

DISASTER RESEARCH CENTER  
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43201

Working Paper #38

POLICE DEPARTMENT PLANNING FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCES:  
ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS INVOLVED IN CHANGES\*

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Work for this study was financed in part by U.S. Public Health Service National Institute of Mental Health Grant 5 RO1 MH-15399-03. A shorter version of this paper was presented at the Interamerican Conference on Criminology at San Juan, Puerto Rico on November 6, 1971.

revised 11/71

In this paper we examine the factors involved in changes in police department planning for civil disturbances. The nature of these changes as well as the internal and external organizational conditions affecting them are discussed on the basis of intensive field studies we have conducted around the country. But why we became interested in this problems requires an understanding of the range of responses to civil disorders by municipal police agencies, and how they historically have responded to criticisms of their behavior in actual and potential riot situations.

Civil disturbances have been rather common occurrences since the formation of the United States. As such, local law agencies for some time have had as one of their major functions, "the keeping of the peace." The maintenance of public order, however, can be carried out in various ways. Despite widespread polemics to the contrary, there are not just two possibilities. The police do not always simply and legally enforce the law against public disturbances, or deal as they sometimes claim with "bad, lawless, and deceitful troublemakers" in perfectly just ways (Campbell, Sahid and Stang; 1970:296). Likewise, the police do not always act illegally and violently against crowds or rioters, nor is it true as one title of a recently published academic article put it, " protest + police = riot" (Stark, 1969). The actual picture is far more mixed and complex.

Police have played roles in the initiation of disturbances ranging from attempts to prevent the outbreak of trouble to the actual instigation, either intentional or unintentional, of major violence. Within actual riot situations, police have been passive " spectators," quasi-rioters, as well as peacemakers and enforcers of the law. Public order has been restored by the police using unnecessary and indiscriminate force as well as through the use of very impartial and non-violent means.

Examples of such different behavior patterns can be cited from the past as well as recent history.

To assess the police role in the initial prevention of disorders and violence is difficult because of the simple fact that one can never determine the exact relationship between the way a potential situation is handled and the way in which the actual situation finally is resolved. Nevertheless, there are enough cases of police forces standing between groups or crowds of opposing demonstrators, as during many of the sit-ins and freedom marches in the early 1960's, to suggest that they were responsible for the lack of overt clashes between the contending groups. Lohman (1947) and Westley (1956) both document a number of cases where police actions seemed instrumental in preventing the emergence of mob and riot action especially in white-black clashes and strike situations prior to World War II. Shellow and Roemer (1966) also detail a case where a gathering of motorcycle club gangs had all the potentials of a riot which did not materialize, in part because of efforts by law enforcement agencies in the area.

On the other hand, police actions have at times been directly associated with the later outbreak of civil disturbances. In fact, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968:6) asserts that police actions were the "final" incident before the outbreak of violence in half of the riots they studied intensively (see also, Fogelson, 1968). Of course, there is little doubt that in the vast majority of these cases, the instigation of the ensuing riots was unintentional, although intentional provocation of public disorders is not totally unknown. In some recent

causes of campus disturbances the allegation has been made that they were provoked by unidentified plain clothes agents mingling with students, and there is evidence that labor disorders of the past were sometimes deliberately instigated by underground police provateurs (Misner, 1969:111).

Once a riot is underway, police action may take many forms. In some cases, as during the 1917 East St. Louis racial disturbance, police officers passively watched as white men assaulted blacks (Rudwick, 1966). More recently, on May 8, 1970, when construction workers beat up anti-war demonstrators around the New York City Hall, many of the police present were very slow to make attempts to intervene. In these cases, it is possible some of the police were sympathetic to the aggressors in the situation. In other instances, police appear to be passive spectators because they are so badly outnumbered that no effort to maintain the peace and enforce the law would seem a reasonable action. This would seem to have been the case during white attacks on blacks during the Springfield riot of 1908 (Crouthamel, 1960) and during the black looting of stores in the 1967 Detroit (Locke, 1969) and 1968 Washington disorders (Gilbert, 1968).

In relatively rare instances, police officers themselves join rioters or engage in actions which if undertaken by civilians would be defined as riotous behavior. Some of the police actions during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago were of this nature, enough in fact for the Walker report on the incident to characterize it as a "police riot" (Walker, 1968).

