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**Police Narcotics Control:  
Patterns and  
Strategies**

**Summary**

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## ABSTRACT

The final report presents the findings of a year-and-a-half study of drug law enforcement in six narcotics units across the United States. The research was designed to identify the perceived drug problems of the urban area narcotics units studied; to determine the goals and objectives of the units with respect to that defined enforcement problem; and to gather from official records, interviews, and observations, the specific means and strategies used to achieve these goals. Once this model of the enforcement process was articulated, the researchers sought to see how the organizational structure maintained control over key operational areas such as evidence, money, informants, agent recruitment, and agent training.

The researchers found that, in general, narcotics enforcement activities are investigator-centered rather than organization-centered. The implications for narcotics enforcement of the organization-centered mode of control versus the investigator-centered mode are explored with reference to such activities as goal setting; monitoring and measuring enforcement impacts; budgeting; recordkeeping; targeting strategies; personnel recruitment and training; inter-organizational and intra-organizational relations; and the use and control of informants.

The researchers assert that the organizational capacity to control the actions of investigators is an important feature of effective narcotics enforcement. While organizational control reduces the freedom of the investigator to choose, work, and close his cases within his own frame of reference, it also results in an increased capacity to achieve organizational purposes and goals.

The report concludes with a set of selected recommendations for the organization and operation of narcotics enforcement.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The report summarizes the findings of a year-and-a-half study of drug law enforcement in six narcotics units across the United States. The project focused on policies and practices directed toward the control of "hard drugs" (opiates). The research was designed to identify the perceived drug problems in the local areas, to determine the goals and objectives of the department, and to gather from official records, interviews, and observations, the specific means or strategies used to achieve these goals. With this model of the enforcement process, the researchers sought to see how the organization maintained control over key operational areas such as evidence, money, informants, agent recruitment and training. From these data the researchers sought to develop policy to guide enforcement.

One goal of the research was to note the gaps between the stated and official aims of the units with regard to the enforcement problem and actual operating practices, and to explain any discrepancies. The researchers also identified various practical problems in each of the six units, and made suggestions of alternatives where possible. In addition, some attempt was made to generalize these problems across the six units and to identify common factors, be they problems or solutions.

It is apparent from a review of the literature that the field of drug law enforcement is full of proscriptive manuals that lay out "ideal" practices, brief descriptions of particular enforcement programs, and many semiautobiographical works. But very few empirical studies of the problems and practices of the police in this problematic area. The researchers attempted to stay close to the ongoing process of narcotics

enforcement and to report what happens. They aim to provide details about the process that would be useful in future research and operations.

The researchers believe the study has implications for other regulatory problems assigned to the police (such as those of vice units) as well as for all units that attempt to gather intelligence about potential or actual crime where a complaint may not yet be evident. The study provides some insights into and understanding of the problems and solutions to drug enforcement specifically and, more generally, for police investigative techniques and organizational patterns.

#### THEORETICAL CONSTRAINTS AND PROBLEMS OF NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT

In the report the researchers explore enforcement patterns to determine effective ways for police agencies to operate, given their historical commitment to eradication (rather than regulation) of narcotics given the decision that the control of opiates is to be mandated by law to law enforcement agencies.

Following is a list of central constraints and problems facing police agencies in their enforcement of drug laws.

1. The potential for police corruption is high because the high profits and risks of illicit business, and the limited access to other forms of influence, make dealers and users focus their attention on the police agents whom they attempt to bribe, influence, or control directly or indirectly.
2. The control of drugs is very expensive, relative to other police functions, because informants and special employees must be paid; rewards are paid; drugs are bought; and larger numbers of officers are being hired to enforce drug laws in



large cities.

3. Control over the discretion of officers is very difficult because of the nature of "victimless" crimes, the problems of setting and effecting policy, and the unpredictable occurrence of the elements of the crime.
4. Because the laws against vice crimes are rarely a product of consensus in the community, enforcement is always potentially the source of an adversary relationship between the police and community groups.
5. Legal control over agents is problematic, and the circumstances of arrest are often such that there is great temptation to perjury, violation of the exclusionary rule, misuse of informants, discretionary alteration or dropping of charges, and other violations of procedural and/or legal rules.

#### NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Because there is little public understanding about the actual operation of narcotics enforcement units, police have been under no pressure to form policy or to make policy public. It would appear that this is not altogether a matter of a desire for insulation from public criticism, for enforcement depends upon and indeed requires a degree of secrecy in respect to targets, strategies, deployment of officers and, most certainly, in serving arrest warrants. It is possible that revelation of these facets of narcotics enforcement would diminish and perhaps neutralize the slight advantage now available to officers through the use of secrecy, surprise, and skill in interpersonal relations with informants and suspects.

Narcotics enforcement policy has for the most part been unwritten even though it may be well understood by officers and police administrators. The absence of written policy may not be a detriment in day-to-day, crisis-oriented policing, but it most certainly has a number of consequences. Absence of written policy may have some positive effects in protecting police agencies from criticism if they should fail to meet their own expectations or goals, and in protecting their operations from exposure to criminals, but it has a number of negative or dysfunctional consequences as well. Some of the consequences are: (1) Resources are allocated for investigations without a gauge of success or failure against which to measure results. (2) There are typically no clear guidelines concerning the initiation and termination of an investigation. (3) Departmental and individual goals can be in conflict. (4) Goals, strategies, and tactics are not made clear. As a result, equipment and relevant training are not systematically acquired. (5) Money is expended at the discretion of investigators and sergeants, and no measures of cost-effectiveness are developed or applied.

The pressures to operate without a formalized set of goals and rules result in an investigator-centered mode of operation. This results in essentially isolated individualistic efforts by unit members to enforce the narcotics laws. In this way investigations can work at cross purposes and information vital to closing old cases and opening new cases is often lost. Furthermore, there are no central criteria on which to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the enforcement efforts. For this reason the researchers favor an organization-centered mode of agent control. In this mode, rules and goals are formalized and records provide data to assess the cost and effectiveness of various

strategies to achieve specified goals. Individual investigator autonomy is truncated and subordinated to the stated goals of the unit. Unit paperwork and recordkeeping is expanded to provide the unit with intelligence for further investigations. The only caveat to this organization-centered approach is that it should not be instituted to the point of overcontrol. Investigator/agents continue to need a certain amount of autonomy. The organization-centered framework should tolerate and encourage flexibility in areas where this will not defeat the basic purposes of an organization-centered approach.

#### METHODOLOGY

Four criteria were used to select the research sites. First, narcotics units were sought in cities with a population of between 150 and 900 thousand where problems of opiate enforcement and jurisdictional relations were likely to be found. Second, cities were desired which were either primary entry points, border cities and/or major transit centers or distribution points for narcotics where enforcement problems had been recognized and where the pattern of use and dealing was more routinized. Third, sites were sought that could be studied adequately by two researchers onsite at a time. Finally, a national geographic distribution of the six sites was sought. The six sites selected represented all regions of the country except the midwest portion of the United States.

Following the selection of sites, the researchers, through several different kinds of approaches managed access to seven of the eight organizations approached. Only six of these could be studied due to the time constraints imposed by the fieldwork schedule.

Three researchers were involved in the project to do onsite interviewing, observation, and collecting relevant documents and records. One researcher was responsible for making contact with a particular unit and arranging a four-to-six-week period which could be spent with the unit for data gathering purposes (this responsibility was shared across the six sites by the three researchers). The researcher gaining entree to the site would establish the initial research routine alone. This was done to avoid the crowding effect that two or three researchers could have on a unit, which could lead to more difficulties in gaining cooperation with the unit's staff.

