

Commentary: Some Trends and Issues in Citizen Involvement in the Law Enforcement Process

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The articles in this volume offer useful information on Guardian Angels, Crime Stoppers, Neighborhood Watch, and a variety of related community crime prevention activities. As is appropriate for delimited empirical inquiries, their microemphasis tells us about particular shrubs rather than entire landscapes. As a commentator, my focus will be on the larger social and political context. I will offer some observations on these studies, contrasting current citizen involvement with the situation we found in doing equivalent research on community police patrols two decades ago, and then indicate five issues that I hope future research can address.

Within the last two decades the research literature on citizen crime prevention efforts has significantly expanded. When Marx and Archer (1971) carried out systematic empirical inquiry into community police patrols 20 years ago there was almost no social science literature on the topic. As the articles in this issue with their extensive bibliographies make clear, that is no longer the case.

In making recent large-scale research on the topic available to a broader audience, this special issue of *Crime and Delinquency* makes a useful contribution. The articles in this issue are certainly informative and, in offering empirical generalizations, contribute to our cumulative knowledge about citizen crime prevention activities. But because the focus of the National Institute of Justice (the funding agent for much of the research) is on applied and evaluation research, the quantitative studies reported here are largely descriptive.¹

The quantitative research (with the exception of Skogan's welcome article) tends to be exploratory and is in general guided by neither explicit theories nor an effort to test propositions. With respect to policy

these articles help to clarify options and raises issues to ponder, but the empirical grounds for recommending specific actions (other than the qualified conclusion that most of these programs hardly work if the goal is only crime prevention) are not strong. In spite of considerable research in the last decade (or perhaps because of it?) many contradictory findings remain (e.g., whether high crime rates deter or spur anticrime efforts), and it is difficult to separate correlation from causality. Many of the strongest correlations are not subject to policy manipulation (e.g., the class characteristics or homogeneity of a neighborhood).

While the topic of this volume is deadly serious, some of the findings reminded me of an old joke. Just before the performance at a Yiddish theater is to begin, the manager comes out and says, "I'm very sorry to have to tell you that the great actor Yankel has just had a fatal stroke in his dressing room and the performance is canceled." A lady in the balcony cries out "quick, give him an enema." The manager says "Lady, Yankel is *dead*, an enema can't possibly help." To which she replies, "Maybe, but it won't do any harm." The same can be said for the impact of many of the programs studied here.

Consistent with the findings of most evaluation research into the impact of single solutions on complex social problems, it is not surprising to learn that the citizen-based programs studied have in general had modest impact.² Some pause is appropriate in the face of Skogan's statement that "the dominant policy questions therefore seem to be, how can local organizations be encouraged to adopt a crime prevention agenda, and how can new anticrime groups be spawned in areas where none are active?" It is also appropriate to ask whether scarce resources are best used in these ways.

Relative to the rhetoric that surrounds some of these programs, these articles are refreshingly honest in noting their limited effects. It is important to start such programs with a realistic assessment of what they are likely to do and to match programs to conditions. The finding by Garafalo and McLeod that Neighborhood Watch programs are likely to make the most difference when they are part of a comprehensive community organization seeking to address a variety of local problems, and in changing neighborhoods where local crime problems are caused by the incursions of outsiders is useful. Similarly, Bennett and Lavrakas argue for the importance of realistic expectations, and their data suggest the need to help establish, or reinforce, strong community-based organizations by providing resources and technical assistance in order to implement crime prevention programs successfully. It is noteworthy

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CRIME & DELINQUENCY, Vol. 35 No. 3, July 1989 500-519
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that the Eisenhower Foundation was able to implement crime prevention programs successfully and generate relatively high rates of participation in communities with the greatest need, which in the past have been difficult to organize and in which, according to Skogan's research, is found the least likelihood of providing opportunities for community organization.

