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**GUARDIAN ANGELS:
AN ASSESSMENT OF
CITIZEN RESPONSE TO CRIME**
VOLUME I — EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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San Diego

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GOVERNMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The Guardian Angels represent a form of citizen crime prevention that has fostered interest and concern regarding their impact, motives, leadership and organizational structure. Led by their founder, Curtis Sliwa, these volunteers patrol the streets and subways in over 50 cities.

The purpose of this exploratory study was to document the activities of the Angels, assess their impact on crime and citizen fear of crime and describe features of the group that differentiate them from other citizen patrols. Recent research suggests that citizen patrols may reduce crime and make citizens feel safe by imposing social order.

Findings suggest that Angels may not reduce the violent offenses they seek to prevent although they may have limited impact on property crimes. Segments of the population feel safe when Angels patrol which may be associated with the Angels performing an order maintenance role. Sliwa's efforts to mobilize minority youth to be positive role models is a unique feature of the Angels. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Angels may depend on the extent to which Sliwa can seek rapprochement with law enforcement and community leaders.

The study includes three volumes: (1) an executive summary, (2) a technical report with summary tables, and (3) methodology and research instruments.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the decline in nationwide crime rates in recent years, approximately 22.8 million households were touched by crime in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Whether it is fear of victimization or dissatisfaction with the perceived ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system, American citizens are reacting to concern about crime with increasing frequency and in a variety of ways. The initial outpouring of support for subway gunman, Bernhard Goetz, who shot the youths who attempted to rob him, was a vivid demonstration of public concern and frustration about crime. Citizens are responding individually and collectively by improving home security measures, hiring private security guards and banding together to form neighborhood watch groups and citizen patrols.

Within this context are the Guardian Angels; unarmed, red-bereted, self-proclaimed peacekeepers who patrol the streets in over 50 urban cities in America and Canada. Initiated in 1979 to patrol the New York subway system, the Guardian Angels are led by founder Curtis Sliwa, whose motives and methods have been sources of concern for government officials and law enforcement administrators. Sliwa and the Guardian Angels have received considerable attention by the popular press with mixed reviews. Sliwa advocates putting the "crudballs and slime buckets" out of business through a reawakening of traditional values that involve people reaching out to one another and caring about the community. He operationalizes that philosophy by recruiting groups of racially-mixed youth who "dare to care" by patrolling the streets to be a visual deterrent against crime and act as role models for younger people. Sliwa's admission that recognition and support of local governments and law enforcement is unnecessary to the Angel mission has fostered skepticism and suspicion regarding the Guardian Angels' motives. Questions have been raised about the nature and extent of training received by Angels, the organizational structure of the group and the overall mission of the Guardian Angels.

Limited evidence has linked the concept of informal social control to the fear of crime (Greenberg, et al., 1985; Lavrakas, 1982; Wilson & Kelling, 1982) and implied that citizen patrols may be a means to impose order and control. Yet as Greenberg and others have noted, the communities most in need of crime prevention efforts to address crime and disorder lack the stability and cohesion to develop and sustain such efforts. The Guardian Angels offer the potential of an alternative approach to reducing disorder and crime in these areas. Moreover, the Angel group is composed primarily of minority, inner city youth who are often perceived as the very agents of disorder. The involvement of youth in crime prevention activities is a significant feature of the Guardian Angels.

Prior to this research, there were no data to either support or refute the contention that the Guardian Angels may fill a need in urban America. Is crime reduced when Angels patrol? Does their presence foster order and feelings of safety? What features of their structure and activities contribute to, or detract from, their ability to impact crime? How do they differ from other citizen groups organized to prevent crime? These are the questions this exploratory study sought to address.

The brief history of the Guardian Angels' organization has been recounted in numerous tabloids since its inception in 1979. However, it bears repeating as part of the research effort to clarify the current organizational structure and the importance of the nature of leadership provided by Curtis Sliwa.

Based on awareness and concern about street crime, Sliwa organized the "Magnificent Thirteen," a group of volunteers who patrolled the number 4 train from the Bronx. These young people would ride the train during peak hours with the intention of deterring crime. In a short time, more volunteers were attracted and the original "Magnificent Thirteen" became the Guardian Angels. Guidelines were established regarding age, type of training needed for volunteers and number of hours volunteers were required to patrol per week. Since 1979, Angel chapters have expanded to over 50 cities in the United States and Canada. In 1982, Sliwa married Lisa Evers, the national director of the Guardian Angels.