For several reasons, it is advantageous to have more than one researcher working a given site. First, the researchers can provide valuable checks on each other's observations and conclusions. Second, in a large and busy unit, several important events can occur simultaneously which can all usually be covered by more than one researcher. Third, persons who may for one reason or another resist being interviewed by one researcher usually will agree to be interviewed by a different researcher.

#### TYPES OF DATA GATHERED

Three types of data were gathered at each site. Information about and, when possible, copies of certain unit records were obtained. Interviews were taken with everyone in the narcotics unit from the commanding officer through the ranks. Interviews were also obtained from the District Attorney's staff who specialized in narcotics cases. In cases where it was clear that others, such as the Police Chief, were an essential everyday part of the unit's activities, these persons were also interviewed.

Finally, observations of critical events and activities of the narcotics units were made.

Based on the experience of the pilot site, a guideline for data collection was developed. While the major purpose of the guideline was for interviewing, it also reflects the study team's interest in unit records and observational material. The guide (see report) is reasonably exhaustive in identifying the components involved in narcotics enforcement.

It was proposed to identify goals and to describe or explain reasons to account for any gap between these statements and the operative goals of the unit. A goal was defined as being any long-range end which an interviewee specified as essential to narcotics enforcement in the unit. Objectives were defined as approximate or short-range goals.

It was difficult to identify unit goals and objectives in spite of the fact that every interview covered that subject. Perhaps the difficulty in obtaining these precise statements arose because: (1) goals, even when written, are not available in a form that is easily accessible to investigators; (2) the word "goals" is not one commonly used in narcotics units; and (3) differences exist between investigators' perceptions of the operations of the unit and the administrator's view of its operations.

It appears that the stated goals (usually written) are a symbolic statement of the idealized ends that are hoped for by administrators of the units. All of the units had goals, in that administrators assumed that their unit had a purpose, a rationale, and an overall place within the structure of the police department. In this sense all the units had a "mission," whether they were written or not.

## ASSUMPTIONS IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT

Whether goals are written or not, success in determining the actual level of drug use or the impact of enforcement is problematic. When asked about the problem of drugs in the city, command personnel would say that they were just "holding back the tide." They felt that regardless of the actual problem, their budget, personnel, and legal limitations made it unlikely that they would directly and significantly reduce the market on any long-term basis. It was found in interviews that perceptions and overall understandings of the drug market were crucial to administrators' operational efforts. These perceptions colored rationales both for the work of enforcement, and for organizing enforcement within the constraints of manpower, budget, and legality.

In noting contrasts between the stated and formal goals of the units studied and their practices, the researchers worked from a constructed model of the effects of narcotics enforcement that was derived from interviews with command personnel (see report). Units studied did not have information on the following items which would be essential if such a model were used to assess the effects of enforcement: closely monitored, ongoing measures of the demand and/or supply of focal drugs; changes in the number, location, use levels, and drugs of choice of "addict" populations; associations between crime and drugs either in the sense of how many criminals use various sorts of drugs, or of how many drug users commit crimes (of what kind?) as a result of their use; the impact of arrests on use, crime, demand, or supply; and the dealing structure in the area.

Perhaps the reason that these data are not gathered and monitored closely is that a system of implicit propositions "makes sense" of the

activities of narcotics units. This model is not a formally written, shared, articulated plan--it is a tacit and invisible organizing agenda for enforcement. Data, if gathered, are not used to test the model or individual aspects of it, but rather to affirm it. These "hidden assumptions" serve to organize narcotics enforcement. The model serves to make sense of the work, and explains in large part why officers are able to continue to enforce the laws in spite of their personal reservations, the criticisms they receive from the public, and the unending nature of the struggle against the flow of drugs.

#### TARGETED DRUGS

Since heroin is consensually defined as being a community threat, enforcement in this area is always viewed as a source of community support. Arrests for the less condemned drugs, especially marijuana, were viewed unofficially by all units as something that one did if one had to, but preferred to do only if it was considered a lead to a "big seizure." Heroin was seen as the primary drug of concern and units felt obligated to emphasize heroin control in their activities and public statements. Cocaine, marijuana, and PCP were considered drugs of concern after heroin although their relative importance was ordered differently from unit to unit.

#### BUDGETING ISSUES

All of the units studied employ a system of incremental budgeting, using expenditures for the past year as a base for calculating current fiscal year expenditures. In general, there was little examination of the assumptions behind various budget expenditures. When assumptions were

examined, they always involved a new acquisition which needed justification before it would be funded. However, since narcotics units and their budgeting process exist within a larger framework, it is unfair to ask of them what their department and municipality do not do: examine budget allocations from the standpoint of goals and objectives that are clearly explicated. Under these conditions, where the goals and the operations necessary to reach the goals are "understood" tacitly but not explicated, they are not often realistic in light of the final amount of money allocated. Stated in another manner, narcotics units and the departments within which they reside (as well as most of the municipalities) establish their budgets first and then determine what they can accomplish on that budget, what goals and objectives can be attained. This process almost always leaves a gap between publicly stated goals and objectives and the achievements that result. That is, while units would like to enforce all the drug laws, they do not have the resources to do so, and they must engage in selective enforcement. If not made explicitly by command and supervisory personnel, the selective enforcement decisions are made by investigators working in the field.

This is in contrast to a budgeting system that is "zero base" and forces examination of operative goals in light of expenditures. Rather than evaluating work loads, responsibilities, and goals after budgets are set, "zero-base" concepts aim at establishing such evaluation as an integral aspect of the budgeting process itself. Commanders, city officials, and others involved are thus required to justify the entire budget, not just its increments. This process forces examination of the various ways in which objectives can be reasonably reached within the fiscal framework provided. Different allocations of resources result in



different activity levels and achievements, and each level is specified as a way to do enforcement. Each mode or way of enforcement has a variable cost, and can be seen as a total "decision package." Thus, while enforcement is most likely to be selective, the selection is based on a management decision rather than as a result of the budgeting process, and leads to more precise uses of resources. That is not to say that all zero-base systems are the best ways to allocate resources, nor are all incremental systems deficient. It is to point out that even incremental systems need periodic evaluation as to the underlying rationales for activities.

#### BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AND OPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES

Narcotics units must set enforcement priorities in light of shrinking resources and dwindling manpower. Five of the six units studied had problems with their manpower and/or fiscal allocations. For example, the one unit that allocates the most money to narcotic enforcement has experienced a reduction in manpower over the last few years resulting from city-wide budgetary problems. In other units, limited funds for buys and informants restrict the unit's enforcement activities. An unwritten but binding administrative policy in one unit is that given the budget allocations, a minimum amount of money should be spent to make a "buy" from a dealer.

There is another related effect. Since cost-effective enforcement can be taken to mean that a limited expenditure should produce a felony conviction, then because of this interpretation, enforcement of the marijuana laws is not as cost-effective as heroin enforcement. That is, to get a felony conviction on a marijuana dealer, one must buy more than one or two ounces and to do so must spend more than \$20. But a heroin sale case can be made for as little as \$12, and since it is a "better"

case, more cost-effective, and removes a more "serious" offender, there is more of a press toward enforcing the heroin laws than the marijuana laws.