Of course, as these studies make clear, crime prevention should not be the only standard used in evaluation. For example, as Pennell, Curtis, Henderson, and Tayman note, an important secondary benefit of the *Guardian Angels* is to offer youth positive role models and a chance for community service. Neighborhood Watch programs have improved police-community relations. Rosenbaum, Lurigio, and Lavrakas note that Crime Stoppers has been effective at solving specific types of "dead-end" cases.

But one senses a tension in some of these articles between the authors' findings and their initial preferences. The notion of citizen involvement speaks to our highest civic ideals and there are theoretical reasons for thinking that the strengthening of community and informal social control will make a difference. Many of those involved in patrol and community organizing activities are inspiring, even heroic, figures fighting incredible odds. Being the bearer of research news that finds that they have little impact does not make one happy (holding apart what it might do to the sponsors of the programs and the research). What then to do? Beyond trying to learn whatever one can from the research about how to make things better and defining goals broadly, Gramsci's call for optimism of the soul to fight the pessimism of the intellect is appropriate.

In 1971, Marx and Archer suggested a way of classifying community patrols based partly on whether they viewed their efforts as supplemental or adversarial relative to the police. In the last two decades there appears to have been an expansion of the supplemental groups welcomed, or at least tolerated, by police. I have the impression that neighborhood patrols represent a much smaller proportion of total volunteer effort than was the case in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Among the latter (apart from the *Guardian Angels*), the proportion that directly intervene rather than simply reporting to police also appears to have declined. While not documented in detail here, one form—the escort service—appears to have spread significantly. There has certainly been a decline in adversarial groups, at least those concerned with police abuse.

Beyond a more conservative time period, one factor here is the increased availability of resources and models for the creation of

supplemental groups. As these articles make clear, there has been a "professionalization of reform" (Moynihan, 1969; McCarthy and Zald, 1973). As a result of government and private funding, community crime prevention entrepreneurs are now available to help establish local programs. The National Institute of Justice, the National Sheriff's Association, the National Crime Prevention Council, and the Eisenhower Foundation, among many others, offer sponsorship and guidance.

In contrast to this top-down outside expert model of resource mobilization, many of the groups formed in the 1960s emerged more spontaneously in response to a strongly felt community need. They were less routinized and more informal. They learned by doing rather than from codified training programs and manuals of operation. They may have been more energetic, flexible, and in touch with community needs. But they also had difficulty maintaining themselves and rates of turnover for individual participants were high.

Contemporary groups with their greater degree of bureaucratic organization, traditions, and steadier financial and political support are likely to be longer lasting and less controversial, though, as several articles note, sustaining local interest after the initial active phase, which relied heavily on outsider involvement, can remain a challenge. The Eisenhower program described by Bennett and Lavrakas sought the advantages of both models of mobilization by seeking to link external and indigenous resources.

The relative success of the *Guardian Angels* studied by Pennell, Curtis, Henderson, and Tayman is intriguing. The Angels are supplemental to police who are likely to view them with ambivalence or hostility.³ According to the literature, their youth, voluntarism, independence from police and from government funding, and willingness to intervene in crimes would lead one to predict that they would have been short-lived (Marx and Archer, 1971; Yin et al., 1977).

However, since their founding in 1977, they have added 50 national chapters. To be sure, as the research reported here finds, activity varies considerably within these and the turnover rate is significant. Yet the endurance of the group is impressive. A charismatic national leader adept at press relations, a well-developed program and guidelines, a clear definition of what the group is about, community support, the youthful group (at least 8 members per patrol), and grassroots character help account for this.

Consistent with the more generally conservative societal ethos of the last decade, groups such as Court Watch and a variety of victim's rights

groups have appeared. They are adversarial in the sense that they are opposed to current practices—the criminal justice system is seen to be too soft on crime. For most of the adversarial groups that were dominant in the 1960s, such as the Black Panthers, the concern was with police repression. For Court Watch and its equivalents the concern is that the criminal justice system is not repressive enough.

