

RECENT HISTORICAL STUDIES OF CRIME AND CRIME CONTROL IN THE UNITED STATES.

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During recent years there has been a growing interest in quantitative research in criminology. This phenomenon has been reflected in a growing number of machine readable datasets becoming available which contain variables of interest to criminology. At such times it can be helpful for those people involved in the archiving of machine readable data to become at least aware of some of the relevant literature. Monkkonen's article is a readable bibliographic essay in the field. Editor.

The trickle of historical works on the police and crime in the American past which began in the 1960s has given way to a flood of works in the 1970s; this review will focus on those published works of the 1970s which employ some social science perspective in their analysis.[1] In so doing it excludes the dozens of doctoral dissertations from which future publications will no doubt appear to enrich historians and social scientists of the 1980s. This review also excludes unpublished conference papers, of which, again, there are dozens. One of the more significant aspects of the historical study of crime, deviance, and the systems of their control is its increasing popularity at conferences of criminologists, criminal justice scholars and practitioners, as well as social science historians. There were, for instance, two sessions at the March, 1979,

*Reprinted from Quantum Information, No. 11 (July 1979), pp. 2-9. Quantum Information is a publication of the Association for Quantification and Methods in Historical and Sociological Research, Reinhard Mann, editor. Quantum Information is published in West Germany. Published by permission.

meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences devoted to historical overviews and historical research. Further evidence of the field's interest can be seen in the membership list of the Network on Criminal Justice and Deviance of the Social Science History Association, which has 80 members. And recently, announcement has been made of a new journal, Crime and Justice: A Historical Review. [2] The vast amount of unpublished dissertations, conference papers, and the growing interdisciplinary interest in the subject suggests that research in the decade of the 1980s will be of greater volume and increased sophistication compared to that of this decade.

One general characteristic of the field deserves preliminary comment: while much of the recent historical scholarship on various social reform movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been concerned with showing how the reformers were motivated by a desire to control the poor and oppressed, most of the recent work on crime and criminal justice has opted for a more complex analysis of social relationships.[3] Perhaps because the social control function of the criminal justice system is explicit, such exooses have not been necessary, and the focus has been more

on the relationship of the control system to larger bureaucracies and to electoral politics, or on the social characteristics of offenders, or on the incidence of crime relative to large social changes. On the other hand, many of the studies cited here do not employ quantitative analysis, a glaring weakness, and the number of studies using relatively sophisticated techniques numbers only about ten. Part of the research agenda for the 1980s must be the more widespread use of quantitative techniques.

Since its inception, the field's interest has been more in control systems than in those people they processed, and the number of studies focusing on actual offenders still remains surprisingly small. Within the category of studies on control systems, most work of note has been done on the police, the major exception being David Rothman's widely and highly criticized study of prisons and mental institutions.[4] Within studies of the police, most have focused on the police of an individual city. One book compares across nations and three include more than one United States city; no published study of the pre-1945 period has used explicit models to analyze a broad spectrum of cities.[5] And few of the extant studies use explicit models of any sort in their analysis. Thus, the field tends to be dominated by localistic studies of police in individual cities. Several works in progress and recent articles indicate that this characteristic will soon be corrected, and within the next few years such studies will be more theoretically informed, quantitative, and comparative, employing explicit models and theories. The remainder of this paper is divided into two sections, the first discussing works whose substance concerns the criminal justice system--police, courts,

and prisons. The second section deals with the smaller number of works covering offenders and offenses.