Sliwa's efforts to "get people off their duffs and get involved" have not been limited to patrolling the streets, but include protesting a variety of perceived injustices as well. He has become embroiled in a number of confrontations with law enforcement and local government officials by protesting subway conditions, circulating petitions to impeach a judge and objecting to treatment of the homeless people in the Rajneesh commune in Oregon. His unconventional procedures to bring attention to the Guardian Angels have caused consternation among law enforcement and resulted in the arrests of Sliwa and other Angels. Many of these incidents involved pitching tents on city-owned property. In May of 1985, Sliwa brought a group of Angels to Tijuana, Mexico to recruit Mexican youth for a chapter in that city. Mexican officials denied Sliwa permission to patrol and arrested one Angel member who was subsequently released.

Patrolling the subways of New York City in red berets and white T-shirts, the Guardian Angels have won support and gratitude of many subway riders. However, as Ostrowe and DiBiase state, "Controversy considering the group's motives, ethics, goals and effectiveness has grown along with its size." (Ostrowe & DiBiase, 1983). Many question the motives of Angel leader Curtis Sliwa. Is Sliwa a Good Samaritan or a publicity grabber attempting to "feather his nest"? He has a history of "developing his penchant for high profile public service," according to Pileggi (1980). Pileggi's (1980) same observations suggest Sliwa's personal ambition will lead him away from the Guardian Angels and he fears what might happen to the impressionable youthful members who are trained in martial arts and are without Sliwa's supervision and control.

Curtis Sliwa is admittedly tenacious in his approach to put the "buzzards, crud-balls, slimebuckets and vultures out of business" (Cermak, 1985). Andrew Gilman, in an interview with Sliwa for Penthouse magazine, summarizes the mixed reception Sliwa has received by local governments and the media: "Whether or not one agrees with Sliwa is not the point. He is one individual who is out there as a positive force in society." (Gilman, 1982)

RESEARCH APPROACH

This section describes the research procedures employed to address the following study objectives:

- o Document the organization and activities of the Guardian Angels.
- o Evaluate the effectiveness of the Angels in preventing or deterring crime in the areas patrolled.
- o Assess the effectiveness of the Guardian Angels in increasing citizens' feelings of safety and reducing fear of crime, and examine citizen perceptions of the Angels.
- o Assess the perceptions of law enforcement personnel and local government officials regarding the Guardian Angels.
- o Compare the Guardian Angels with other citizen volunteer crime prevention groups with respect to leadership, organizational structure and membership.

Documentation of Angel Organization and Activities

At the beginning of the research (October, 1983), Curtis Sliwa reported 48 chapters in the United States and Canada. Discussions with leaders and features of cities determined the final selection of 21 cities for study. Factors considered included accessibility to the Angel leader, location, city population, crime rate, Angels' perception of police attitude toward Angels, longevity of chapter, number of Angel members and activities (e.g., street patrol, transit patrol). It is believed that the chapters studied reflect a reasonable and representative cross-section of all Angel chapters.

Eight cities were considered primary sites. These cities are urban areas and include representation from both Eastern and Western regions: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, New York, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco. In these cities, two site visits were conducted by the research team at six-month intervals. During the initial visit, interviews were conducted with Angel leaders, members and police administrators. Guardian Angel training procedures were observed and the researchers joined regularly scheduled Angel patrols for non-participant observation. Angels were asked to maintain information about patrol activity on patrol logs. On the return visit, data were collected from logs and membership applications, follow-up interviews were carried out with the Angel leader and police administrator and surveys were conducted of police line officers and citizens. In the remaining 13 cities, considered secondary sites, telephone interviews were conducted with chapter leaders. In one of these chapters, Angel members completed mailed surveys. In another chapter, personal interviews were conducted with members in a city that was not a primary site. A list of cities involved in each research phase is provided in Table 1.