On the other hand, and seemingly in the majority of cases, police during riots attempt to act as peacemakers and enforcers of the law. In

certain incidents, their behavior is so exemplary that they win the praise of all sides. A classic case of this kind was the 1943 Harlem riot, where police actions during many clashes between blacks and whites was of such a nature as to win general approval by all parties concerned (Weckler and Hall, 1947:4-5; Grimshaw, 1963:272). Similarly a special task force of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence noted the praiseworthy behavior of the Washington police force during the counterinaugural protest activities on January 18-20, 1969. The report observes that despite 119 arrests and many confrontations with high potential for violence, "The reaction from all sides was complimentary to the Washington police . . . . On the whole they performed their difficult job splendidly" (Sahid, 1970:119-120). Similarly, although often forgotten because of what happened in the counterpart situation four years later, the police actions during the 1964 Republican National Convention have been praised (Misner:1967).

While it is difficult to separate police actions during riots and their efforts to bring disturbances to an end, a rough distinction can be made in terms of the tactics used, some of which seem more designed to stop a disorder than to apprehend disorderly individuals. In certain instances the police have been unnecessarily violent and discriminatory in their activities. As long ago as during the Civil War draft riots in New York City, police officers heaved white rioters off buildings (Headley, 1970:194); in the Chicago racial riot of 1919 the police were later condemned for disproportionately and violently apprehending black as opposed to white rioters (Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1922). There is also the famous "Memorial Day Massacre" of 1937 when the police attacked parading marchers including women and children outside of the Republic Steel plant in South Chicago and killed ten of them (Sargent and Williamson, 1958:486). Police behavior in terminating the 1968 Columbia University student sit-in appeared unnecessarily violent (Cox Commission, 1968).

On the other hand, law enforcement agencies in many disorders have used impartial and non-violent means to bring disturbances to an end. Thus, recent college campus disorders, when all of them are taken into account, appear to have been terminated in the majority of cases without the use of force, tear gas, or even arrests. The more dramatic instances of violent clashes between students and policemen often obscure this point. (Peterson, 1970:59-80). In fact, as most students of collective behavior can attest, most crowds of all kinds dissolve upon the appearance of large groups of policemen, with their very presence rather than any aggressive action on their part dissolving the crowd.

The previous examples and many more that could be cited illustrate the fact that police behavior in actual and potential riot situations, both in the past and recently, has been quite varied. Some of the behavior which deviates from expected standards in keeping the peace has consistently evoked strong criticisms of the police (Skolnick, 1969:240-292). However, there is a difference in the current as contrasted with most past waves of incidents. They have evoked a different general reaction on the part of the police themselves.

Wade (1969:22) in a historical examination of reactions to public disturbances in America from those in Cotton Mather's Boston of 1721 to the present, remarks that it is typical in postmortems after riots "to blame the local police for incompetence, for prejudice, for intervening too soon or too late, or not at all." He also observes that in the past "after quiet was restored there would almost certainly be a discussion of police reform. Customarily little came of it."

There have been some exceptions. Thus, one earlier wave of 19th century urban turmoil led to the evolution of the major agency of formal social control in the local American community: the modern police force. As Graham and Curr (1969:792) state it: "The professional city police system replaced the inadequate

constabulary and watch-and-ward in response to the rioting of the 1840's and 1850's, largely in the Northeast." Concern in this particular instance did lead eventually to organizational change.

If our subsequent analysis is valid, we can suspect we are in the middle of another major transformation of American police departments. As needs no documentation, there is considerable criticism about the performance of the police in recent civil disturbances (although sociologists do not always observe that the public at large is far more favorable to the police than the social critics, thus, for example, according to national polls, police actions during the 1968 Democratic National Convention were widely approved). We shall try to show that a reaction to the criticism at the departmental level to a considerable extent is taking the form of planning. The organizational concern evoked by vocal criticism about the behavior of police departments, is being translated into internal planning for both the prevention and suppression of civil disorders. In varying degrees and in different ways, American police planning for potential and actual civil disturbances has markedly increased over the last few years.

#### Study and Data

The rest of this article is primarily focused on the nature of that planning. We will first discuss the current state of civil disturbance planning on the part of 18 large police departments in the United States. Some observations will be made about actual police operations during civil disorders, but the major focus will be on police plans for large-scale disturbances. This primarily descriptive account is followed by an analysis of the organizational factors influencing the planning itself. Undoubtedly many factors are involved in the present concern of police about their own behaviors in maintaining public order. However, our major interest is in what is affecting, at the organizational level primarily, the implementation of this concern into planning and actual operations. Hopefully,

this kind of analysis will not only suggest some trends in police planning for disturbances but will also indicate some general factors that may be operative in bringing about changes in these kinds of organizations.

