

REPRODUCING ORDER: A STUDY OF POLICE PATROL WORK, by Richard V. Ericson. University of Toronto Press, 1982, pp. vii and 236, \$30.00 cloth, \$12.50 paper.

The publication of this book has provided readers with one of the few in-depth studies of Canadian police work. It reports the findings of an observational study of 348 workshifts or 1323 patrol officer-citizen encounters in an unnamed regional municipality of Ontario, Canada.

Based on a review of available socio-legal literature on the nature of police patrol work, Professor Ericson begins with the assumption that the work of patrol officers is governed by "rules" which come from the community and legal and police organizations. The "rules" identified are: criminal-law rules, administrative rules and rules within the occupational culture. Together they provide officers with a sense of order and a framework in which to conduct their routine activities so as to reproduce that order. As such Ericson's central research task is an organizational analysis within a broader social-action framework.

The second and third chapters furnish useful background information. Specifically, Chapter 2 describes how the study was actually conducted. It provides useful insights into the dilemmas of gaining access to the inside work world of patrol officers and offers advice for gaining the acceptance of these same individuals once having been granted access. Chapter 3 considers the "inside" occupational environment of the officers being studied (patrol officers' specialized vocabulary, how they view politicians and the criminal law, etc.). Through the presentation of descriptive data, the reader not only learns how a patrol officer spends time, but also what the officer's everyday work looks like.

Chapters 4-6 make for the most interesting reading. They address the more specific aspects of patrol work, namely, decisions concerning when to mobilize police officers in response to particular complaints; an examination of decisions in relation to victim complainants (for example, under what circumstances will an officer file an official report); decisions concerning whether to take investigative action; and finally, decisions regarding the charging process. Some discussion is devoted to the officer's role in the court procedure.

The research suggests, first, that there is an almost equal split between the amount of patrol work which is proactive or police-initiated (47.4%) and reactive or citizen-initiated (52.6%). This is a significant finding. Other books, for example, *Sample Surveys of Victims of Crime* (Ballinger Press, Cambridge, 1976), suggest patrol work is predominantly reactive. Second, Ericson's study clearly illustrates the discretion police officers have in deciding whether or not to deal with a certain complaint. Third, the reader discovers that criminal law, as a set of codified rules, is only used on occasion by patrol officers to reproduce order. They are highly selective in their use of the law. Further, patrol officers spend only a small proportion of their time actually enforcing criminal law.

There are two major strengths to this book. First, it is one of the few sociological studies of police work which provides statistical data supported by actual quotations from patrol officers themselves concerning their work. This perspective is insightful. Second, its thorough examina-

tion of the various parts of the patrol officer's work (contact with citizens, writing official reports and processing cases) allows the reader to become familiar with the "rules" which govern patrol officers and their work.

The major weaknesses of the book are found in the scope of the research and the final discussion of the research findings. Although Ericson describes the relationship between patrol officers and complainants, victims, suspects and accused persons, there is relatively little discussion concerning patrol officers' relationships with defense counsel, prosecutors or judges. This is considered a drawback as patrol officers are in fact part of the larger criminal justice system. Secondly, although the concluding chapter (7) is an attempt to tie the research findings back into the more general issues involved in policing, the author fails to consider to any great extent how much of what was found in this study is really unique to the particular force under investigation. While he does acknowledge the need for further research in other police jurisdictions in Canada, Ericson never asks: "To what extent does the provincial legislation that governs the force of interest determine its actual operation?"

Richard Ericson's book is clearly a major contribution to our knowledge of Canadian police work. Its insights and observations provide a wealth of information to those legal practitioners who deal with patrol officers on a daily basis.

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