Similarly, but for opposite reasons, cocaine enforcement is difficult because of budgetary concerns. Even though cocaine cases are "good" cases, a standard buy of cocaine is a "gram," which can run from \$55-\$95. Even if a buy can be made for half that amount, the outlay of cash must be greater than for a heroin buy.

A third effect of the budgetary problem focuses undercover work at the lower market levels because letting money "walk" at the higher levels would be prohibitive; when such penetration is achieved, however, Federal or State money must be utilized.

Another budgetary restraint (perceived and real) is the issue of paid overtime. Due to the budgetary squeeze at one site, for example, no overtime is paid at all, unless ordered by the Mayor or Chief for emergency work. Moreover, no compensation is given for court time whether the agent is on- or off-duty, and the department has enforced a policy that all paid work must be done during working hours. The overall impact of such policies has been to raise the level of cynicism among the agents.

There are other ways to reduce the amount of paid overtime. One way is to eliminate or minimize enforcement outside normal hours. The second is to experiment with shift changes, trying to match regular duty work to activity in the narcotics market, and the third is to have variable accounting systems for paying overtime in time off instead of money. All of these have been used extensively singly or in combination by all the units studied.

## UNIT STRATEGIES OR MODES OF TARGETING

There are four modes of targeting identified in the research. The first is the proactive mode, where targets are assigned on the basis of information gathered systematically on expected problems, persons, or areas. This mode is characterized by anticipated action. An example is the Drug Enforcement Agency's use in targeting of the term "major violator" (i.e., a person who deals in an ounce or more of heroin). Despite the desirability of this mode of targeting, the majority of all arrests made in all the units studied came from informant-based work rather than from proactive targeting. At one site, however, a program to develop conspiracy cases used the proactive mode of targeting and utilized informants (in addition to other sources) for intelligence gathering.

The second mode is the agent/informant targeting mode, where the investigator works whatever an informant can do; that is, he leaves it to the informant to choose a target, develop the situation, and then the investigator makes the final decision about how the case will be closed: by arrest warrant, buy-bust, or by search warrant/raid. Allowing the informant to pick the target means that to a considerable degree the informant has also set the priorities and the goals of the unit in sequential, or in aggregate effect. A competent officer can control and constrict the actions and choices of an informant: by careful interviewing and interrogating to "pick the brain" of the informant and make him reveal information on targets or areas that an officer wishes to work; by control of the money given for buys, for information, or miscellaneous services; by careful choice of the informants worked; by selection of cases once information is obtained; and by checking information and ideas with partners, other members of the unit, or supervisors.

A third mode of targeting is the citizen-determined or politically determined mode. Although it is possible that a department or unit can develop a policy of responding to all citizen calls, and to serving the public in this way in a serious and responsible fashion, more often the handling of citizen calls tends to be ad hoc, on a case-by-case basis. Since these calls are not uniform but are unpredictable in their content, meaning, arrival times, and promise, it is very difficult for any unit to set a policy about them internally and to implement that policy. Typically these calls are seen by investigators in the unit as unimportant in terms of their enforcement goals and objectives. At some sites, however, this perception was not shared by administrative personnel. Because of their sense of obligation to the public, or the feeling that something of benefit may come from such a call (it does happen frequently enough to make it a known possibility), or because of unit policy, units do attempt to allocate investigators to these calls.

A fourth mode of targeting is the patrol-targeting strategy. In all the units studied, patrol officers routinely make drug arrests, so this is an organizational strategy. Patrol officers make the vast majority of all drug arrests, usually incidental to routine traffic stops (these arrests are, in most cases, for possession of marijuana).

Patrol and narcotics units do not routinely cooperate on programs, functions, or objectives, but only when the situation seems to warrant it. In this sense, then, that patrol is essentially an independent mode of enforcement not controlled to any appreciable degree by the command of the drug unit. This is ironic in light of the proportion of the arrests that they make, and the resources for enforcement located in the patrol. This empirical finding does not mean that in an organizationally -

centered agency, cooperation could not be developed. Such programs could only increase the overall arrest output of the department, and the informational input to both patrol and narcotics units.

#### RECRUITMENT MODES

Recruitment of narcotics officers showed considerable variation across the six sites studied. At one site entry rules varied and entry was competitive. The old system involved the use of a waiting list, and the person whose application was in the longest was given the first vacancy. This situation was deemed totally inadequate by the current commander, who viewed it as (among other things) inefficient and organizationally a loss of control over entry. As a result, and due to some pressures from minority officers, the system was altered. There was a small purge of some of the older officers. A new system was introduced and included a chronology, but also delineated two groups. One was the core officer group, considered the best producers, knowledgeable and hard working. They were--as long as they continued to produce--virtually assured of staying in the unit. The other group consisted of those being rotated in for one year from the chronological list. The chronology had been somewhat altered to include some black officers. Ideally, the system was to work as follows: the core members would be paired with the rotaters, and the rotaters would be evaluated critically over the year. In theory most would be rotated out at the end of the year, but those who met the core criteria would be retained and added to the core. Also, any core officer who was not producing would be removed. This was to establish greater control over recruitment, retain the producers, and allow for phase-outs.

By creating the system which required prior knowledge of narcotics law, procedure, and practice, this unit made a step toward the rationalization of its recruitment rules, and moved further away from the chronological system, which attempts to follow the civil service model by treating all applicants equally in terms of skill, knowledge, and background. The previous rotational and chronological rules were used primarily in recruitment for temporary duty assignments. The three entry systems are:

- I. Chronological - Minimum production rules and standards in prior career.
- II. Rotational/Chronological/Minority - Minimum previous acceptable performance in prior career, constant evaluation in temporary assignment.
- III. Test Basis/Competitive - High previous performance record; evidence of college or other course work in area; test evidence on knowledge of law (constant evaluation of temporary person).

All new agents are recruited as positions open. There is a single-serial type recruitment pattern throughout all three systems. The exception was the rotational system, which allowed for greater turnover.

In another unit the recruitment mode was personalistic, with organizational review. When a vacancy occurs (for whatever reasons), division leaders discuss the needs of the unit, and begin a search. There is a file of applicants or requested transfers, but no formal rule that they must be accepted. However, it must be demonstrated that the person(s) selected are the best. If final selection by the Lieutenant is not the most senior applicant in terms of chronology of applications and years on the force a detailed justification is required.

In yet another unit the recruitment mode is personalistic, individualistic, and time-sequenced. This is a small unit (around seven officers), supervised by a Sergeant who was the "original" narcotics

officer in the city and has an important hand in choosing officers. There are no written rules or policies about recruitment into the unit. The Chief takes a special interest in the officers hired for this unit. From the perspective of individual officers, there was no single pattern for their selection except that they felt that they were "aggressive" or "hardworking" and that they could "put up with the weird hours...." In the Chief's view, the person's family life was important, and he looked for officers who were good family men. This was apparently an attempt to find families who could endure the strain created by the erratic hours and temptations of the job.

The recruitment mode was personalistic, individualistic, and time-sequenced with organizational review in another unit. There are no written rules concerning entry qualifications. Since there is a policy of rotation of officers to the various tasks and substations when they join the force, there is a fair opportunity for them to know each other. When the time comes for recruiting, supervisors may trade names of persons, or begin to ask around among the precincts, looking for people who are "go-getters," "self-starters," "highly motivated," and the like. This could be considered a semiformal mode of recruitment. Another general recruitment mode is that of happenstance: officers making a uniform-patrol arrest may catch the attention of the narcotics unit's members. In the department, there are always at least a few people who are known to want to join the unit. This is recruitment by self-selection, often complemented by the attention received on the unit, or sergeant's or command personnel's interest.