Our data are from a study underway at the Disaster Research Center (DRC) at The Ohio State University. Unlike most research in this area which typically focuses on victims, individual participants, or objects of social control attention, the Center has tended instead to look at the operation of organizations and groups involved in community emergencies, and this study follows this pattern. We have thus looked at eighteen major police departments around the country as part of our continuing study into the nature of community and organizational preparations for and response to both natural disasters and civil disturbances. High level personnel (including in almost all cases the chiefs and operational deputies) have been interviewed extensively regarding the emergency plans of their departments. In addition, documents of many kinds, including copies of plans for community emergencies, have been obtained. While a few departments did not want to release copies of their specific riot plans, they nevertheless were willing to discuss them in detail. Because the plans in part were obtained on a confidential basis, none of the departments in this particular study are identified, but it can be said that all but two of the cities involved have over 100,000 population, are located in all parts of the country, and have had a range of past experiences with community emergencies -- especially civil disturbances.

In dealing with the views of police as to their tasks during civil disorders, it is well to be aware of how they view their job during routine everyday operations. Niederhoffer, a former police officer turned sociologist, in his book (1967:11) lists six official functions performed by any police organization. These are: (1) the protection of life and property; (2) the preservation of the peace;

(3) the prevention of crime; (4) the detection and arrest of violators of the law; (5) enforcement of laws and ordinances; and (6) safeguarding of the rights of individuals.

One police officer in an interview, however, put it more simply by stating that police functions revolve around the prevention of crime of all kinds before it happens and the suppression of crime after it occurs. He went on to note that the emphasis was probably more on the latter than the former-- a correct observation according to most students of the police. The general suppression emphasis is the result of many factors, not the least of which is budgetary. For example, it is obviously easier to obtain money for suppression activities because it is relatively simple to provide statistical data such as arrest records and crime rates to support departmental claims. On the other hand, it is more difficult to get resources for prevention activities due to the difficulty in documenting that such activities are (or will be) effective in preventing crime.

It was not surprising, therefore, when we started our study of police departments, to find that they were stressing suppression of civil disturbances both in their planning and actual street operations. Suppression as used here refers to the actual implementation of various means of social control such as the use of reasoning or physical force in an attempt to end an in-progress disturbance. In terms of suppression, almost all departments contacted viewed themselves as the primary agent of social control in the event of a disturbance. They feel they have the major responsibility for handling community disorders and other agencies such as the National Guard are to be employed only if local resources are exhausted. Only two of the departments we studied, because of special local circumstances, planned to delegate the actual task of quelling any disturbance to the National Guard. Both police departments, among the smallest of those we studied, took the position that they were not adequately equipped or manned to handle any but very

minor civil disorders. In both cities involved, in fact, the National Guard was quickly called in when racial disorders occurred, although the police departments still continued to see themselves as having the overall responsibility and being the primary agent of formal social control in their communities.

In the course of the five years of our study, however, we found that even though there was and is an emphasis on suppression, a shift in basic orientation occurred in many police departments. In terms of the strategies to be used in quelling a disturbance two basic approaches (subject, of course, to much tactical variation within each category) stand out. There is what might be called the "show of force" strategy and the "containment" strategy. The "show of force" strategy prevailed several years ago but today almost all the departments we studied have shifted to a "containment" strategy.

Historically, the "show of force" strategy has been the traditional one. It involves immediately sealing off an area so no one can get in or out. The streets are cleared of all civilians by massed units of heavily armed police officers and large scale arrests are made. Only such warnings are given as are legally required, e.g., reading of the local riot act. Use of massive firepower is not ruled out (and in several of the cities we studied some indiscriminate shooting by some police officers during earlier disorders had occurred). In this approach the basic goal seems to be to commit a maximum number of men and equipment to the "battle" in a minimum amount of time. Underlying the approach appears to be the assumption that all crowd violence is best controlled and subdued by the rapid presence of a great amount of massive force, the presence to be turned into actuality if any resistance is met. The approach stresses visible force and speed of response but is somewhat inflexible in terms of quickly adapting to situational contingencies during or after the initial sweep, and in the maintenance of adequate

back-up reserves.

"Show of force" as a viable strategy, however, has lost almost complete official favor in most departments. Even several years ago, higher echelon police officers in particular were often dubious about its effectiveness. In part, the reasoning was pragmatic. As one recent survey established, nearly 75 percent of all cities of over 100,000 population have less than 500 policemen in their whole police force (Campbell, Sahid and Stang, 1970:312), thus indicating that not too many departments can gather together many men for a massive "show of force". Other early objections voiced had to do with humanitarian concerns. Whatever the reasons, today the "containment" approach is generally the official position in the departments we studied. This approach is similar to the "show of force" in that the disturbance area is sealed off. Curfews, and the closing of liquor stores, bars and gasoline stations are also part of this strategy. However, instead of a massive and rapid display of force, a gradual and discriminating approach to the restoration of order is implicit in the "containment" strategy. Specific tactics vary from one police department to another, but it is generally expected that ample warning will be given that the police will come into an area, that only selective arrests will be made, and that physical force or even the use of tear gas will be only a last resort tactic. Also, instead of assuming that massive firepower might have to be employed, special sniper squads have been trained to handle such shooting as may occur. In most places, too, it is anticipated that community leaders and key members of neighborhood groups may be allowed to move through an area and make pleas for order and for people to disperse.