Twenty-five Guardian Angel leaders, representing 21 cities, responded to a personal or telephone interview about their chapter. Twelve of the respondents were in the eight primary sites visited by the researchers. (Borough leaders in New York were interviewed individually.) The questions addressed the nature and

TABLE 1

CITIES CONTACTED,** BY TYPE OF RESPONDENT
GUARDIAN ANGEL STUDY

City	Police Administrators	Police Community Relations Officers	Patrol Officers	Angel Chapter Leaders	Angel Members	City Government Officials	Citizens
Boston, MA	X *	X	X	X	X	X	X
Buffalo, NY	X						
Camden, NJ	X						
Chicago, IL	X *		X	X	X	X	X
Cleveland, OH	X *			X	X	X	X
Dallas, TX	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Detroit, MI	X						
Fresno, CA	X	X		X	X		
Hammond, IN	X						
Harrisburg, PA	X	X		X			
Houston, TX	X	X		X			
Indianapolis, IN		X					
Kalamazoo, MI	X			X			
Las Vegas, NV	X			X			
Miami, FL	X	X		X			
Montreal, Canada	X						
New Haven, CT	X						
New York, NY	X *	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oakland, CA	X	X					
Ontario, Canada	X	X					
Philadelphia PA				X			
Pittsburgh, PA				X			
Portland, ME	X			X			
Portland, OR		X		X			
Sacramento, CA	X	X	X	X	X	X	
San Diego, CA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
San Francisco, CA	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Santa Ana, CA	X	X		X	X		
St. Louis, MO	X	X					
Seattle, WA		X					
Stockton, CA	X			X			
Toronto, Canada	X						
Syracuse, NY	X	X		X			
Toledo, OH	X	X					
Vancouver, Canada	X						

* Includes transit police administrators.

** Cities in boldface type were primary sites.

scope of patrol activities, recruitment and training, internal management of chapters and relationship with police.

A total of 117 Angel members participated in personal or mailed interviews (106 in primary sites). The Angels represented 10 cities (8 primary sites plus two chapters for which comparable information was received). The personal interviews were conducted prior to patrols and those members who patrolled on a particular day were included. It is possible that the sample reflects Angels who were more active (e.g., more likely to patrol). This is an advantage in that these members were more aware of Angel activities; however, this may affect the representativeness of their estimates of level of participation (i.e., number of patrols per week). Angel members were asked about their motivation for joining the Angels, their experiences on patrol, level of participation and sociodemographic characteristics.

Patrol logs maintained by Angels were the primary source of information on Angel activities. Each chapter leader was asked to include specific data elements as part of the patrol logs for a six-month period (April 1, 1984 to September 30, 1984). In particular, data requested included number of members on patrol, date, time, pre-patrol activity (e.g., weapons checks, calisthenics), nature of contacts with citizens and police and discipline problems. A total of 672 patrol logs were reviewed for the study period. Problems regarding missing logs and incomplete data for some chapters are noted in the discussion of results, when relevant.

Effect of Angels in Preventing Crime

One of the primary objectives of the Guardian Angels is to reduce or deter violent crime in the areas patrolled. The target offenses, according to the national leader, include assault, battery, rape, robbery and other crimes which involve force or personal injury. While property crimes (e.g., theft, burglary) are not considered target offenses, Angels will intervene to assist victims and apprehend offenders. For this reason, both violent and property crimes are included in the assessment of Guardian Angel effectiveness.

The study site for this phase of the analysis was San Diego, California, where the Angels patrol in the downtown redevelopment area. The quasi-experimental design used to assess changes in crime is a modification of the multiple time-series design which compares reported crimes in an experimental area, where the Angels patrol, to a non-equivalent control area.

The Guardian Angels began patrolling in San Diego in July 1982. The study period was from January 1, 1982 through December, 1984. Reported crimes occurring between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. were compared because this is when Angel patrols occur. In this study, the pretest period does not provide an equivalent number of observations as in the post-test period (6 months compared to 30 months after Angel patrols began) because comparable data prior to January 1982 were not available. The fact that the pretest period is limited to six months affects the statistical analyses that could be performed. The number of crimes was analyzed monthly and for six-month intervals to establish trends during the study period. The source for the reported crime information was the Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS).

Effect of Angels on Citizen Feelings of Safety and Perceptions Toward Angels

To obtain detailed information on citizens' attitudes toward the Guardian Angels, personal interviews were conducted with 110 merchants and 130 residents in downtown areas of San Diego where the Guardian Angels patrol. The purpose of conducting citizen interviews was to gather subjective information on the effect of Guardian Angels on fear of crime and crime incidence. The 1980 Census data show that most downtown residents are male (81%); single (45%); likely to rent (99%); a significant proportion are not high school graduates (46%) and the median annual income is \$5,187. The population characteristics presented unique problems for sampling and conducting interviews which could affect the representativeness of the sample. Also, the fact that the interviews were conducted in an urban redevelopment area in one city affects the extent to which the findings can be generalized.