The citizen-based efforts studied in this issue are one part of a broader trend involving citizen mobilization around crime and justice issues. Our frame of reference for thinking about citizen involvement should be expanded beyond patrols and hot line reporting to groups with related moral crusades such as those concerned with alcoholics and drug addicts, drunk drivers, child and spouse abuse, and the variety of grassroots groups opposing or supporting the death penalty, gun control, legalization of drugs, abortion, and so on. Such citizen concerns as expressed through social movement activity appear to have increased markedly in the last decade.

These citizen actions seek to change the environment of crime and justice just as citizen patrols do. One aspect is of course legal—by seeking stronger penalties or decriminalization. Another is educational and moral. Moral crusaders may target potential offenders rather than victims, and seek deterrence via moral suasion and warnings (choose "a designated driver," "just say no").

We need a conceptual framework and a census or ecological map of such social movements touching issues of crime, deviance, and order. This would help locate these seemingly unrelated activities alongside of the more familiar forms of citizen involvement such as patrols, hot lines, improved locks, and indelibly marking property. Insights from the study of social movements and collective behavior can inform our understanding of citizen mobilization around crime and justice issues (Mauss, 1975; Zald and McCarthy, 1986; Turner and Killian, 1987; Lofland, 1985).

Let me next turn to five areas that I hope future research can address. These are (1) a possible increase in individually aggressive and passive anticrime actions; (2) the privatization of government services; (3) the spread of access and location control strategies and the changing nature of public-private space; (4) racial and ethnic conflict; and (5) a society of informers.

AN INCREASE IN INDIVIDUAL AGGRESSIVE COUNTERMEASURES?

As homicide rates, attacks on bystanders (dehumanizingly referred to as "mushrooms" by some gang members), and property crimes have increased significantly in many urban areas (with the spread of crack being the latest spark) there appears to be an increase in aggressive actions by individuals, or at least a significant increase in the publicity given such actions. Citizen outrage at street crime may be reaching new levels with a concomitant increase in anticrime measures. It is not at all clear that this will eventually be channeled into communal endeavors, in spite of the increased availability of resources for this.

The popular *Death Wish* and *Rambo* films carry strong messages that update the traditional American strong-man frontier ethos. The phrase "Rambos not Sambos" has gained currency. Bernhard Goetz, a previous victim of street crime, shot four young blacks on a New York subway because he feared they were going to rob him. His case struck a responsive cultural chord and he has become a folk hero to many Americans, even as others are horrified by his actions, with perhaps a majority of persons feeling ambivalent. In many urban areas, the sense of crisis and desperation over urban crime issues seems particularly pronounced in the late 1980s. To what extent this is explained by the cumulative weight of past crime and disorder (in a straw breaking the camel's back model), by qualitatively new kinds of problems associated with crack and the easy availability of semiautomatic weapons, or by the filtering and distorting role that the mass media may play is certainly appropriate for academics to debate from the comfort of suburban homes. But as a jaded sociological observer sympathetic to the "social constructionist" view of reality, I am nonetheless struck by the difference in the tone of the contemporary debate. Are we now entering a period where citizens will be more likely to take the law into their own hands because the problems are perceived to be so terrible and the state is seen to be incapable of taking appropriate action—whether because it lacks the resources or will?

Dramatic examples are easy to find in the daily papers of almost any American city. In Long Island a man opened fire on a crowd he believed to be dealing in drugs. In Detroit two men set fire to a house in their neighborhood thought to be used by drug dealers. They acknowledged burning the abandoned house after police failed to investigate their complaints.⁴

In an earlier age vigilantes might have worn masks and denied their actions, while authorities looked the other way. But the scenario has changed. Now vigilante action may be publicly asserted and authorities are more likely to prosecute. Reminiscent of the newscaster in the film *Network* who led millions of angry citizens who were mad and unwilling to take it anymore, one of the Detroit arsonists reports: "I couldn't take it anymore, it didn't look like anything was going to change. I just said, 'This is it.' And we did it" (*New York Times*, October 22, 1988).