The "containment" strategy minimizes the risk of either injury or death to both police and civilians while allowing a great deal of flexibility on the part of the police and in the use of resources. A guiding assumption is that the moderate use of selective force might avoid the necessity of having to employ massive and

indiscriminate forceful tactics that may only escalate an already existing disturbance. It seems clear that most higher echelons of police departments and many of the officers in key operational positions are now committed to a strategy of "containment," even though it does not appear that there is a total across-the-board acceptance of the official position in all departments, particularly at the patrolman level.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the "containment" strategy exists not only in police department plans but has actually been generally implemented in a number of incidents, in disorders in inner cities and around campus areas.

To summarize, police departments see themselves as having the prime responsibility for the maintenance of order and they plan to achieve this through suppressive activities. However, in the last few years, the emphasis in suppression has changed from a "show of force" to "containment." This shows up not only in the plans of the police departments we have studied, but to an extent has manifested itself also in the police actions taken in actual disturbance situations.

In addition, another trend in police planning, probably more important than those just discussed, has appeared prominently. It is an interest in and activities devoted toward the prevention of civil disturbances, rather than just their suppression. An interest in this, as indicated earlier, is in line with the general police function of preventing crime rather than just responding to illegal acts when they occur. But while police departments may not be engaging in many preventive activities in general, there is a definite move in this direction insofar as civil disturbances are concerned. Prevention as used here means the commitment of resources to various long-run programs or policies designed to forestall the possible outbreak of disturbances and/or alleviate conditions thought to lead to civil disorders.

Not all the police departments we studied had planned or were engaging in

prevention programs. Two, in fact, were not only failing to take active roles in attempts to prevent disturbances, but also they expressed almost no interest in such activities. They were the two smallest departments we looked at and served relatively small urban centers. One of the departments had availed itself of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) money but had used it all for the purchase of such things as automatic shotguns and "instant banana peel." The other small department had done nothing at all of either a suppressive or preventive nature, the only one of our eighteen police organizations falling into such a category.

In departments with some preventive emphasis there was considerable variation both in what was planned and what was actually undertaken. At one end of the continuum, involving the smaller number of organizations, were those departments with certain elementary programs but where the guiding assumption seemed to be that prevention is better handled by other agencies whereas suppression is the more proper jurisdiction of the police. These departments therefore engage in only a minimal amount of prevention planning and activities, sometimes at the prompting of outside groups. One department which falls into this category is promoting such activities as police lectures at schools and clubs and is setting up complaint centers in various neighborhoods where trouble is likely. In addition, special training courses on human relations have been developed for police officers, and special courses for patrolmen are being developed with a local university. However, each of these programs is rather minimal in terms of the personnel involved and the resources committed, and nowhere near the magnitude of the programs some higher echelon officers felt were necessary. Nevertheless in this city as well as others with similar kinds and levels of preventive programs, this is a substantial increase in effort over a few years ago when nothing at all of this nature was even thought of, much less attempted.

The largest group of the police departments we studied fall into a third category of preventive planning and activities. They have a great variety of programs involving policemen of all ranks and directed at both intra-departmental as well as community factors that might bear on the outbreak of civil disturbances. In some cases, considerable resources as well as extensive planning has been committed to preventive activities. In one city, for example, as reported by Kreps (1971:132) in a separate DRC study related to ours, the following occurred. Detailed civil disturbance planning was formally instituted in the police department in 1966 and all plans are revised annually. Crowd control is a formalized aspect of both recruit and in-service training; in addition, forty-three hours of community relations training is required of all recruits and sixteen hours of community relations workshops exist at the in-service level. A new specialized subunit for community relations established within the department is staffed by seven full-time and numerous part-time level personnel carrying out more than twenty community oriented programs with twenty more programs in the planning stage.

In another city, the following exists chiefly as a result of police department initiative. Every week, the chief of police along with the mayor and other high ranking city officials meet in City Hall. Anyone, no matter what his political philosophy, may come and voice complaints about any matter over which the city has jurisdiction. In many cases, verified by DRC interviews with interested parties, the complaints are not only heard but acted upon by the police or whoever has responsibility in the area of complaint. In addition, there are a series of other programs in the city ranging from the sponsoring of talent shows to the establishment of a police community relations group within the department.