To obtain a comprehensive picture of citizen reaction to the Guardian Angels, a survey of transit riders was also conducted. Researchers surveyed transit riders in four Eastern cities either while they were on the subway train or at the bus stop (in Cleveland). The sample was based on availability and willingness to participate. The forms were returned before the rider got off the train (or on the bus in Cleveland). A total of 286 surveys were completed during October, 1984.

Perceptions of Local Law Enforcement and Government Representatives

It was presumed that the activities and subsequent effectiveness of the Guardian Angels may be affected by the degree of support, acceptance and recognition by local governments and city police agencies. To address the nature of police and Angel interaction and obtain opinions of law enforcement toward the Guardian Angels, personal interviews were undertaken with city and transit police administrators at the eight primary sites. Additionally, to provide a broader cross-section of responses, surveys were mailed to police administrators in the remaining 40 cities known to have an active Guardian Angels chapter. A total of 33 agencies participated in both interviews and surveys. Thirty-five (35) police and transit administrators and 34 community relations or liaison officers responded.

The position of local governments toward the Guardian Angels was assessed through interviews with mayors and city administrative personnel in the primary sites. No information from local city governments was obtained from secondary sites.

Preliminary data collected during the first site visit to eight cities suggested that opinions of line officers and police administrators regarding the Guardian Angels may vary and that attitudes of officers may differ according to experiences in different cities. Therefore, a brief questionnaire was developed for city police and transit officers and administered during the second site visit. The surveys were conducted at six of the primary sites. (One agency declined to participate and an in-depth survey was conducted in San Diego which is not comparable.) In Eastern cities with transit police, these officers were surveyed. Only precincts or divisions in which the Angels patrol were included in the study. Specific shifts were selected based on the hours the Angels patrol in each city or area. A total of 444 line officer surveys were completed during October and November, 1984. A more detailed questionnaire was completed by 56 San Diego officers in the Central division where Angels routinely patrol. This survey was also administered during line up using the same procedures as in other police surveys.

Comparison With Other Citizen Crime Prevention Efforts

An empirical examination of 15 citizen crime prevention groups was conducted through personal interviews with their leaders (presidents, chairmen). In the groups with a citizen patrol component, active members were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires. Differences from, and similarities to, the Angels were compared with respect to several variables including purpose, activities, organizational structure, internal management, financial support, interaction with police and characteristics of the membership. Groups were selected based on discussions with law enforcement personnel, listings of groups provided by large citizen organizations and focus of groups (e.g., neighborhood watch, citizen patrol).

Literature Review

To place the Guardian Angels within the framework of citizen efforts to prevent crime, an extensive literature review was conducted, providing an historical and current perspective. The crime prevention literature provided a summary of the applied research and theoretical perspectives advanced in this field. The academic literature focuses on three primary areas: forms of citizen participation, behaviors and motives of citizens and theoretical approaches that account for community involvement. Participation can be on an individual basis, characterized by Lavrakas as self-imposed behavioral restrictions to avoid victimization and measures taken to increase home security. Or participation can involve collective behavior, not necessarily as a result of fear of crime, but as a result of participation in neighborhood groups (Lavrakas, 1981). Typical forms of collective participation behavior are neighborhood watch, citizen patrol, senior escort and attendance at community meetings.

Podolefsky and DuBow's (1982) study of citizen participation suggested that individuals who join such groups are likely to be integrated in the community. The groups were not organized around crime prevention but considered the issue of crime along with other community issues. This finding was further substantiated by Lavrakas (1982).

The primary research on citizen patrols (Yin et al., 1977; Washnis, 1977) cites various types of patrols characterized as social service, building, mobile and foot patrols and special interest patrols.

As is generally true of volunteer organizations, citizen patrols have trouble with recruitment, training and commitment, according to Yin. These problems have given rise to short-lived programs, poor quality programs and understaffed erratic programs. Factors that make the difference in the quality or success of the programs include: existence of charismatic leadership, urgency or saliency of the immediate problem and the characteristics of the population attempting the program (Yin et al., 1977). The locus of control of citizen patrols is, for the most part, local citizens in cooperation with local law enforcement. Research on citizen patrols leaves many unanswered questions about the success, organization and interaction patterns of patrols.