In the Detroit case, what might be seen as a "vigilante jury" found the men not guilty after they claimed they acted under duress and in self-defense. There appears to be widespread community support for their actions. The jury's foreman saw the action as a way of letting city officials know that more had to be done against drugs. Another juror said he would probably have done the same thing, but been more violent. In a feat of Olympian moral jui jitsu, where a morally questionable act is made to look good because it is not as bad as something else that might have happened, another juror said "the police couldn't stop the crack dealers. Would it have been better if they shot them?" A neighbor said, "I just wish they'd do it to more houses." The defense attorney states, "What is occurring in the streets now is anarchy. Should you just let criminals prey on your kids and shoot guns in the middle of the day until the police get around to it? No one is going to buy that" (*New York Times*, October 8, 1989).

There is a broader, poorly understood interdependence between citizen attitudes as expressed in their behavior on juries and as voters, and citizen anticrime measures that broach formal legality. To the extent that vigilantes perceive mass support they are more likely to act. They will feel morally justified and be unconcerned with prosecution.

The cultural meaning of self-defense may be changing to encourage aggressive responses. As a legal defense it traditionally referred to an immediate, clearly identifiable jeopardy, but now it is used to justify action taken in the face of cumulative or anticipated danger. What Black (1983) calls the "self-help" aspect of some conventional crime and in one form Katz (1988) refers to as "righteous slaughter" may mean increased crime undertaken in the name of protection.

Juries may come to be more accepting of actions justified by "self-defense," which to prosecutors look like felonies. In some recent well-publicized cases, battered women who assaulted, killed, or tried to kill their spouses have faced lesser charges, been found not guilty, or have had their sentences commuted. A "battered women's syndrome" self-defense has emerged in which continued violence from a male, the

impossibility of escape, and the indifference of authorities lead to claims of impaired judgment and the perception that murder is the only way out.

In a protest against local corruption, in Raleigh, N.C., two Tuscarora Indians took over a newspaper office and held hostages for 10 hours. They surrendered after the governor agreed to set up a task force to investigate their allegations of corruption in Robeson County. They too were acquitted of all charges by a jury (*New York Times*, October 14, 1988).

As Gorelick's article helpfully reminds us, media accounts of crime may bear little relationship to actual statistical trends, yet if we are interested in the impact of the media rather than its accuracy, then cases such as the above are significant.

It is possible to imagine a situation where prosecutors and police committed to the rule of law will nonetheless use their discretion not to arrest, or to prosecute, cases involving certain vigilante actions because they know juries will be unlikely to convict. This contrasts with an earlier justification for police and prosecutor inaction—sympathy for vigilantes—but the *de facto* result is the same and a message of legitimization is sent, or at least perceived.

Will this trend toward individualized aggressive responses transfer into more sustained and organized group activity that will come to be more within the letter and spirit of the law? It is important to have systematic measures of both individual and organized actions against crime and to understand how they relate. Does an increase in the first lead to an increase in the second, perhaps followed by a subsequent decline in individual actions? Or does an increase in individual crime prevention measures lead to a decline in the perceived need for more organized measures? Or do organized actions serve as models that legitimate additional individual actions (in a parallel to the gastronomic finding that the more restaurants there are on a block the more people eat out)? Do organized efforts help keep individual anger within legal bounds? Most research has tended to focus on either individuals or groups rather than looking at their interaction over time. No doubt a number of patterns can be identified depending on the conditions.

Is American culture becoming more supportive of aggressive individualized responses and will this lead to a spiral of crime and retaliation as criminals respond in kind? Such a trend of course would run counter to the basic insight of Max Weber, who saw the modern state increasing its monopoly over the means of violence and the gradual triumph of public over private means of maintaining order.

Passive Measures

In addition to active aggressive measures taken against identifiable targets, mention can also be made of a trend involving passive self-defense measures. Here I do not refer to target hardening activities such as better locks or weapons, or to withdrawing from social interaction, but to citizens voluntarily giving up some of their liberty for a perceived gain in security.