## TRAINING MODES

Two training models are applicable to narcotics enforcement, the apprentice model in which the new agent is taught "on the job" by an experienced agent and the formal model in which the new agent attends a formal course or class to learn about his job. None of the sites studied had a purely apprentice model or a purely formal model. The predominant mode across sites was a mixed model leaning most heavily toward the apprentice model.

In one unit a strictly apprenticeship mode was replaced by a formal training mode, resulting from two related "corruption" scandals. There was almost a total turnover in the unit. The Commander had the task of training a whole class of neophytes and went to a formalized training model. The school was such a success that it was "institutionalized" and repeated for area narcotics agents from smaller departments. The formal school exists "on top of" an apprentice model that still functions.

In the last several years, another unit experienced a movement from a highly individualistic mode of training to greater systemization. Only a few years ago, new recruits were "given a desk and told to make cases" without any training whatsoever. If they wished help, they attached themselves to some veterans and learned by watching and asking questions.

In the movement to more formalized training, recruits were paired with older, more experienced officers who trained by the apprenticeship method. This was not a formalized school, however, and then as now the unit relied on outside training courses given by State or Federal programs. Officers often learn very little new material at the school since they have been functioning under a modified apprenticeship mode for several months.



Overall, this unit is moving toward a more organizational approach, although apprenticeship is currently predominant. Requiring that an officer applying for transfer into the vice and narcotics unit already be familiar with its work relieves the department of some training costs. A working officer in training may study on the job, although this obviously is not recommended. This indirect cost in lost duty time is eliminated if training occurs before duty begins. The unit is "saved" the training time, and agents can more rapidly assume full-time duties. The pretraining technique is organizationally cost effective.

In yet another unit, new undercover officers are "trained" by being placed with a more experienced officer. They attend meetings with them, learn to "jive," and in general pursue the informal modes of learning. Some of the more experienced officers do teach at the police academy and thus their abilities to instruct younger officers are somewhat formalized.

#### UNIT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Evaluation of the performance of police officers is problematic whether it occurs in patrol, detective work, or narcotics. The police comment often upon their concern with upgrading their standards, but it is never totally clear what those standards are. In narcotics work the criteria of performance (a) vary from unit to unit at the formal level, e.g., some units emphasize seizures, others arrests, while others use general terms like "making cases;" (b) vary from unit to unit at the informal or operational level; (c) are highly contextual in the sense that key terms such as "major violator" mean different things to different people in different circumstances; (d) are not written; (e) are less

important than informal evaluations of peers, sergeants and partners; (f) are known in significant cases where their absence is noted, e.g., where a person is transferred out for a foul-up, or violation of some procedure.

Units with more formalized training also routinely employ more formalized means of evaluation. In general, however, one must distinguish the formal criteria and the operational criteria of evaluation. Formal evaluation is seen as irrelevant in the narcotics units studied: (a) It is usually based on forms designed primarily for the evaluation of patrol officers. (b) Narcotics units are based on face-to-face interaction, and similarity of function between sergeants and officers which is in general not the case in patrol, where more distant relations are maintained. (c) Evaluation in most police departments is less trusted than the word of peers. (d) Promotion is not based on evaluation. (e) The patrimonial nature of entry and exit--that is, the control exercised by the unit head and/or his most trusted sergeant(s)--means that these paper exercises rarely reveal what the important evaluator thinks.

In general, ratings are high for most officers, according to supervisors, because it is said that "if they weren't producing, they'd be out of the unit." At times officers are rated low on paper, but the "real reasons" for these ratings are not often captured in the categories used in formal evaluation.

#### ROTATIONAL POLICIES

While the units studied had wide variation in their modes of rotation, there was common agreement that 18 to 24 months was a maximum time limit for agents working the street to be active, since the stresses and

strains made them vulnerable to a variety of problems, the possibility of corruption being paramount. In practice, however, "productive" agents tended to stay on beyond their expected rotational period. Rotation for the street agent (there was less concern for the office and command officers) became a double-edged sword. If the agent was not rotated, concern was voiced for the possibility of corruption. If the agent was rotated on schedule, concern was voiced for losing an agent who had begun to maximize his knowledge about the street and develop good cases.

It should be noted that the absence of a rotation policy usually means that ad hoc maintenance rules for crisis situations are utilized, or that rotation is controlled by commanders who can, with a minimum of documentation, rotate staff. However, when unions are strong or civil service regulations are specific, this may not be the case, and it may be almost impossible to rotate an officer.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF RATES OF TURNOVER

The forced rotation of first-line supervisors (sergeants) and higher command staff allows for the growth of the policymaking power of members of the lower echelons. In units that are highly investigator-centered, rotation can result in policy being made effectively at the individual investigator level. That is, each productive investigator is left to his or her own devices. Similarly, when sergeants become the locus of policy power, they can have their squads pursuing divergent aims, or aims which they, and not the unit as a whole, wish pursued. When two sergeants are pursuing divergent aims, and when command is either not aware of it, or is unwilling or unable to resolve it, organizational

tensions inevitably result.

Another, more general, way of stating the effects of rotation is in terms of rates of turnover. In general, a unit whose rate is lowest can be said to have an "advantage" in terms of knowledge of the rules, commitments to informal structure, etc. This principle can have several results. For example, if those who produce the most are promoted or rotated out, those who are left produce the least, ~~and are~~ likely to establish and maintain an informal structure that can evade and replace official policy, goals, and objectives.

One way in which personnel ensure their positions is by becoming the sole sources for valued information. In one unit, several of the older veterans possessed a tremendous amount of information about the area drug market and its principals that was not written down. In another unit two veteran officers were said to possess complete mental files of the scene, and were valued because they could provide longitudinal knowledge of the market. In both instances, the agents continued to be highly productive.

Where a steady rate of turnover of personnel is desired, narcotics organizations must also develop a structure that allows for continued information transfer. This means that it must be collected, and stored within the organization rather than individuals. What can result when this is not the case is demonstrated by the experience of one unit. Because of a wholesale dismissal and transfer of almost all of the unit resulting from scandals, it became necessary to reorganize the unit. This meant reorganization of the recruitment, use, and retention of informants as well as chains of evidence; relocation of the narcotics property section; adjustments in the manner of making cases, etc.

The instructive point here is that informants become organizational property not individual property. Intelligence information, rather than being filed in personal files, should become organizationally filed. In fact, all case data must become available unit-wide so that losing the officer making the case does not mean losing the investigation. In the above instance, there was a grievous loss of information, but this was the cost of change. Within the new system in this unit, officers moved from one squad to another are staggered for this very reason: veterans of the task-specific squads always remain to aid the newcomer.

Turnover rates for the various ranks need to be examined in light of their organizational effects. Where unit goals and policies are directly related to key staff, their rotation may mean significant changes in direction. Some consider the organization to have regeneration problems if there was a greater than 50 percent turnover rate per five years; however, it is not clear that such rates are applicable to narcotics units. Units must keep in mind the overall organizational features they desire when establishing turnover; otherwise, they will be unsuccessful in achieving their goals.

#### INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS

One of the most common problems in narcotics enforcement is coordination within the local department, with other departments, with special county and State units in the area, and with Federal organizations (e.g., ATF, DEA, FBI, IRS). The problems, as noted in our interviews with officers and command personnel were (a) Competition for informants (e.g., Federal agents could pay more) and sometimes local units lost cases and informants for this reason. (b) Competition when both DEA and a local

department knew they were working on the same persons, but did not make cooperative arrangements. (c) Lack of shared information on persons, dealing networks, etc. (d) Envy of the equipment of Federal agents and their working conditions. (e) Past histories of feuds either between the local unit and the Federal unit, or between the heads of the units; for example, in one case the head of the local unit ordered his officers not to speak to the local Federal agents. (f) Legal questions surrounding the charges and the courts in which the cases will be prosecuted. (g) Actual jurisdictional disputes arising in chases, raids, or investigations where one unit intrudes on the other's territory, legally or not. (h) Lack of any formalized means of sharing cases, information, money, equipment, personnel or the like, except for instances based on personal relations maintained by the heads of the units, sergeants, or supervisors. (i) Disagreements about the ways in which publicity, seizures, and prisoners would be handled should an arrest result from a joint operation. (j) Competing or conflicting agendas, e.g., an officer would follow leads on gun dealers in hopes of developing a drug-dealing case, but ATF officers would arrest the people on gun sales cases. (k) Cases dropped by the courts without feedback or notification. (l) Prosecutor's offices would set preferred criteria for cases that they would try, e.g., two buys from a person prior to arrest, but exigent circumstances would arise, the person would be arrested on one buy and the case would be dropped. Prosecutors typically found the paperwork of the narcotics officers to be lacking and often requested supplementary reports to insure better court cases, a nuisance to narcotics officers. Plea bargaining and dropping charges were often interpreted as an affront to the enforcement efforts of the narcotics unit.

## INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS

Three principle intra-organizational relations are important in any narcotics unit: relations with investigative units, especially burglary, robbery, checks and frauds, and to a lesser degree, auto theft; relationships with patrol division; and relationships with vice, gambling, prostitution, and pornography (or equivalent units).

Several general points can be made about these relationships. First, they are invariably informal rather than formal, and are based on a variety of personal ties, experiences, and friendships. A corollary of the above is that no formal policies are observed on the sharing of information.

The relationships are often affected by ecology. Where the patrol division and narcotics unit are close by or in the same building, interpersonal contacts result in the cafeteria, in the halls, and offices. Where narcotics is housed next to or with the vice unit, a double-edged closeness results. That is, although information is traded and assistance rendered, demands on time and personnel are based upon informal agreements not controlled by the command personnel. Closeness to detective units, where such personnel demands are less likely to happen, generally means more shared information on "villians;" e.g., one officer will stick his head in the door of the burglary squad office and ask the name of the suspect arrested a few nights ago for stolen property in an area where a narcotics case is developing. Isolation results in some improved sense of security, but loss of contact with other units.

Items a, b, c, d, e, and f for inter-organizational problems are also true for intra-organizational problems. The most profound is the simple absence of any systematic sharing of records, information, case

investigations, or the like. This is perpetuated because: (a) Cases made and activity are important to the success of individual officers, who do not share information unless they "have to" with other than their Sergeant (sometimes) and their partners. (b) There are great psychological pressures (fear, paranoia) to keep one's work secret, as well as the actual problems that might result should informants or drug dealers find out about the investigative activities of the narcotics unit. (c) There are few, if any, rewards, formal or informal, for sharing cases or information with others. (d) Even should individual officers want to place their information in a central file of informants, in three of the six cities there was none. Computerization of certain files was accomplished with positive effect in four units.

Because many unit relationships are informal, they are not easily controlled by command personnel. Policies are often very difficult to implement because no substantive knowledge of particular cases is possessed by supervisors. Unless help is requested, no one knows help is required. In five of the units specialized information was possessed only by the day Sergeant, or his clerks, or senior officers on the day crew. Thus, the night shifts did not have it, or even know how to get it. To many officers, for example, the computer was a joke or a mystery, and they avoided using it or asking for help in learning to use it. Finally, when there is little information sharing across units or within the unit, there is no single perception of what the unit does, should do, or can do.



## EQUIPMENT

The three basic and interdependent strategies or activities in narcotics law enforcement are surveillance, buys, and raids (search warrants). Surveillance can be visual, electronic, or some combination of the two; buys can be buy/walks or buy/busts; and raids can be knock or no-knock (depending on local laws). Each of these depends heavily on the proper utilization of manpower, money, and equipment.

Equipment, can be subdivided into five categories: undercover cars, communications equipment, surveillance equipment, office equipment, and raid equipment.

Agents in all the sites agreed that they needed more and better undercover cars. Three types of autos were mentioned: old cars, new cars, and vans or panel trucks. Each type had a specific use for certain deals or surveillance work. The major concern was that, with continued use, the vehicles would be identified ("burned"). Hence, the desire on the part of the agents for a regular supply of replacement vehicles.

Acquiring and maintaining a large number of cars is expensive. On the acquisition side, this cost can be reduced where cars confiscated in narcotics cases are turned over to the custody of the narcotics unit. The researchers found that the availability of confiscated vehicles varied widely with local laws, the cooperation of the courts, and resources of the department. Given these problems and needs, it was suggested by several units that car rentals would be the most satisfactory solution for reducing the opportunity to be "burned."

Communication equipment in narcotics work enables the unit to be more efficient and effective by coordinating their efforts and allowing them to act as a team rather than as a series of individuals. The problem

most mentioned by agents at all the sites, other than equipment malfunctioning, was being monitored by the drug dealers. All the agents feel, not surprisingly, that they could be more effective if their communications were not monitored by the persons they were planning to arrest.

Electronic surveillance equipment is employed in narcotics work to obtain information and evidence. Examples of this kind of equipment are body mikes, electronic "bugs," transponders (bumper beepers), tape recorders, telephone taps, and pen registers (officially called dialed number recorders). Control of such equipment was maintained outside the narcotics unit at most sites, and procedures for obtaining it were often too ponderous and slow to be responsive to immediate needs of the unit. It was suggested therefore that the units have more control over the use of such equipment.

Office equipment for narcotics work refers to special telephones. Communications with informants are maintained minimally by telephone. While agents and the informants they are "working" meet on a fairly regular basis, the informant sometimes needs to be able to get in touch with the agent by phone. For this purpose, it would be best to have an unlisted number for the unit which did not have the characteristics of the city office or police headquarters numbers. Another type of phone needed by units is the "cool line" for use when an agent arranges a buy and has to give a phone number for the dealer to contact him. It is best if the unit has a special telephone that is only used for such purposes. The numbers for both types of phones should be regularly changed.

Location of the narcotics unit was an issue at every site studied. There was almost unanimous agreement among the agents in all sites that

the unit should be located away from the police headquarters. Being housed in the police headquarters made their informants, they felt, more reluctant to drop by to meet with the informant. In addition they felt it made them run the risk of running into persons going to court (in four out of the six sites the court was located in the police headquarters building) against whom they might be building a case, or who might otherwise identify them and "blow their cover."

Raid equipment (for serving search warrants) includes protection equipment such as bulletproof vests; specialized firearms--specifically shotguns; identification clothing to identify the raiders as police; and raid/arrest/evidence kit material. The raid/arrest/evidence kit should include the implements for gaining entry (battering ram), forms for doing the preliminary arrest paperwork, materials for processing evidence, and the necessary items to secure the raid site before leaving with the arrestees. Every unit had rules for the use of protection equipment on raids, but it was rarely used until a close call or shootout stimulated the officers to renew their interest in it. While most units had identification attire, it too was seldom used. The legitimization of the raiders as police was usually made by requesting a uniformed patrol unit or two to back up the raiders. Two units had raid kits. In others, different members of the raid team brought bits and pieces of what could be thought of as a raid kit. In sum, in most units, such equipment was available but used sporadically.