Two of the approaches cited in the literature to account for varying definitions of crime and crime prevention responses include: the victimization approach and the social order approach (Lewis & Salem, 1981). The victimization approach defines

crime as an event which occurs when an individual has been victimized according to a statute declaring the event illegal. Individual responses tend toward isolation and avoidance, whereas collective responses seek to increase awareness of risk and educate individuals in ways to reduce opportunities for victimization (Lewis & Salem, 1981).

The social order perspective defines crime and fear of crime as indicative of the community's lack of social control. Crime prevention programs are designed to increase the social control capacity of a community as well as increase integration. The significance of informal social control and its relationship to fear of crime has been recognized as a critical factor in the crime prevention literature (Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Greenberg, 1985).

The literature review suggests that the Guardian Angels represent a unique citizen patrol because they are nationally controlled, comprised of young minorities, do not rely on government funding, maintain independence from local police and are willing to intervene in crimes. These features separate the Angels from other volunteer foot patrols.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Guardian Angel Organization and Activities

The goals of the Guardian Angels are to prevent crime and to increase citizens' feelings of safety. Before examining the extent to which Angels have achieved their goals, the methods used by the Angels to accomplish these ends will be described. The analysis of Angel activities focuses on motivation, training and patrol activities in eight primary sites.

Motivation

Prior to a discussion of actual Angel activities, it is important to understand the motivation of the participants, as expressed by the members themselves. The overriding reasons given for patrols are to prevent or deter crime (64% of all respondents) and to help others (49%). Other factors mentioned include keeping the streets safe (27%) and providing a positive role model for youth (9%). Several Angels told of family members or friends who had been crime victims. Others had personal experience as victims of crime. Some members felt that the Angels had helped them stay out of trouble.

Training

According to the National Rules and Regulations, a Guardian Angel recruit must complete a training program in order to graduate and earn a beret and T-shirt. In all eight primary sites, the original groups, or "waves", received a three-month training program consisting of martial arts instruction, physical and mental conditioning, citizen's arrest procedures, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. This training was completed before Angels were allowed to patrol.

The chapters studied no longer have a sufficient number of recruits to justify the formal three-month training. These chapters now conduct "on-the-job" training in

which the recruit learns by participating in patrols, but not in "colors" (beret and T-shirt). Some chapters supplement the on-patrol training with classroom instruction. Of the Angel members interviewed, 87% had been trained in martial arts and 76% had training in citizen's arrest procedures. Less than half of the respondents had received CPR (48%) or first aid training (46%). The quality of the training was not addressed in this study.

The review of Guardian Angel training suggests that the training has become more informal, and that Angel members have not been consistently trained in all areas. In addition, untrained recruits actually take part in patrols during their training. The inconsistencies in training could affect a patrol's ability to respond according to accepted procedures. However, data from patrol logs and researchers' observations indicate that most patrols do not become involved in crime incidents where the training could be put to the test. The national leader is currently revising the training program, but he states that on-patrol training will continue in chapters with a small number of recruits.

Patrol Activities

To ensure that members do not carry weapons, drugs or other contraband while on patrol, each member is searched before the patrol begins. This was done in all chapters visited by the research team. Based on data collected from patrol logs, a weapon was reportedly found in 1 of 672 patrols.

Street patrols occur in the eight primary sites; however, subway patrols take place only in the four eastern cities where this form of transportation is prevalent. With regard to street patrols, the areas covered most frequently include downtown, inner city areas as well as parks, other commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Some chapters also routinely patrol schools, shopping malls and concerts.

According to patrol log data, the average number of patrols per week ranges from 1 in Dallas to 13 patrols in New York. Data also suggest that six of the eight chapters patrol less than three times a week, on the average. Inconsistencies between interviews and patrol log data regarding the number of patrols per week raise questions regarding the validity of the data. Observations by researchers suggest that some chapters, especially those with fewer members, have problems getting enough members for scheduled patrols.

The typical patrol in the primary sites lasts 4 hours. Patrols in Eastern cities tend to be larger, with an average of 8 members compared to 4 in the Western cities studied. National guidelines suggest that patrols should consist of eight or more members.

Patrol log data indicate that discipline problems were reported in 6% of the 672 patrols. Types of misconduct, in order of frequency, include: failure to show up for patrol; misbehavior on patrol such as talking; being late for patrol; possession or use of drugs or alcohol; possession of a weapon and not wearing the proper uniform.