In fact, the development of a community or human relations unit within the police organization itself is often a good indicator of a strong preventive

orientation. To be sure, in some cases such units have been created more for public relations reasons and are not taken too seriously within the department, but more often such groups are intended to deal with both larger community problems as well as internal departmental matters that could become the eventual source of outbreaks of civil disorders. In part, the community relations groups are used in a feedback fashion to assess points of developing conflict within the community as well as for locating departmental factors that could contribute to civil disturbances.

In particular, police departments with a strong preventive orientation seem to work as much at potential sources of problems within as outside the organization. For example, efforts are made to change the training of policemen so that they will be sensitive to how their actions might exacerbate already tense police-ethnic group relationships. This usually goes far beyond mere crowd control tactics -- in some cases it involves such matters as psychological tests to screen out "undesirable" personality types applying for police jobs and the extensive use of different kinds of encounter group and sensitivity training procedures.

As might be expected, the development of a high level of preventive planning and action is associated with an increasing emphasis on a "containment" strategy of suppression. Part of this strategy involves establishing rapport with neighborhood leaders and also assumes that a potential or actual riot situation is more of a symptom rather than the base root of the problem in itself. However, this observation raises the question of what is involved in these recent changes in police planning for civil disturbances, a consideration to which we now turn.

## Factors Affecting Police Planning

All the police departments we studied are complex, bureaucratically organized social entities. This is a fact which poses limits to the plans that can be developed. On the other hand, there are certain aspects of such kinds of organizations that might act as sources of change. For example, it might be supposed that police departments with more and greater experience with civil disorders might be more inclined to develop civil disturbance plans. The amount of resources, the wealth of an organization could clearly also affect its planning efforts. Finally, if professionalization is an index of rational adaptation to problems, it should be anticipated that plans for civil disorders might be more readily developed in more professionalized police departments. While these are certainly not the only internal factors that might affect planning, they are surely among those that might be particularly relevant and were among those we examined in some detail.

In addition to internal factors, there are external factors that could influence planning. Each police department is part of a greater social milieu composed particularly of other community organizations and the populations which they are supposed to service. This social environment, as in the case of intra-organizational aspects, limits but can also facilitate any possible planning for civil disturbances. Thus, it could be supposed that extensive linkages with other police departments and intensive ties to other community agencies might increase the probability of civil disorder planning. Also, it might be thought that planning might be accelerated if departments thought that identifiable, local segments of the population were the main sources for participation in disturbances. Here again this does not include all external factors that might be operative, but does involve three that seem especially relevant and were looked at intensively in our study.

Thus for expository and analytical purposes we will divide the following

discussion into major intra-organizational factors and extra-organizational factors that might influence police department planning about civil disturbances.

#### Intra-Organizational Factors

Logically it might be anticipated that prior community experience with disturbances would be very highly correlated with police planning for disorders. This is not the case although there often is a link between the two. Civil disturbances in a community generally raise concern about the police response but in the departments we studied did not always lead directly to planning either of a suppressive or preventive nature. The converse is also true. Some police departments in localities without a prior history of any major disturbance nevertheless launched large scale planning efforts. There can and often is an association between experience and planning, but there is not always a close and direct link.

This can also be seen in the previously mentioned DRC study done by Kreps (1971:123-125). Overall, there was a correlation of .60 in his rank order study between organizational change in police departments and objective existence of civil disturbances. (In passing, we may note the same approximate pattern appeared for fire departments.) But in his fourteen city study he found that one city which ranked fifth insofar as disturbances were concerned, ranked only fourteenth in organizational change in its police department. Although the city had undergone three civil disturbances lasting a total of nine days, there was no formal civil disorder planning of any kind and a community relations unit that had been established was disbanded after only three months. Kreps states (1971:137) "the organization experienced little change, both relatively and absolutely." Still another city in his study ranked only eleventh in civil disturbances but fifth in police department changes.

What we have here of course is an old finding in sociology. What actually exists in a situation at best only partly determines if and what kind of response there will be by the human beings and social groups involved. The actual experience of disturbances, or the absence of disorders is only at times partly related to the presence or absence of police department planning for those kinds of community emergencies. Thus, the fact that civil disturbances have almost become a way of life in some inner city areas and on college and high school campuses does not automatically lead to major planning for such events by police departments. Another implication here is that ineffectiveness in handling a civil disturbance will not necessarily bring about police efforts at organizational improvement for similar future events.