If Benjamin Franklin had lived in a high-crime area and had his car stolen several times, one wonders whether he would have written, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." In an interesting example, thousands of New Yorkers have voluntarily enrolled in a program to deter auto theft. They sign a consent form and put up two bright yellow badge-shaped decals on the back windows of their cars. Participants waive their Constitutional guarantee against illegal searches. Police are allowed to stop their vehicles and check the driver's identity, if they are driven between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m., the time when most car thefts occur. In the initial analysis this served to displace auto theft away from the cars with the stickers, but had no impact on overall rates of theft.

It is easy to imagine how such voluntary waiving of rights might spill over into other areas. Actions such as citizens agreeing to searches and video surveillance absent any grounds for suspicion when entering private space, agreeing to drug tests and searches of their lockers, desks, or cars at work, accepting monitoring of their private phone and computer communications, agreeing always to carry and provide an identity card and gladly providing personal data for computer dossiers may become commonplace in response to appeals to join in anticrime campaigns. Following the logic that only the guilty have something to hide, the failure to volunteer may call attention to persons as likely suspects. We need a conceptual framework that is broad enough to locate these passive, even self-denying, measures alongside of the more familiar individual and community crime prevention measures.

PRIVATIZATION

Citizen-based anticrime efforts of two decades ago often were seen as a last resort. There was little ideological justification to suggest that such

actions were preferable to a more efficient government criminal justice system. Indeed sometimes citizen action, or the threat of it, was part of a bargaining strategy aimed at improving the quality and quantity of government-provided criminal justice services. But in the last decade a clearer ideological rationale has emerged.

The issue of citizen involvement can now be seen as part of the broader debate in recent years over the proper role of government in American life. The increase in citizen initiatives is one strand of the privatization of what were once expected to be public services. Demands on government, which have increased far more rapidly than revenue, and dissatisfaction with many government services have led to a reexamination of the public and private responsibility for needed services. What should be left to individuals, families, and neighborhoods, and what should be provided by government? When should government directly provide a service rather than pay the private sector to provide it? What should be provided by volunteers and what by profit-seeking organizations? Former President Reagan's conservative ideology, which stressed the need to cut back on government, and President Bush's call for a "thousand points of light" gave increased prominence to private actions.

The call for privatization draws upon value themes that run deep in American life—beliefs about the greater efficiency of the marketplace, a preference for localism, and the importance of self-reliance and charity. Privatization can be seen as positive—a restoration or continuation of an honored American tradition of self-help where neighbors voluntarily come together to solve problems. Yet given unequal starting points, this call could easily lead to increased inequality in American life. The rich can afford to pay for services that the poor either will not get or will get in an inferior cut-rate or do-it-yourself fashion.

Citizen initiatives must be seen against this broader ideological backdrop with its rich potential for unintended consequences. While so far there have been few calls actually to disband public police departments (although some fire departments and prison systems are now privately run), the private provision of police services has increased markedly in recent decades. This takes two forms: (1) the hiring of private police, and (2) the hiring of off-duty public police.

Far more persons are employed in private than in public security work and the gap is increasing, but a simple counting of public versus private police is not useful since there is extensive moonlighting by public police. Until 30 years ago this was generally not permitted.

According to a study by Al Reiss reported in *Law Enforcement News* of January 1988, up to one-half of public police may now work in private security while off duty. On some shifts there may be more uniformed officers performing off duty than on.

To the extent that law and order issues come to be increasingly defined as the responsibility of the individual or local group, rather than government, large questions are raised. Will the official powers of public police (which come with them even in a private role such as carrying weapons and the power of arrest) be unfairly used to serve private interests? Conversely, will private police be used as a way to get around restrictions on public police and will liberty decline as a result (Marx, 1987a)? Will those officers who play both a public and a private role experience value conflicts? Will fatigue and pressure from off-duty work affect how officers perform while on duty? Will the image of public police be sullied if they are permitted to accept seemingly unseemly off-duty assignments such as bill collectors, body guards, and guards at places of adult entertainment? Will the true value of the public's investment in its police (training, equipment, insurance, benefits, and so on) be paid, or will the public in general offer a hidden subsidy to those who can afford to hire off-duty public police at a fraction of their actual "cost"?