According to Angel members, they routinely assist citizens while on patrol. In interviews, Angel members noted the following types of assistance given to citizens:

- o Providing directions
- o Calling police
- o Helping people on buses, subways and across the street
- o Escorting senior citizens
- o Assisting drunks
- o Stopping crimes.

The research team saw many situations in which Angels helped citizens such as escorting people or carrying packages. However, based on patrol log data, only 17% of the patrols involved incidents in which citizens were assisted. Citizen assistance may be underestimated in patrol log statistics. Observations suggest that more serious incidents are more likely to be reported on patrol logs. Data on interventions in crime incidents are probably the most reliable. Six percent of the patrols involved assisting citizens in a crime incident.

In 672 patrols studied during a six-month period, only two citizen's arrests were documented. In addition, only 10 crime-related incidents resulted in the Angels contacting police. Curtis Sliwa has stated that almost 500 citizen's arrests were made by Angels in a six-year period; however, this does not appear to be consistent with data collected from logs. Documentation for the figures quoted by Sliwa was not available either through the police departments or the Guardian Angels.

There may be confusion regarding the legal definition of a citizen's arrest that accounts for conflicting information regarding arrests made by Angels. In some cases, the Angels detain suspects for police or assist police, but do not actually make the arrest. These may be counted as citizen's arrests by Angels.

Citizen Perceptions

The household and merchant interviews conducted in areas patrolled by the Guardian Angels in San Diego provide the following information on interactions with the Guardian Angels from the citizens' perspective:

- o Ninety percent (90%) of the 240 respondents had heard of the Guardian Angels.
- o A smaller percentage (42%) were aware that the Angels patrolled in their neighborhood.
- o Most of the respondents who knew of the Angel patrols had actually observed them.
- o Over one-third had seen the Angels once a week or more and 27% had talked to Angel members.
- o Five of those interviewed had been assisted by the Angels and 36% had seen the Angels help someone else.
- o Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents had seen the Angels act in a way they thought was inappropriate (e.g., over-react; patrol where they were not wanted; act in a rowdy manner).

In four Eastern cities, the majority of the transit riders surveyed knew of the Angels (97%) and 83% had seen the Angels patrolling. Eleven percent (11%) had received assistance from the Angels and over one-third had observed the Angels help another person.

Police Line Officer Surveys

Police officers surveyed in San Diego were, for the most part, aware of the Angel patrols and 45% had conversed with members. Approximately one-third acknowledged that Angels had participated in resolution of a disturbance, citizen's arrests and detention of a suspect. Sixteen percent (16%) had personally been assisted by Angels (e.g., providing information, intervening in a crime, acting as a witness). A slightly higher percentage (23%) had seen the Angels helping citizens. Additionally, 32% felt that Angel patrols had, on occasion, acted inappropriately by escalating a situation, interfering with police or committing a minor misdemeanor offense.

Police in six other cities completed a shorter questionnaire during line up or roll call. The majority of the officers surveyed were familiar with the Angels. Almost half (49%) had talked with Angels; however, only 6% stated that they had received assistance. Of the officers who were knowledgeable of Angel activities (152), the majority agreed that Angels had:

- o Helped citizens (61%)
- o Made citizen's arrests (66%)
- o Detained a suspect (61%)
- o Identified a suspect (51%)
- o Acted inappropriately (70%).

Guardian Angels' Impact on Crime

It was hypothesized that the presence of the Guardian Angels would prevent or deter violent crime. Findings suggest that the Angels did not have an impact on violent crime in San Diego.

When comparing six-month intervals, reported major violent offenses declined in both the experimental and control areas after the Angels began patrolling. In the experimental area where Angels patrolled, reported violent crimes dropped 22% between the pretest period and the six-month time frame when Angel activity was the highest, compared to a 42% decline in the control area. This suggests that factors other than Angel patrols may explain the reduction in crime. This conclusion is supported by the correlation coefficient computed using monthly Angel activity data (number of patrols) and reported violent offenses. The correlation coefficient indicated that Angel activity and reported crimes were not strongly associated.

In addition, Guardian Angels do not appear to have impacted simple assault. These offenses actually increased in the experimental area (2%), while simple assaults declined in the control area (-9%) when comparing January to June 1982 and 1983. The correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between monthly Angel activity and less serious assaults was not statistically significant.