Seemingly, somewhat more important than experience are the resources a police department can bring to bear. If we treat size ( in terms of budget, manpower and extent of domain) as an index of resources, we find something of a correlation with police planning. The larger the size of the department the more likely there is extensive planning. The bigger a department is, the more men it can allocate not only for overall planning but for preventive activities per se, the more money it can put into those operations, and the more likely it is to have a large and therefore more troublesome domain to cover. (This last point is related to the probability as defined by police, that if their jurisdiction encompasses a very large area, the more likely "disturbance prone" groups will be located in widely scattered pockets and clusters within the police jurisdiction rather than being concentrated in one more easily handled compact area.)

The influence of one of these factors, the size of the budget, is illustrated in the following example of a department wishing to expand its prevention activities. The plan was to raise the salaries of officers along with the quality of training given each recruit. Also, it was planned to expand community related

activities such as the sponsoring of clubs and programs in high schools. These intentions, however, were dependent in large part on the passage by local voters or a rather small raise in the income tax rate. But the levy failed and thus the department was unable to expand its programs and improve its quality.

However, while size (and thus resources) of a department is a factor in the development of police planning for civil disturbances, it is not the only major factor. In fact, it would be particularly misleading if the implication were left that resources are to be equated with money, and that availability of money is the prime factor. Actually, most important of all internal factors affecting the development of police planning for civil disturbances appears to be the degree of professionalization in a department.<sup>2</sup> To the extent that the availability of funds is the major factor, it is probable that such planning as is undertaken will be of a suppressive nature. Whereas when resources in general are combined with a professional orientation the greater the likelihood of preventive planning for civil disturbances, and that is now the modal pattern.

What is happening insofar as professionalization of police department is concerned, seems to be paralleling in part changes in the military. Janowitz (1960) notes the new and changing military technology altering the structure of the armed forces and what kinds of persons get into authority positions. Similarly in police departments there is a new technology in the broad sense of the term. That is, new technical advancements such as computer data banks as well as the increasing social complexity of police work requiring, for instance, skilled administrators means there is a necessity for better trained officers and more specialized training. Thus, as a result of technological changes, the professional standards of most police departments are rising. Associated with this is that promotions to authority positions also come to be increasingly based on competence and knowledge in addition to seniority.

The recent wave of civil disturbances in American society occurred at a time when strongly professionally oriented officers had taken over most of the specialized staff positions and a fair number of the second echelon line positions in many police departments. It is clear from our interview in the departments that we studied, that the disorders provided such officers not only an opportunity to move in with new ideas about police work, but enabled them to use their professional skills and attitudes to press for their views against the more traditional orientation. Departments with a great number of middle echelon professionally oriented police officers or where such officers occupy key administrative positions, clearly have moved toward preventive police planning in particular. In one major department we studied, a new, non-traditional police chief coming in from the outside was able to place a handful of very professional junior officers in key positions, and in a two-year period brought about major changes in police planning for civil disturbances especially, almost totally reversing the previous traditional posture of the organization. (Other supportive conditions must of course be present for in another department we studied, a somewhat similar effort is currently the basis of a very intense struggle for control between "traditionalists" and "professionals".)

#### Extra-Organizational Factors

As indicated earlier, any organization is to a greater or lesser degree dependent on its surrounding environment and is therefore forced to adapt its planning and activities somewhat to demands stemming from such relationships. One such category of relationships which is affecting police planning is what Evan

(1966:176) calls the "organization-set". This concept is derived from that of "role-set" but where the unit of analysis is an organization instead of a social status. Analysis proceeds by tracing the relationships of a given organization with other organizations and elements in its set.

In terms of the police, three crucial relationships would appear to be the population interacted with by the organization, other community agencies, and other police departments. Our study indicates their importance in civil disorder planning increases in the stated order. That is, the relationship to the population interacted appears to be relatively least important, the other community agencies more important, and other police departments most important of all in affecting police planning for civil disturbances. All the relationships are important but they are not of equivalent importance.

Police departments in any community stand in varying degrees of friendliness and hostility toward different segments of the population in their jurisdiction. While there is some evidence showing that the degree of enmity between the police and -- to take two currently salient categories -- "blacks" and "students" may not be as sharp as commonly believed,<sup>3</sup> there is little reason to question a generally strained relationship these days between police departments and these segments of the population. In the departments we studied, these categories of persons are typically seen as the potential sources of participants in disturbances. This would suggest that considerable police planning might be developed with such local segments of the population in mind. However, the actual picture is somewhat more complicated than that just implied. Some local segments of the population have become very salient in the intelligence activities of most if not all departments, but that kind of organizational response is something different from the kind of

planning we have been discussing. Furthermore, even the most professional of departments still give considerable credence to the role of "outside agitators" in civil disturbances (although in many cases in a far more sophisticated and non-paranoid fashion than the phrase typically connotes). In a sense, this distracts attention away from local groupings. Finally, as already indicated several times in this paper, concern is not always translated into action, or even just planning activities.