Two important books of the late 1960s precipitated the current interest in police history. Roger Lane's Policing the City, a history of the Boston police in the nineteenth century, linked police growth to the development of urban government. And James Richardson's The New York Police, also focused on the nineteenth century, but with greater attention to the role of the police and less relating of expansion to other bureaucratic change.[6] Both books have been praised, yet one might not have predicted the flood of dissertations, articles, and books on the police which have followed. Particularly important are two books, Wilbur Miller's Cops and Bobbies, and Samuel Walker's A Critical History of Police Reform.^[7] Miller's book compares the early (1830-1860) New York and London police. His conceptual tool is the Weberian notion of legitimacy, and he tries to demonstrate that the style of policing between the two cities flowed from differing national conceptions of law and authority. The London police emphasized the impartial rule of law; the New York police emphasized a personal kind of "street justice." The lack of comparable primary sources for the two police bureaucracies flaws Miller's analysis, yet while one may doubt the soundness of his conclusions, the work is certainly provocative and worthy of a careful reading. Walker, on the other hand, provides the best and most carefully detailed narrative of police development in the United States published to date. More than the title of the book promises, Walker's work synthesizes much of the previously published material evidence.

Unfortunately, the book lacks a major unifying thesis, other than the constant reform of corrupt and inefficient police departments. At one point Walker claims the police had little social impact, an observation which causes one to wonder what the reason for their study is.

Another recently published book, Robert Fogelson's Big City Police, covers much of the same ground as Walker's, but with a more intensive and exclusive focus on the public image of the police and on various investigations of police corruption since the 1890s.[8] The strength of Fogelson's work is its extensive use of primary, non-quantitative materials; as a place to look for quotations and policy related statements, it is unparalleled. However, its lack of a rigorous conceptual focus makes it of less interest to social science historians. The same criticism applies to James Richardson's Urban Police in the United States, but as this book lacks the massive exploration in primary materials of Fogelson, it is of less use.[9] And another book, which just appeared as this review was being prepared, shares the strengths and weaknesses of Fogelson's book. David Johnson's Policing the Urban Underworld focuses on police work in several different cities in the nineteenth century.[10] Like Miller's work, the book contains good descriptions of police activities; however, it too is bound with naive assumptions about the changing incidence of criminal behavior. These assumptions are in virtually all of the books described above, but appear most intrusively in Johnson's book. The line of argument runs like this: crime, "real crime", that is, increased per capita in the nineteenth century, and the only natural response of urban dwellers was to create uniformed police to "fight crime". The evident defects

in this kind of analysis - from the empirical assumption that the incidence of criminal activity changed to the implicit causal argument that the creation of the uniformed police needs no explanation, given the increase in crime - detract from the rigor we should demand of social science history. Further, it indicates one reason why so little of the work on control systems has been quantitative -- its questions have not been properly formulated, and the requirement of refutable propositions has not been met.[11]

A fourth book, David Rothman's Discovery of the Asylum, has received more popular attention than any other recent book relating to the history of crime and criminal justice. In this carefully conceptualized book, Rothman presents the now popular social control thesis emphasizing that the creation of prisons, mental institutions and other kinds of asylums in the early nineteenth century came from an optimistic belief, unique to the "age of Jackson," that individuals could be remolded. He claims that the failure of the institutions to remake people resulted in a quick change of reformatories to places of incarceration, warehouses for the deviant. This book has been severely criticized by both those concerned with the history of social control and those interested in the history of social welfare institutions.[12] Both argue that Rothman oversimplifies, sensationalizes, and isolates the development of American institutions from their European origins. Even so, his book is probably more widely read and cited here. As a result, subsequent research on reform institutions has been forced to take a stand on the Rothman thesis. And

while there have been a few dissertations on prisons, little of this work has yet been published.

Several recent articles indicate that there is still much research to be done on policing in the nineteenth century and that some of this work will in fact generate refutable propositions and employ theoretically aware investigative approaches. One of the earliest of such articles was by John Maniha, who systematically explored police professionalism in one city, St. Louis, in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[13] Maniha presents a defined model of professionalism, relating a clear historical thesis of the model, uses an explicitly bounded data base, and examines the data in relation to both the theory and model. While his statistics are rudimentary, the study is accessible to challenge at any level and has conclusions which relate both to police history and the social scientific study of professionalism. He argues that the process occurred in four phases over a 130 year period, but that professionalization came only in administration, not in police work. In so doing, he has presented a model for understanding the development of a police bureaucracy, not policing, a model which can be evaluated for other departments and other bureaucracies. But the importance of this article lies not so much in its substance as in its methods, which make clear that the field has an alternative to anecdotal analysis.