Property offenses declined at a greater rate in the experimental area (25%) versus the control area (15%) when comparing the six months before Angels began patrolling in San Diego with the period in which Angel activity was highest (January to June, 1983). This suggests that the Angels may have contributed to the greater reduction in property crime in the areas patrolled. However, it is possible that, as a result of the presence of the Guardian Angels, burglars and thieves went to other areas to commit offenses. Due to data limitations, this issue could not be addressed.

The correlation coefficient shows a significant relationship between Angel patrols and theft-related crimes. When the Angel patrols increased in frequency, the number of reported crimes was lower. This association between Angel patrols and property crimes is not conclusive, however. The San Diego Police Department initiated a foot patrol in the experimental area in November 1982 which could have affected crime in the posttest period. Unfortunately, an alternative experimental area could not be selected because the Angels do not routinely patrol elsewhere in the City.

One hypothesis suggested by the data requires further testing. It may be that Angels are most effective at times of high visibility, such as during extensive media coverage and when patrols are frequent (e.g., six days a week).

Impact of Guardian Angels on Citizens' Feelings of Safety

A basic tenet of the Guardian Angel approach is that their presence in selected areas increases citizens' feelings of safety or, conversely, reduces fear of crime. To measure this effect, San Diego residents and merchants were interviewed and surveys were distributed to Eastern transit riders.

The purpose was twofold:

- o To describe citizen opinions regarding Angel effectiveness in increasing citizens' feelings of safety.
- o To account for the fact that some citizens more than others perceived the Angels as effective.

The pertinent literature indicates that certain subgroups in the population are relatively more fearful (Lavrakas, Lewis & Skogan, 1980) and general correlates of fear have been postulated in several studies (Warr & Stafford, 1983). The variables analyzed in this study included sex of respondent, age, income and if the respondent had been a crime victim.

The findings presented in this section should be considered exploratory. It is difficult to generalize the survey results to other populations since the sample overrepresented some segments of the general population.

Two questions related to effectiveness of the Guardian Angels in reducing fear of crime:

- o Using a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being very effective and 1 being not at all effective, what number best describes how effective you feel the Guardian Angels are in increasing citizens' feelings of safety?

- o Do you feel more safe when you know the Guardian Angels are patrolling in your neighborhood?

Citizens gave the Guardian Angels a relatively high rating on their effectiveness in increasing citizens' feelings of safety with a total mean score of 3.5 of a possible 5.0.

Citizens who were aware that the Angels patrolled in their neighborhood (85) were asked if they felt more safe knowing the Angels were patrolling. Over half (60%) observed that they felt more safe as a result of the presence of Angels.

The relationship between responses to the questions about Angel effectiveness and sociodemographic variables was examined. Age was the only sociodemographic factor related to opinions about the effectiveness of the Guardian Angels. Those respondents aged 50 and over were more likely to give the Angels a higher rating with respect to Angels' effectiveness in increasing citizens' feelings of safety than respondents who were under 50 (3.7 vs. 3.2). Although females and respondents with lower income levels also reflected more positive views of the Angels, these differences were not statistically significant. No sociodemographic variables were significantly related to the question about feeling more safe knowing Angels are patrolling.

Transit riders (285) in four Eastern cities gave the Angels a positive rating on their effectiveness in increasing citizens' feelings of safety (3.3 out of 5). Forty percent (40%) of the transit riders indicated that they felt unsafe or very unsafe on the subway/bus. Those who felt the Guardian Angels have the greatest impact on citizens' feelings of safety were female respondents and those 30 years of age or over.

Sex of respondent was the only sociodemographic variable related to both feelings of safeness and perceptions of Guardian Angels' effectiveness. Similar to San Diego citizens, older transit riders were more likely to think Guardian Angels increase citizens' feelings of safety, resulting in a relationship between age and perceptions about Angels. While sociodemographic characteristics were related to both feelings of safety and Angel effectiveness, there was not a significant relationship between feeling safe on the train/bus and the responses regarding effectiveness of the Guardian Angels in increasing feelings of safety.

These findings are supported by results of another survey of 2,698 subway riders in the Bronx and Harlem in 1984. Over half of the respondents (61%) agreed that the Guardian Angels make people like themselves less fearful of crime. Elderly and female respondents were more likely to feel this way. When the Angels were present on the train, riders were significantly more likely to agree. Most of the subway riders (66%) said that they believed the Guardian Angels reduced crime on the subways (Kenney, 1985).