On balance it can be said that the relationship of the police to local segments of the community population is clearly a factor in police planning for civil disturbances. In fact, much preventive planning is developed to neutralize the possible participation in disorders by local residents. However, in part for the reasons indicated, this relationship is less of a factor in influencing planning than the relationship of the police with other community groups.

Important in affecting police planning is the relationship of the police department with other community agencies and officials, although the effect is seldom direct or simple. Part of the complexity stems from the varying degrees of autonomy police departments in different cities have with regard to the mayor's office especially. The range is from virtual autonomy to almost complete political domination with most departments in our study falling in what Wilson (1968: 227-277) considers the most common pattern, that is they have relative autonomy. In general, autonomy seemingly leads to the development of preventive planning, in part because such departments tend to take their models from visible police departments who themselves are likely to be preventive oriented. On the other hand, we do have at least one case among the departments we studied, where changes in police disturbance planning in part stemmed from a new mayor installing a new police chief with both working to change the traditional posture of the

department. In most cases, however, the more the direct influence of the mayor's office and/or city council over the police department, the more likely it appears the police department will have a suppressive emphasis and generally less concern with overall civil disturbance planning. Given the political pressures mayors and councilmen are subjected to, this is what could be expected. In any case, the nature of the relationship between the police department and the mayor's office does seem to have an effect on planning one way or another.

In addition, virtually all departments have formal or informal mutual aid pacts with other law enforcement agencies in their area, and also often with the National Guard. This is almost always in terms of suppressive rather than preventive activities. The initiative and planning of other law enforcement groups in a few cases seems to have consciously reinforced the disturbance planning on the part of some of the departments we studied. In general, contact of almost any kind with other police groups that necessitates some kind of cooperative or joint effort almost inherently pushes a department to develop its plans further.

But clearly most important of all in influencing planning for civil disturbances are the key reference organizations for most departments -- other police groups elsewhere. In our earlier field studies (around 1966) of police departments, one observation stood out above all others: that many police organizations, whether they themselves had experienced a racial disturbance or not, were sending observers to other cities frequently during the actual time such other localities were experiencing disorders. The objective in most cases was to learn the problems associated with the new wave of large-scale civil disturbances, and to see what lessons, particularly of an operational nature, could be learned. This was at a time when not too many departments had elaborate plans for disorders and when the basic strategy emphasized was "show of force."

In the next several years a distinctively more elaborate and substantively somewhat different pattern emerged that might be considered the development of a planning information network. That is various, almost institutionalized, means came into being by which planning and related information could be exchanged. For example, in one of the police departments we studied, fairly continuous contact is maintained with at least seven other cities, most of which had undergone civil disorders. During a four year period, members of this department made at least six site visits to riot events and attended six conferences and seminars on civil disorder problems. Half a dozen civil disturbance plans were borrowed from departments and carefully examined, and a series of relevant publications on the topic were subscribed to on a regular basis.

Associated with all these activities--visiting, meeting, reading, etc.-- is the fact that some police departments became important focal points in the information network. For instance, one police department we studied in a city with many and extensive civil disturbances, maintains fairly continuous contact with thirty-two other departments outside of the state with the specific goal of exchanging information about mutual problems. The focal police organizations tend to be highly professional and strongly oriented toward preventive planning. In one such department we looked at, twelve different subunits are directly involved in the development of organizational change, and another twenty-eight persons participate in or evaluate the process. The general organizational model presented to other departments is one of much professionalism, the importance of planning, and the necessity to go beyond suppression activities to prevention insofar as civil disturbances are concerned.

It is noticeable that the smaller departments we studied were those that lagged in developing plans and shifting to a preventive orientation, and also have been last in dropping the "show of force" strategy. What seems to be

involved is that smaller departments tend to have fewer resources and tend to be less professional, and thus tend to remain outside of the police informational network that has emerged in the last few years. In a sense, these departments are not as aware of the newer organizational model being presented by the focal police departments.

Undoubtedly there are other factors besides those discussed that influence police planning for emergencies. We do not pretend to have examined them all. However, other factors that are sometimes suggested as possibly being important were not directly salient in the data of our study. We have in mind such factors as the availability of LEAA funds, governmental commission reports condemning the police, direct intervention of community power figures especially outside the political realm, police unionization, regional differences in law enforcement, and spotlighting of police actions by mass media groups. Either they did not show up as important in our observations, or they are mediated through the factors we did discuss, or they are very important in police operations but not with regard to organizational planning activities, the focus of our study.