Will the call for citizen involvement as an offshoot of privatization serve as another example of the cruel ironies of class and racial injustice, wherein the more privileged with lesser need have the means to pay for this privately, while the poor with fewer resources and greater need are left to solve problems on their own? To the extent that richer and better organized communities do create safer neighborhoods through private resources, will that mean displacement and increased crime in the poorest communities unable to compete in the coproduction of order, even as they may be helping to subsidize those who can?

ACCESS CONTROL AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PLACES

A related factor is the privatization of public space. A more efficient means of preventing crime than visible patrols is controlling access. Rather than going out looking for would-be perpetrators, why not exclude them from ever gaining access to victims? The rich have always been able to isolate themselves, whether in tall buildings with guarded

entrances or in walled private residential communities. But the growth of quasi-private spaces and the spread of a perimeter control strategy, even to public streets, is bringing the tactic to middle- and even lower-income persons.

The distribution of public-private space is changing. There has been an enormous growth in what can be called quasi-public or quasi-private places. It is a simple ecological fact that as the ratio of public to private places shrinks, so too does freedom of movement. Behavior in our society increasingly occurs in settings such as shopping malls, industrial parks, college campuses, airports, planned communities, and condominium complexes. These usually have well-defined perimeters and a limited number of points of entrance and egress, factors that aid access control.

Even in areas served by public streets we are seeing the beginning of the barricading of neighborhoods. In sections of Miami and Fort Lauderdale, for example, private guards control checkpoints and lower gates to stop cars. Advocates claim that the barricades are Constitutional because all motorists are detained and in principle allowed to enter, after drivers have answered questions and had their license numbers written down.

But even this may be a passing phase as new surveillance devices become more widely available. Our neighborhoods are likely to become the equivalent of the electronic, chemical, and biological fortresses of science fiction where advanced technological devices lock some in and others out.

In the future, electronic monitoring may eliminate the necessity of checkpoints. Thus electronic receptors could be placed in the road every 10 feet and if a passing vehicle did not give off a radio transmission indicating that it was a welcome vehicle, an alarm would be triggered and a camera would photograph the car and its occupants. Alternatively, or in addition, each vehicle could be fitted with a distinctive radio transmission signal and receptors would record the cars' whereabouts at all times.⁵ Navigational systems using satellites are now available to determine the exact location of hikers, as well as ship, train, and airline pilots. There is even a commercial navigational system available for cars that uses a CD player.

Technical developments offer new possibilities for the ethos of self-control and protection via the voluntary waiving of traditional rights noted earlier. It is easy to imagine, in the equivalent of an electronic scarlet letter, persons being fitted with signal devices as well. Note the

spread of house arrest systems in which an alarm is sent if the subject goes more than a few feet from a designated location such as a home. These are now being used in conjunction with computerized voice validation, telemetric breathalyzer readings, and even remote wide-angle lens video room scanning.

Citizens might volunteer to wear such devices as jewelry or even have them implanted under the skin (just as in one system a transmitter is hidden in a car). These would permit positive identification in case of an emergency and would also permit knowing the individual's whereabouts and would help offer proof that the individual was not guilty.⁶ When one adds to this the possibility of remote monitoring of bodily functions, the surveillance potential is astounding. Citizen volunteers of the future may need backgrounds in engineering and biology.

Observing the changing nature of public and private space and the activities of public and private police can help untangle a conceptually muddy area and help us understand social change. As Shearing and Stenning (1987) suggest, things are more complicated than a simple historic move from private to public policing. The process is neither linear nor irreversible. Depending on the context, private police and citizen volunteers in crime prevention roles can be seen as either continuous (whether parallel or merged) or discontinuous with public police. The picture is further clouded with so many public police also serving as private police.

