General assistance: 9.2%
- Disputes: 8.6%
- Dependent persons, medical, information request, information offer, miscellaneous, GOA: 18.3%

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

# Aspects of Patrol Work

- Response Time (affects citizen satisfaction with police)
  - Discovery Time
  - Reporting Time
  - Processing Time
  - Travel Time
    - This is the only one under the control of the responding officer
- Reasons why citizens delay calling
  - Need to verify crime occurred
  - Gain composure
  - Call a friend or family member first
  - Decide whether to involve police
  - Telephone not immediately available

# Aspects of Patrol Work

- Officer use of patrol time
  - Project on Policing Neighborhoods (PPON) studies routine police work
    - Found that regular patrol officers spend only 20 percent of shift interacting with citizens
    - Rest of time spent on general patrol and traveling
- Evading duty
  - Delay in reporting the completion of a call
- High-speed pursuits
  - A situation where a police officer attempts to stop a vehicle and the suspect knowingly flees at a high rate of speed
  - Highly dangerous situation
  - Decision to engage in and continue pursuit based on judgment of officer, SOPs, supervisor monitoring situation

# Improving Traditional Patrol

- Differential response calls
  - Classifying calls according to seriousness
- Telephone reporting units
  - Handle 10-20% of calls on some shifts
- 311 Nonemergency Numbers
- Non-English 911 call Services
- Reverse 911
  - Allows police to call citizens
- Computers and video cameras in patrol cars
  - Increase accountability
- Police aides, cadets, civilian personnel
  - Unsworn officer response
- Directed patrol
  - Look for specific crimes or people, patrol certain areas
- Beyond Traditional Patrol
  - Taking more proactive measures
  - CP
  - POP