#### RECORDS AND RECORDKEEPING

Recordkeeping in narcotics units should be viewed in the context of police attitudes toward paperwork. First, there is a general mistrust

of paper and paperwork among police. Also, because police officers share the notion that real police work is on the streets, dealing with immediate, face-to-face problems which must be shaped, solved, and disposed of because of the competition within drug units, and because of the general belief in secrecy, case files tend not to be written up or referred to except under special conditions.

Making up a file with full details is the exception in the units studied. The rule is that officers keep their "cases" in the form of scrawled notes, "in their heads," or in their desks, and rarely keep files in the sense of a repository of information placed in some meaningful order that is understandable by others. A case may be limited to a few telephone numbers, a name or two, and an address. Sometimes a few descriptors such as "deals from his apartment," or "Slick's sister" or "worked for J. before" may accompany the names and numbers, but they are idiosyncratic marks in a format that is not universally understood by others.

Department files are often not cross-indexed so that one can work from files to informant payments to conviction or disposition. People have to remember the approximate date of the arrest, the circumstances, etc. This is easy if there are frequent conversations between members of the units, if there is a low turnover, and if the case has taken place within the last year or so. But if any of these conditions do not hold, the information is lost.

Vice and narcotics units at two sites were on the same floor of the police building and their officers saw each other regularly and shared in some case discussion. In four cities, the units shared the same office space and this led to good-natured kidding, shared raids and

operations (often informally arranged), and case discussion. As a general rule, proximity substitutes for and reduces the need for formal channels of communication. Where organizational units are isolated and formal information sharing is not well developed, they tend to be organizationally autonomous and isolated.

The prosecutor's office maintains quite different "feedback" systems in each of the cities studied. Commonly, officers make an arrest, send it forward for charging and never again hear about it. Thus, much of the sense of being isolated from the courts and complaints about the courts are based on lack of information and feedback, rather than frustration about what actually occurs in courts. This also results in a cynical view about the value of paperwork for the prosecutor's office.

#### PROCESSING OF EVIDENCE

Narcotics units and investigative units in general concern themselves with evidence and the procedures surrounding its gathering, analysis, and use in court. These procedures are covered in formal and informal training.

The reasons for concern with them are manifest: drug evidence can be the basis for various corrupt practices (e.g., using the dope, selling it, giving it to informants as partial payment, "planting" evidence on persons suspected of crimes, etc.). While there are no examples of this from the fieldwork, corruption has been discovered in previous research. For example, evidence can be mishandled, lost, misidentified, and the like, and any and all of these factors can play a role in the disposition of the case. It is likely that mishandling of evidence is

one of the major reasons for cases being refused for prosecution.

Thus, clearly, maintaining the integrity of evidence is immensely important in illicit drug cases. The evidence must be procured, identified, preserved until needed, processed, secured, subjected to qualitative or quantitative laboratory analysis, prepared for introduction into cases and , finally, destroyed. The researchers discovered a great many similarities and some differences in the ways in which evidence was handled.

Each narcotics unit visited by the study team expressed concern over the chain of evidence. The basis for the concern is to avoid charges of tampering with the evidence, which includes theft of part or all of the evidence, and substitution or adulteration of drugs. If tampering can be demonstrated, a short chain of evidence will clearly indicate who is responsible, whereas a long chain will diffuse responsibility to the point that, in effect, no one will be responsible. Hence, a short chain of evidence deters tampering. The shorter the chain and the fewer the number of people involved, the greater the integrity of the evidence and the greater the security.

It appears clear that a noncompromising chain of evidence should be as simple and short as possible. Elaborate procedures to ensure the integrity of the chain more often than not compromise it. As evidence chains grow more complex, more instances, places, and circumstances arise where the chain can be breached.

Prior to a quantitative and qualitative analysis of drugs, there is little effective way to have documentation of drug tampering. Prior to such analysis the integrity of individuals within the structure of handling the evidence is a pivotal concern. A very short chain of evidence is optimal since the crime laboratory almost immediately establishes

the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the drug evidence. This should, by reasonable expectations, set a measurable standard for tracking the evidence and serve therefore as a deterrent to tampering.

#### INFORMANTS

The need for information is crucial to the narcotics enforcement enterprise, and the gathering of information is primarily the duty of the investigators. In order to effectively and efficiently enforce the narcotics laws, agents must have reliable information about what is going on in the drug marketplace. The prime source for such information is informants. In actuality, the development of informants is a vital investigator duty and oftentimes is performed without any type of written administrative control. Clearly, however, good informants are essential to the continued successful operation of narcotics units.

#### INFORMANT FILES

One site out of the six keeps no confidential informant files but does keep receipts for informant payments which are kept in a locked safe. With this exception, the individual memories of the unit agents constitute what informant files there are. The lack of an informant file is somewhat remarkable given the size of the unit (21 officers including command personnel) and the level of its enforcement activity. However, the unit has relative stability and an investigator-centered model of informant "ownership," and does not appear to desire such a file.

The remaining five units had informant files. The files serve a number of useful purposes, one of which is to protect agents by providing an accurate record of contact, payments, etc. In addition, the files

can provide an accurate record of informant performance. Also, the record is available if and when other narcotics agencies desire some information.

On the other hand, it is sometimes argued that not keeping informant files markedly reduces the chance that they would be subpoenaed, and that somehow files might allow unauthorized persons to know the identities of informants. Effective administrative control through informant files allows for more organizational control over informants and their information. The existence of such files indicates an organizationally-centered unit as opposed to the investigator-centered unit. In the investigator-centered model, no higher order controls the cultivation and evaluation of informants; while in the organization-centered model there is at least some supervisor contact with the informant, and there may be administrative rules concerning evaluation.

#### INFORMANT RECRUITMENT

There are three basic types of informants. One is the informant trying to make cases in exchange for dropping or reducing charges pending against him or her. This type of informant is called "turned," "flipped," or "twisted." The second type is the paid informant who receives a fee for information. The third type is a volunteer who does not work for money or other considerations. It may be a citizen reporting suspicious behavior, a jealous girlfriend or boyfriend, or a dealer using the police to reduce his competition.

Only the first type of informants are actively recruited. They are developed from persons the unit has arrested or who are in jail for narcotics violations. While no unit had a written policy on the number



of cases that an informant must make to receive consideration, agents appear to have some applicable standards. In general, there is never a single charge traded off against a single case unless the case is "big enough." More likely, though, is a three-to-one or five-to-one rule in which, for every three or five cases made against "dealers," consideration is given in an offender's pending case. In addition to the number of cases to be made, the informant must help make cases on persons higher in the market than the level at which the informant was operating.

The major budgetary and ideological concerns that promote the use of flipped versus paid informants are the following: (1) It is more economical to use flipped informants, since the form of payment is not monetary. (2) It is believed by the administration in some units that agents have more effective control over informants who have criminal sanctions hanging over them than over those who are paid, and that informants who are paid are less trustworthy. While there is little argument that from the unit's point of view it is less costly to use twisted informants, there exists considerable disagreement over whether paid or flipped informants are more trustworthy and over which type the agent controls best. Some investigators felt that informants working off cases made the most effective information sources, while overall claims for the efficiency of the paid versus twisted informant ran equally high.