Contemporary citizen and paid private police efforts to control space, carry out searches, and collect personal information surface novel issues and are likely to lead to legislation and Supreme Court rulings that will clarify the meaning of "public" and "private" for public policy purposes.

Researchers need to analyze the relations among citizen volunteers, paid private police, and public police. To understand the convergences and divergences and fusing and fragmentation occurring here it is necessary to ask: (1) Where does the policing occur—in public, private, or mixed space? (2) Whose interest is served by the policing—the general public, a private interest, or both? (3) What is the function of the policing? (4) Who pays for, or sponsors, the policing—public or private interests? (5) Who carries it out—regular sworn agents of the state with full police powers, special purpose deputies with more limited powers, or citizens with no official powers? (6) Who controls and directs the policing and to what extent is it subject to official regulation? (7) Where the policing involves data collection and investigation, who has access to the results? (8) What popular and self-definitions characterize those

doing the policing? (9) What organizational form does the policing take? (10) To what extent are control agents linked in informal networks that transcend their nominal labeling as public or private?⁷

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

During the unrest of the late 1960s, it was easy to imagine a future in which citizen involvement took the form of vigilante attacks on suspected offenders on the one hand and/or revolutionary attacks on police in the name of protecting the community on the other. Community police patrols organized along racial and ethnic lines, which define a given minority group as the problem, are not the norm. In spite of the widespread arming of the population, and a sometimes bewildering simmering ethnic cauldron, the United States has become neither Lebanon, Northern Ireland, nor South Africa. While racial and ethnic patterning is clearly a factor, polarization into armed camps has not occurred, at least not yet.⁸

It is important to study what factors inhibit this. The increased representation of minorities in government, particularly at the local level, is important. More sensitive police behavior and procedures for preventing and reporting abuse, at least relative to the 1960s, is also important. The traditional pattern where white vigilantes perceived themselves to be the victims of minority criminals and the criminal justice system was almost exclusively white has become more varied. Today minorities are most likely to be victimized by street crime and to suffer at the hands of other minorities. Minority representation as agents of the criminal justice system has increased and black neighborhoods may be more likely to have opportunities for citizen crime prevention activities than white neighborhoods.

A related factor is a trans-ethnic ideology that says that the problem is crime, not a given group. Integrated groups such as the Guardian Angels have an ideology that stresses racial harmony. The fact that community crime prevention efforts are often found in minority communities is also a factor. Such citizen efforts offer a context in which to study and facilitate racial and ethnic cooperation, as persons of diverse backgrounds come together to share in what can be an emotionally intense task.

What is new is the systematic and publicly aggressive way in which information is sought and the ease with which it can be reported, analyzed, and protected. The telephone technology that can bring persons closer together also permits a kind of technological distancing that is supportive of anonymous reports.

The case for this is clear. Police cannot be everywhere. In large diverse areas they depend on citizens for information about wrongdoing and wrongdoers. In some ways this is a continuation of the citizen-based policing that is the hallmark of the Anglo-American tradition. In its ideal form it contrasts with the imposed police of colonial and totalitarian societies.

As Rosenbaum, Lurigio, and Lavrakas make clear, efforts such as Crime Stoppers have aided in solving many cases. It would be useful to estimate what proportion of wanted persons who are apprehended as a result of these programs would likely have been apprehended eventually anyway. Virtually all observers agree that community support is the key to effective policing and crime control. We value our First Amendment protections to collect and communicate information freely. Yet there is obviously another side to this.

Informing in a democratic society offers us a queasy moral paradox, and this paradox is likely to become more prominent as current efforts to engage the public in antidrug and other moral crusades continue to gain momentum. Family relations may be harmed as children turn in parents or the reverse (Marx, 1987c). Neighborhoods may be divided (Klein and Luxenburg, 1987). Unscrupulous persons may use the anonymity of the system for malevolent and frivolous ends. Innocent persons may be wrongly identified as criminals. Societal trust may decline and suspicion increase. There may be escalation of conflict and the appearance of new crimes, as those informed against seek retaliation. In a tragic case in Kansas City, six people were killed in a fire believed started by drug dealers as retaliation for the occupants complaining to police about activities in a nearby drug house.⁹ Stickers on houses and apartment windows warning that the neighborhood or dwelling participates in a community crime prevention effort are meant to deter, but they can also be magnets for attack.