#### Some Concluding Observations

We have primarily discussed police department planning although at different points we did make reference to the actual implementation of plans. Our overall impression is that most plans will be generally implemented in most departments.<sup>4</sup> We might not have said this several years ago, but currently the various policies instituted, the general orientation of higher echelon officers,

and specific alterations of recruitment, training, and field procedures almost assure that the projected disturbance planning of most police departments will become manifest to a considerable degree in their actual structure and functioning. In short, we do believe that American police departments as a whole are undergoing major organization transformation.

However, even if this happens as we project, it does not mean that all police problems in relation to civil disturbances will be solved or that everyone will be satisfied with the end result. There will be overall organizational change, of that we are fairly certain. But whether the change will be effective insofar as the intended goal is concerned is far more problematical. And whether this organizational change will mute the criticism of the police is even more dubious.

For one, it is hardly to be expected that all police departments will change so that such organizations will be homogeneous. Currently specific departments differ widely in their degree of professionalization, their planning efforts, their training of recruits, their operational policies, and so on. There is no reason to think there will not continue to be a range of structural and functional differences in the future. It might be possible to say that American police departments as a whole will generally undertake preventive disturbance planning and be more professional in the future, but this will not preclude any number of specific departments deviating considerably from the modal pattern.

More important, there is little evidence at present to allow us to state that if all the planned changes were instituted, that they would improve either

the prevention or suppression of civil disturbances, or make police departments better, whatever better might mean. The question is not whether they might, for they might achieve those ends. Rather the issue we are raising is whether there is much evidence that the planned changes, do or can have such intended consequences. The current answer is clear; we have little hard evidence. On general grounds, furthermore, doubts can be raised, for example, whether the psychotherapy involved in the current fad for group encounters and sensitivity training will contribute to the solution of organizational and social problems. Possibly, but one would be hard pressed to point to concrete data supporting an affirmative answer. Many other planned aspects could also be similarly questioned. A "containment" strategy seems intuitively a more "humane" response than a "show of force" strategy, but what evidence do we have that it changes the character of disturbances or the likelihood of their recurrence? Again the answer is that we have no hard data in support of such a strategy, or the opposite one for that matter. We can conclusively say it may or may not.

What we are trying to indicate, outside of the need for obtaining some systematic evidence, is that there is little empirical ground at present for asserting or implying that the projected planning changes in police departments will have desired consequences. Social philosophers and social critics might be justified in polemically arguing for their biases but social scientists at least should indicate when their statements rest on some evidence and when they do not. We can assert in this paper, on the basis of some evidence we have obtained, that a certain kind of organizational change is likely in American police departments as a whole. We can not make a statement at present about whether the planning involved will have either the intended result-- the prevention or suppression of civil disturbances-- or some other consequences that might also be viewed positively.

Finally, and related to the last point, it seems clear that even if all the projected plans were instituted and had their intended result, some groups would still be highly dissatisfied with the police. In fact, in some cases such groups could say that the planning merely deals with surface issues and involves minor tinkering with an institutional complex that needs to be basically reworked. Radicals calling for community control of the police, or militants advocating police disarmament are hardly likely to look favorably upon police department improvements in disturbance planning. At best this can be seen as merely a palliative for a minor matter, at worst it can be perceived as strengthening an organization that should be subverted. The point here is a fundamental one and of course goes far beyond the topic of this paper, but it is necessary to note lest the implication be left that everyone would agree with the desirability of the change we foresee in American police departments

We have indicated the nature of the change and the factors affecting it. History and further study will show whether we are right in our prediction. The rest of the issues--even though we may note them-- will have to be settled elsewhere. They too may be settled by history and study, but more likely they will remain as basic questions about the proper relationship between individual rights and group control.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Our systematic data are primarily from higher echelon police officers rather than from the rank and file, and thus we can not fully generalize to the latter. However, remarks in interviews with top rank police officials as well as some general observations of field operations suggest that some lower ranking police officers are not always willing to adhere to the "Containment" strategy, even though that may be the official position of their department.
2. For different definitions and views about police professionalization, see Niederhoffer (1967:19) and Wilson (1968:29-30). In general, professionalization has reference to such features as high admission standards and lengthy training periods for recruits, a specialized body of knowledge and theory, a service ideal and membership organizations with concerns beyond job conditions.
3. Another DRC study of the mutual perception of police and college students shows less polarization than is commonly believed and an absence of the extreme hostility that is supposed to characterize the relationship. A report on this study is in preparation by the last named author of this article.
4. To what extent planning itself gets implemented into actual field operations especially during an emergency situation is an open question. Some of the factors affecting the possible gap between organizational plans and policies and the actions of individual police officers are reviewed in detail in Galliher (1971).

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