A recent article by John Schneider on crime, violence and police in Detroit asks a broader set of questions over a shorter span of time than that covered by Maniha.[14] Looking at a thirty-year period in the mid-nineteenth century, Schneider takes a geographical perspective, arguing that

change in urban police and crime can only be understood within the changing spatial arrangements of growing cities. While his model is not as explicit as Maniha's, he develops his analysis around the notion of a socially constructed community, a paradigm proposed by sociologist Gerald Suttles. Schneider plots the locations of arrests, of police officer and offender residences in relation to the changing residential structure of the city, showing how police control over sub-groups, bachelors, for instance, became more focused and directed with increased competition for public space. This work holds particular importance in its account of both the necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence of a police who actively attempted to control public behavior which had previously been less visible and more tolerated.

Research by Eugene Watts, like that of Maniha, has also focused on St. Louis and emphasized social characteristics of police personnel, showing vividly how different sets of questions dictate the use of differing models and kinds of quantitative analysis.[15] His article, "Education, Recruitment, Career Patterns, and Perceptions of the St. Louis Police 1899-1970," uses multiple discriminant analysis on a data set which includes complete personnel files and survey questionnaires. His work attacks the notion of clear class origins of police recruits and shows the sharp periodization delineated by Maniha to be doubtful. The fluidity of the twentieth century occupational structure, rather than any rigid scheme, dominates the picture drawn by Watts, who ultimately questions the validity of any unique characterization of the policing occupation.

Two short articles of mine indicate yet another methodological direction to be taken in the study of the police.[16] My work in these articles focuses on the police as an urban bureaucracy and undertakes an examination of the bureaucracy's function through an analysis of its behavior, particularly arrests. Using annual data from police reports for the largest United States cities, my work uses an explicit model of police behavior, emphasizing indicators of police strength, police welfare activities, and homicide rates. Using multiple regression, the model both accounts for a significant proportion of arrest rates and suggest that broad changes in the function of urban police took place in the 1890s. These two short articles, and a much more extensive and thorough analysis in a forthcoming book, bring up a methodological problem in analyzing criminal justice systems and offenders in the United States - the vast diversity of records and sources. Today there are literally thousands of jurisdictions and criminal justice agencies with widespread variety in bureaucratic arrangements. For instance, some parts of metropolitan Los Angeles are patrolled by small municipal police forces, others sub-contract to the county sheriff's office, while the Los Angeles city police patrol the complex boundaries of the city itself. Although the nineteenth century did not see such a high degree of complexity, any systematic study which moves beyond the boundaries of one city or one county must contend with multiple record sources from differing agencies. Only at the felony court level does cross county consistency, of a sort, appear, and for states, prisons have the highest degree of comparability. But as each state has its own criminal code and federal offenses are relatively small in

number compared to state level offenses, any study which tries to analyze low-level bureaucracies must aggregate across a large number of agencies.

Studies which concentrate on the post-1945 era have the methodological advantage of access to comparative data collected by the FBI. While the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports began in 1930, the early years had severe reliability problems.[17] More recent data collected and aggregated by the FBI is better, and researchers like Kenneth Land and Marcus Felson have used this data in one of the best recent studies of police behavior.[18] Explicitly using theory to develop their model, they analyze expenditure data to account for police arrest behavior. Because their data came to them pre-aggregated on a national basis, they do not consider the historical or conceptual implications involved in aggregating across multiple police departments in diverse places for the test of their model. In terms of the analysis they present, such differences would matter little, yet the whole notion of a national basis for behavior is one which they accept without question -- a dramatic shift from the particularistic studies of the nineteenth century.

Several, non-empirical, left oriented studies of the development of United States policing from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century have also appeared recently. Each develops a model to account for both the role of policing and to describe police behavior, although none develop any empirical tests of their analysis.[19] The most interesting outcome of these works is a clear interpretive split between those which emphasize the police as

direct control agents of a bourgeoisie who actively and consciously monitor the working class, on the one hand, and those which argue that the police often represent working class demand and perceptions. This latter perspective, the most prevalent, looks beyond urban police to private police, the militia, and to state police, with the work of Andrew Scull, for instance, emphasizing the changing role of private police in protecting the interests of the bourgeoisie.[20] The speculations of this latter group of researchers may give rise to new conceptual developments and empirical work, although none of it has yet appeared.