Gorelick's call for studying how crime news consumers receive and process the information they receive from newspaper crime-fighting campaigns also applies to other media. With respect to realistic television programs such as Crime Stoppers, it is important to ask to what extent these might increase fear of crime by bringing vivid details of gruesome events into the home. Do they have a "copy cat" impact and

stimulate new related crimes (the behavior is modeled and the criminal has gotten away), or might they serve to lessen such crimes by serving as a form of displacement? Unlike most of the television crime stories we view, this is real, not fantasy. What does it do to the actual victims and relatives of the crimes depicted to have to relive it? Is their privacy invaded as millions of persons see what they experienced?

We are becoming a "maximum security," "fish bowl," or "surveillance society" where our actions are increasingly visible to outsiders whether we will this or not, or even know about it or not. This has profound implications for crime control, work and health monitoring, and of course privacy, liberty, and community.

We know little about the extensiveness or correlates of many of the consequences of increased citizen involvement in surveillance (whether as watchers or watched). Nor has adequate thought been given to how we ought to balance conflicting goals and consequences. The point is certainly not to argue against increased citizen involvement, but it is to alert us to the possible unintended consequences of such programs and the need for future evaluations to attempt to assess these questions.

NOTES

1. While I have not followed the activities of the NIJ closely and indeed no longer even receive their mass mailings, I have the impression that their focus in general has become narrower and more technocratic and that emphasis is given to asking the little rather than the big questions. The constituency for its research is criminal justice practitioners with a job to do. In spite of the norms of science, the Institute does not appear to have been immune to the increased politicization of the Justice Department during the Reagan period. Some decisions were no doubt made more with an eye to the next election than the next generation.

2. Klein, Luxenburg, and King (this issue) report a striking difference in crime rates within the Starrett City housing development and its broader community. Yet its full-time paid private police force is something very different from the citizen efforts reported in the other articles.

3. Marx and Archer (1971) found that the attitude of a group toward police (adversarial or supplemental) was not a necessary determinant of police attitudes toward the group. In a number of cases, police opposed groups that defined themselves as supplemental.

This easy 1971 categorization of police response as either encouragement or opposition does not fit for the Angels. They require a third police response of indifference or ambivalence.

4. Detroit police estimate that there may have been as many as 100 such drug-related fires in 1988.

5. Such a system has been tested in Hong Kong as a means of controlling traffic. A small radio receiver in the vehicle picks up low-frequency signals from wire loops set into the streets and transmits an identification number, indicating where, when, and how fast a car is driven. Persons were taxed depending on when and where they drove.

6. A variety of other possibilities are considered in Marx (1987a, 1988, 1989). These illustrate some of the characteristics of the tendency toward our becoming a "maximum security society." This is composed of six subsocieties: a transparent society, a dossier society, an actuarial society, an engineered society, a self-monitored society, and a suspicious society.

7. The blurring of the line and types of interdependence between public and private police with respect to the area of undercover operations is treated in Marx (1987b), from which these questions are taken.

8. In writing about this I am mindful of the two political scientists whose book explaining why Lebanon's divided democracy was so successful was published just as civil war broke out there. Some evidence does suggest an increase in racial tensions—incidents on college campuses, swastika graffiti, the growth of skin heads and neo-nazi youth groups, the election of a former Klansman to the Louisiana legislature, and so on, though some of this may represent better means of documentation and communication in an age that is more sensitive to the dangers of intolerance.

9. An 11-year-old ad hoc group against crime is headquartered in a church a block from the burned house. The group runs a hot line and advises citizens about dealing with crime and how to spot and report drug houses. It posts a list of alleged drug houses. It designated February "Report a Drug House Month" (*New York Times*, February 18, 1989).

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