In some units there was a general agreement that paid informants develop more and better cases than those who are flipped. Whereas the latter are likely to make the minimum number of cases, "good" paid informants may make well over a hundred cases in a period of a year or two. While there is some agreement that paid informants make more and better cases,

they are also more distrusted than twisted informants. Paid informants, it is reasoned, since they inform for money would not hesitate to set up agents and thus "work both sides of the fence."

In only two of the units studied was there a clear administrative policy made concerning the development of informants. In one other unit, a policy was emerging at the time of the research. In the others, informant policies were virtually residuals of unit organization, or effects of forces outside the unit's direct control.

For example, at one site during the research, the total number of informants was quite low. The lack of paid informants was mostly attributable to the lack of funds to pay for information. The lack of twisted informants, according to the agents, was due to lenient sentencing. They reported that "not that many people are going to jail anymore. They're not too worried about their charges like they used to be years ago."

Policies concerning the mode of development of informants are critical to the effective functioning of narcotics units. Even when austerity budgets force the units into one mode, or Federal grants allow another, unit-wide policy planning continues to be important. In the absence of unit policy, individual investigators often form their own, which inevitably results in investigators "owning" single informants.

#### INFORMANT INFORMATION

The quality of the informant's information is crucial to the enforcement activities of the narcotics unit. Once the reliability of the information source is legally established, the informant must provide complete information concerning where the drugs are, who is involved, and the like. In general, the more specific the information, and the

more that can be corroborated, the greater its credibility. For the narcotics agent, the easier it is to solve the critical issues concerning informant information, the easier it is to obtain warrants, and the easier it is to execute the search and make the case.

#### INFORMANT PROTECTION

Since informants play such a crucial role it is not surprising the agents expend considerable resources protecting them.

Protection serves several direct and indirect purposes. First, the longer the "life" of an informant, the greater number of cases he or she can contribute to and the better able the agent is to assess the quality of the information provided. Warrant applications are made stronger by long-term, repetitive sources that have track records of success. Second, the longer the informant works, the fewer resources the unit must spend to cultivate new informants. Third, a protected informant will appear above suspicion and perhaps be able to penetrate deeper into the dealing chain. Fourth, a unit with a stock of informants relatively above suspicion might be able to better target known dealers and utilize the informants to penetrate their dealing organizations. Fifth, a unit that cannot protect its informants from recognition and reprisal faces not only a constant struggle to develop new sources of information, but in addition loses its overall capability to penetrate the deeper levels of the market. Thus, the unit may constantly face the prospect of casemaking against the most vulnerable or lower level, more public dealers.

The informant's identity must be protected not only from the persons that have been informed on but from legal procedures that might require informants to appear in court, thus exposing them to hazards not only

from the defendants but from others as well. Each of the units studied has generic and unique ways in which they attempt to protect informants. The most common involve the following strategies: multiple buys from the dealer that gradually omit the informant so that the warrant is written on a sale that does not have the informant for a witness; single buys that are made while the informant is out of sight and hearing; significant time lags between controlled buys by an informant and the serving of a search warrant; and grand jury indictments. One unique and infrequently used mode is to implicate some other person in the dealing/information chain. Another is to use "testifying informants" (that is informants willing to testify in court). Finally, units can "arrange" for the informant to appear as if he/she has been arrested, too, or has been informed upon, taking the heat off the informant. The greater number of these strategies available to the unit, the better able it is to protect its informants.

#### INFORMANT CONTROL: UNIT OR AGENT

As stated policy, the idea that the informant belongs to the unit rather than to an agent or agents occurs frequently. In operation, however, the reverse is the more common reality. That is, while it is relatively easy to make a policy statement, agents must relate to informants on a personal and professional basis. Informants, for their part, generally prefer to work with a single agent or a small number of agents.

The overall tendency is for investigators to view the relationship between an informant and one of their colleagues as personal, and to understand it as one of "ownership." Frequent references are made to "his informant" even in units where the expressed written policy is that

the informant belongs to the unit as a whole. So while the informant does not belong to an agent, he "does." One way this problem is mitigated is through the team approach to informant use; another is through the agent-partnership mode. It should be noted that team approaches are more likely to occur in units that do not compare individual agents with regard to the number of cases made, the amount of dope seized, and the like.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major thrust of the research converges with the following conclusions for how narcotics units could "ideally" pattern their activities and develop their strategies.

- Task 1: Gather as complete and reliable information about the drug market structure and operation as possible.
- Task 2: Set enforcement goals and strategies based on intelligence about the drug market.
- Task 3: Determine the resources of money, personnel and equipment needed (a) to continue to get market information, and (b) to achieve enforcement goals.
- Task 4: Readjust market information strategies based on the discrepancy between resources needed and available.  
  
Readjust enforcement goals and strategies based on the discrepancy between resources needed and available.
- Task 5: Monitor and evaluate enforcement goal achievement through judicious recordkeeping.

The above procedures, at all levels, are best achieved by an organization-based rather than an investigator-based mode of control. This is not to say, however, that the organization-based unit should disallow individual initiative, which appears to be highly important to productive narcotics enforcement. The narcotics unit organization should remain

flexible enough to allow certain decisionmaking by the individual agent. In sum, the organization-based model can incorporate certain investigator-based elements into its structure without detriment.

## SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are a list of recommendations (with notes of caution where warranted) extracted from the research report. These recommendations are meant to summarize the highlights of the report.

### A. GOALS

**Recommendation:** Enforcement goals for a unit should be formally stated. They should be compared with available resources and adjustments made where there is a disparity. The achievement of goals should be monitored and the cost should be noted. This will provide a basis on which to assess the cost effectiveness of enforcement strategies.

**Recommendation:** Goal-setting for narcotics enforcement should not be wholly based on perceived public concern with types of drugs and violators. Rather, goals and priorities should be based on some empirical demonstration that the goals are realistic, and by some criterion, important. This will relieve the unit, from distracting and disruptive pressures to seek less important goals.

*Recommendation Caution:* While police should be responsive to public concerns, it is suggested that, based on empirical assessments of the problem (rather than on others' perceptions), the unit will be more able to defend and maintain its goals and operations against excessive public and political pressures. Public concerns should not be ignored but rather be assessed carefully, put into proper perspective, and dealt with.

**Recommendation:** Goals should be written. This allows the goals to be commonly reviewed and shared. Written goals also provide a baseline for assessment of goal achievement for adjusting strategies and tactics, and for monitoring decisions and allocating resources.

*Recommendation Caution:* Written goals need not be viewed as being carved in stone, never to be changed. They should serve as guidelines to activity, be constantly reviewed, and changed when the situation warrants a change.

### B. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL

**Recommendation:** The organization-centered mode of control is more

desirable for a narcotics unit than is the investigator-centered mode.

*Recommendation Caution:* The organization-centered mode of control is a matter of degree. Overcontrol in this mode, will, no doubt, result in reduced agent productivity.

#### C. ROTATION

*Recommendation:* Rotational policies in a narcotics unit should be calculated on the basis of the stresses, tensions, and opportunities for corruption experienced by the street agent. The office agent is largely immune from these "street" pressures.

*Recommendation:* Units must keep in mind the overall organizational features they desire when establishing turnover; otherwise, they will be unsuccessful in achieving their goals.

#### D. INFORMATION AND RECORDKEEPING

*Recommendation:* Where a steady rate of turnover of personnel is desired, narcotics organizations must also develop a structure that allows for continued information transfer. This means that it must be collected, and stored within the organization rather than individuals.