Unfortunately, far less work has been done on those controlled by the criminal justice system than on the system itself. Of the work dealing with offenders, two perspectives have been used, often separately, sometimes jointly. The first perspective emphasizes per capita rates of offenses and relates these rates to larger social changes. The other perspective emphasizes an analysis of individual offenders and their social characteristics.

Two provocative articles by Roger Lane, one which appeared in 1968 and the other in 1974, argue from the rates of felony level courts that modernization and urbanization decrease the incidence of violent crime.[21] Similar arguments have been made about regional differences in homicide and suicide, but the work of Loftin and Hill has shown the multiple regressions which supported the argument to be seriously flawed by serially correlated errors, errors due to an essentially mis-specified model.[22] And in general, work with rates has tended to have vaguely specified models in a certain degree of ad hoc theorizing.

Those studies which have examined the social characteristics of individual offenders have also been guilty of some ad hoc theorizing, but most employ some form of hypothesis testing.[23] Harvey Graff, for instance, effectively demolishes the nineteenth century reformers' claims that illiteracy and criminality were causally linked, while Michael Hindus' examination of slave trials demonstrates clearly the bias of criminal proceedings against slaves.[24] And my book on Columbus, Ohio, explicitly tests the hypotheses that urbanization caused crime and pauperization and that poverty caused crime.[25] Thus, each of these studies takes on previously accepted generalizations which have become truisms and finds them to be lacking.

Given the interest in the police, the small amount of work on individual offenders is somewhat surprising. Several projects are underway as dissertations, but given the systematic availability of felony court records, especially, there is room for a great deal more research. Questions to be explored ranged from those more specifically covering criminal behavior to the broader issues in urban and social history. While I question the systematic availability of manuscript police arrest records, they exist for enough cities to contribute a new dimension to social science history. Certainly the generalizations of the present research on control systems, particularly that on the police and penitentiaries, is open to test through the records of individual offenders. And as long as the tendency to let the "facts speak for themselves" is assiduously avoided, these records constitute a sample with interesting and important dimensions.

While this survey has been brief and has not included all of the work of importance, it should suggest the concerns, questions, and methods of a field which continues to grow in liveliness. At this juncture the field is fragmented; the work varies greatly in quality and mutual awareness. Further, as the field publishes in a bewildering number of journals, scholars have been and continue to be isolated from one another, and the questions more often reflect the parochial concerns of the various academic departments of the scholars involved, rather than what should be the major substantive and methodological issues. The Criminal Justice Network of the Social Science History Association, while small compared to the interest and work in the field, has helped bring these various researchers together, and if it is possible to learn from one another it should occur within this network.

References

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2. Manuscripts have been solicited for this journal: write Henry Cohen, Dept. of History, Loyola Univ. of Chicago, 6525 N Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626, USA.
3. Three scholars in particular have opted for a more direct control model: Platt, Child Savers; Sidney L. Harring and Lorraine M. McMullin, "The

Buffalo Police, 1872-1900: Labor Unrest, Political Power and the Creation of the Police Institution," Crime and Social Justice (Fall-Winter, 1975), 5-14; Harring, "The Development of the Police Institution in the United States," Crime and Social Justice (Spring-Summer, 1976), 54-59; and Steven L. Schlossman, "Juvenile Justice in the age of Jackson," Teachers College Record (Sept., 1974) 119-133.