*Recommendation:* Investigative case files should be developed and maintained for use with arrest case files and intelligence work. Such files could be kept for a period of six months and then destroyed after relevant information has been transferred to other files.

*Recommendation Caution:* While it is useful, for a variety of reasons, to keep files documenting a case, such records may work to the disadvantage of the narcotics unit (for example, may be subpoenaed; the person under investigation may ask to see records under the Freedom of Information Act; and so forth). A recordkeeping system should be formally developed after careful assessment of the various disadvantages and vulnerabilities of such a system have been fully explored.

*Recommendation:* Record files should be organized so that they are cross-indexed for maximum usefulness.

*Recommendation:* Have at least one person on each shift who is knowledgeable about information retrieval (computer terminals and the like) in order to obtain information for agents.

*Recommendation:* A formal intra-agency information sharing policy should be developed in order to share relevant information with other units such as burglary and robbery.

*Recommendation Caution:* When the use of such information is tied to performance measures (such as getting credit for an arrest), the information will not be freely shared.

E. INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Recommendation: Provided the unit has the resources, at least one agent should be assigned as a full-time intelligence officer.

F. UNIT LOCATION AND LAYOUT

Recommendation: There was almost unanimous agreement among the agents in all sites that the unit should be located away from the police headquarters.

*Recommendation Caution:* Being away from the main headquarters creates ecological barriers to maintaining intraorganizational relations. In such a situation, plans should be developed for monitoring the unit's activities in order that they do not become organizationally autonomous.

Recommendation: The spatial design of the unit office space should permit isolation of arrestees and informants from the agents in the unit.

G. RECRUITMENT

Recommendation: Females and minority males and females should be recruited for narcotics enforcement when possible.

Recommendation: In recruiting a potential narcotics officer, make a careful assessment of the strength of the officer's family relations and of the spouse's understanding and acceptance of the role of a narcotics agent. Since narcotics enforcement puts pressure on family relationships, the strength of those relationships is an important factor in choosing the officer.

H. TRAINING AGENTS

Recommendation: A suggested desirable sequence for training (when possible) is to:

- 1) send the new agent to DEA school or the equivalent to learn about drugs and basic enforcement procedures (the school should be reasonably short in duration so as not to keep the agent from his or her full-time duties).
- 2) place the new agent with the office crew in order to learn about unit requirements and paperwork. This also serves to teach the new agent the value of paperwork for



completing a successful case.

NOTE: Points 1) and 2) are sequentially interchangeable.

- 3) Place the new agent on the street with an experienced partner who will complete the training.

*Recommendation Caution:* The above sequence assumes that the unit does not have a high rate of turnover, in which case a more formal model of training would best apply.

## I. EQUIPMENT

*Recommendation:* The number of undercover cars available should be about 70 percent of the number of agents.

*Recommendation Caution:* Obtaining and maintaining a large number of undercover cars is usually a large budget item.

*Recommendation:* Undercover cars should not be easily identifiable as police cars. All types of cars and vans are needed--old and new. Sometimes cars must be matched to the type of narcotics deal being made.

*Recommendation:* Undercover cars need to be changed periodically. The use of rental cars is a possible solution.

*Recommendation:* Each unit needs special telephones for informant and dealer contacts. They should not be identifiable as city or police prefix numbers, and this number should be changed periodically.

*Recommendation:* The unit should have its own radio channel with a scrambling device to protect against being monitored.

*Recommendation:* When eyeball surveillance is not possible, agents should routinely use body mikes for protection in making drug deals.

*Recommendation Caution:* Many body mikes provide poor transmission and thereby become useless. A body mike can be easily neutralized. Also, relatively inexpensive electronic detectors of body mikes are widely available.

*Recommendation:* The control and maintenance of electronic equipment should be the responsibility of the unit.

*Recommendation:* One officer or agent per shift should be made responsible for controlling, maintaining, and instructing agents on the use of the electronic equipment.

## J. INFORMANTS

Recommendation: A record of the agreement between the informant and the narcotics agent or unit should be kept on file.

Recommendation: Agents must be carefully trained in techniques of informant control.

Recommendation: At least two agents should work an informant, preferably as partners.

Recommendation: In dealing with informants the unit should:

- 1) centralize and integrate the information the informant provides, particularly information that may be peripheral to the case;
- 2) develop a standardized schedule of informant payments;
- 3) develop a unit-wide set of performance criteria for the informant.

Recommendation: The unit should have some form of informant files and records.

*Recommendation Caution:* Guarding the identity of the informant is paramount. While certain members of the District Attorney's staff may have limited access to the informant files, those files should remain solely under the control of the narcotics unit. In sum, if there are to be informant files and information records, they must be stored in a secure place and be protected from subpoena.

Recommendation: Longtime and "reliable" paid informants should not be treated in a lax manner so that control over the informant is lost. The informant's information should always be corroborated. The informant should not be allowed to dictate "how the deal is going down."

Recommendation: It must always be assumed that the informant is providing information about the unit as well as providing information to the unit. All opportunities for the informant to pick up information about the unit should be limited (for example, by isolating the informant on visits to the unit office).

## K. SEARCH WARRANTS/RAIDS

Recommendation: Raid equipment (such as hats, jackets, and the like) and routine should firmly establish that the agents are police officers.

*Recommendation Caution:* In some instances such identification may cause the agents to lose the element of surprise. This will have to be weighed against the need to establish identity as police.

Recommendation: Certain agents from each shift should be specially trained in the use of a shotgun. These agents would be the only ones authorized to have a shotgun for a raid. If difficulties are anticipated in the execution of the search warrant, a SWAT unit should be requested to accompany the agents.

L. CHAIN OF EVIDENCE

Recommendation: The shortest chain of evidence possible should be developed.

M. SHIFT SCHEDULES

Recommendation: Shifts should be as flexible as possible. This will help to relieve the overtime problem by allowing agents to coordinate their paid working hours with case developments. Flexible shift schedules will also aid the unit in being responsive to the contingencies of drug market activities.

N. CORRUPTION

Recommendation: Avoid having the narcotics unit do a job without adequate resources, as great strains and temptations result. Such a situation is often the basis for corrupt practices.

O. INTERAGENCY RELATIONS

Recommendation: In order to strengthen relationships with other narcotics enforcement agencies, the following might be done:

- 1) Develop a formal agreement for sharing information.
- 2) Share agents on temporary assignments to the other agency.
- 3) To reduce jurisdictional disputes, have agents deputized and authorized to operate in adjacent jurisdictions.
- 4) Develop formal rules and procedures for sharing cases, information, money, equipment, and personnel.
- 5) Develop formal rules for joint investigations in which arrests occur. Who gets credit for the arrest? How will the publicity be handled? Who controls the evidence and prisoners?

*Recommendation Caution:* Interagency cooperation appears to be built more firmly on interpersonal relationships than on sets of formal rules. Personal grudges, withholding information, taking cases or credit for cases, and the like often seem to dominate. Building a firm relationship will have to proceed slowly and cautiously.

Recommendation: The unit's relationship, with the prosecutor's office could be strengthened by:

- 1) Getting clarification from the prosecutor about procedures and paperwork.
- 2) Monitoring cases sent to the prosecutors and providing feedback to agents about case outcomes.
- 3) Having the prosecutor's office give the unit periodic updates and reviews of changes in the law.

**END**