4. David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the American Republic (New York: Little, Brown, 1971).
5. Wilbur R. Miller, Cops and Bobbies: Police Authority in New York and London, 1830-1870 (Chicago: Univ. of Chi., 1976); Samuel Walker, A Critical History of Police Reform: The Emergence of Professionalism (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1977); Robert M. Fogelson, Big City Police (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1977); David R. Johnson, Policing the Urban Underworld: The Impact of Crime on the Development of the American Police, 1800-1887 (Phila.: Temple Univ., 1978). Two of my articles sketch an explicitly broad analysis: see note 16, below.
6. See note 1.
7. See note 5.
8. See note 5.
9. James F. Richardson, Urban Police in the United States: A Brief History (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat, 1974).
10. See note 5.

11. See Harold Pepinsky, "Social Historians: Write Your Criminologists," paper presented at the Social Science History Association annual meeting, Columbus, Ohio, Nov. 5, 1978, for a programmatic discussion of these requirements.
12. See William A. Muraskin, "The Social Control Theory in American History: A Critique," Journal of Social History (Summer, 1976), 559-568, for a cogent analysis. Also, Paul Boyer, Urban Masses and Moral Order (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), 58-60.
13. John K. Maniha, "Structural Supports for the Development of Professionalism Among Police Administrators," Pacific Sociological Review (July, 1973), 315-343.
14. John C. Schneider, "Public Order and the Geography of the City: Crime, Violence, and the Police in Detroit, 1845-1875," Journal of Urban History (Feb., 1978), 183-208.
15. Eugene J. Watts, "Education, Recruitment, Career Patterns, and Perceptions of the St. Louis Police, 1899-1970," in John Conley, ed., Current Trends in Criminal Justice: Theory and Research (Cincinnati: Anderson, 1979).
16. Eric H. Monkkonen, "Toward a Dynamic Theory of Crime and the Police: A Criminal Justice Systems Perspective," Historical Methods Newsletter (Fall, 1977), 157-165; "Systematic Criminal Justice History: Some Suggestions," Journal of Interdisciplinary History (Winter, 1972), 451-464.
17. Michael D. Maltz, "Crime Statistics: A Historical Perspective," Crime and Delinquency (Jan., 1977), 32-40.
18. Kenneth C. Land and Marcus Felson, "A General Framework for Building Dynamic Macro Social Indicator Models: Including an Analysis of Changes in Crime Rates and Police Expenditures," American Journal of Sociology (Nov., 1976), 565-604.
19. See note 3 for the mechanistic model. Bruce C. Johnson, "Taking Care of Labor: The Police in American Politics," Theory and Society (Spring, 1976), 89-117; and Robert Liebman and Michael Polen, "Perspectives on Policing in Nineteenth Century America," Social Science History (Spring, 1978), 346-360, for more complex views.
20. Steven Spitzer and Andrew T. Scull, "Privatization and Capitalist Development: The Case of the Private Police," Social Problems, (Oct., 1977), 18-29.
21. Roger Lane, "Urbanization and Criminal violence in the Nineteenth Century: Massachusetts as a Test Case," Journal of Social History (Winter, 1968), 155-163; "Crime and the Industrial Revolution: British and American Views," Journal of Social History (Spring, 1974), 287-303.
22. Colin Loftin and Robert H. Hill, "Regional Subculture and Homicide: An Examination of the Gastil-Hackney Thesis," American Sociological Review (Oct., 1974), 714-724.
23. For instance, Douglas Greenburg, Crime and Law Enforcement in the Colony of New York, 1621-1775 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell

- Univ., 1976). and Harvey J. Graff, "Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth Century: A New Look at the Criminal," Journal Of Interdisciplinary History (Winter, 1977), 477-491, both exemplify the dangers of ad hoc theorizing.
24. Harvey J. Graff, "Pauperism, Misery, and Vice: Illiteracy and Criminality in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of Social History (Winter, 1977), 245-268. Michael S. Hindus, "Black Justice Under White Law: Criminal Prosecutions of Slaves in Antebellum South Carolina," Journal of American History (Dec., 1976), 575-599. See also, Hindus, "The Contours of Crime and Justice in Massachusetts and South Carolina, 1767-1878," The American Journal of Legal History (July, 1977), 212-237.
25. Monkkonen, The Dangerous Class: Crime and Poverty in Columbus, Ohio, 1850-1885 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1975).