Police and City Government Reaction to Guardian Angels

It was expected that the activities and impact of the Guardian Angels would be influenced by perceptions and reactions of law enforcement, city government and the general public. Interviews and surveys of these groups addressed this issue as well as the nature and extent of interaction between the Angels and these segments of the population.

The following findings summarize the responses of law enforcement personnel and city government representatives.

- o Upon request by the Angels, most police administrators (77% of 35) and city government staff members surveyed (6 of 8) have held meetings with Angels. Meetings generally focused on Angels' requests for support or recognition of their activities. In some agencies, Angels were provided with identification cards and police conducted record checks on potential Angel recruits.
- o Although nearly half of the police administrators (46%) agreed that the Angels have assisted patrol officers, 37% observed that their agencies have received complaints from citizens about the Angels. Concerns from citizens included: Angels soliciting contributions, patrolling in areas in which their presence was not wanted and acting in an aggressive manner.
- o Almost half of the police administrators (49%) observed that no conflicts have arisen between police and Angels for two reasons: Angel visibility has been minimal or Angels have adhered to the ground rules established by police.
- o About half of the administrators (51%) agreed that there is a benefit to the Angels' patrols and 46% indicated that Angel activities in their cities should continue. Proportionately, line patrol officers were less likely to hold these views.
- o The majority of city government respondents indicated that Angel patrols are beneficial and should continue. However, only two of eight city representatives characterized their city's position toward the Angels as supportive. Most took a neutral position.
- o Similarly, the majority of police administrators adopted a neutral stance toward the Angels (57%). Twenty-three percent described their view as supportive while 17% observed an unsupportive position.
- o Supportive opinions were reflected in statements such as "any type of citizen help is welcome" and the "Angels provide a positive means for youth to become involved in their community." Less positive views were associated with the belief that patrolling the streets is the responsibility of the police. Some respondents spoke unfavorably about the Angels' demeanor and style of dress (e.g., appearance similar to gang members).
- o Eleven of the 35 police and transit administrators have developed either formal or informal agreements with the Angels. In four of the cities studied (Boston, Cleveland, Portland, Syracuse), the Angels are provided with free subway or bus passes and identification cards. In exchange, the Angels are asked to notify the transit personnel of trains or routes they intend to patrol. Informal agreements with city police agencies are characterized by police departments assigning a liaison person to meet with the Angels and in some cases providing identification cards, training facilities and information relative to citizen's arrest procedures. Some departments have issued in-house bulletins to police personnel describing the department position toward the Angels and the administrative expectations with respect to officer interaction with the Angels. At the time of this writing, four police departments

are known to have initiated formalized, written agreements with the Angels: New York City, Buffalo, Las Vegas and Syracuse. The most comprehensive of these is the City of New York, with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) developed in May of 1981. The agreement delineates terms and conditions agreed to by the Guardian Angels and the New York City Police Department and transit police. The responsibilities of each party are similar to those informally agreed to in other cities (e.g., police will issue I.D. cards, assign department liaison, render necessary courtesy, provide legal training and conduct criminal record checks). Angels are expected to provide membership lists, notice of proposed patrol areas and copies of patrol logs to the police department. The agreement also states that the City of New York is not liable for actions taken by Angels.

Discussions with New York City and transit police administrators and Curtis Sliwa suggest that neither party has responded satisfactorily to the terms outlined in the agreement. Both sides appear to hold each other responsible for non-compliance. The result is a formal agreement to which neither party subscribes.

The Syracuse and Buffalo memorandums are similar in nature to the City of New York but relatively recent and thus untested with respect to compliance of both parties. The agreement in Las Vegas was never acted upon because of dissension and instability within the Guardian Angels according to police personnel in Las Vegas.

Citizens' Views Compared to Police and City Officials

A series of opinion statements about the Guardian Angels (Ostrowe & DiBiase, 1983) were asked to all groups (Table 2). Results indicate that Eastern transit riders and San Diego citizens are more likely than others to feel that more Angels should be patrolling, that Guardian Angels should expand to other cities and that local governments should support the Angels. In contrast, line police officers revealed the least favorable opinions regarding these statements. Police administrators and city officials generally scored in the mid-range, reflecting a no opinion response. Groups tended to agree that crime-fighting should be done only by professional police. Similar responses by citizens on the issue of crime-fighting may be related to reluctance on the part of citizens to grant "crime-fighting" status to a civilian group. Citizens may also perceive the Angels in a helping or good Samaritan role.

It is of interest to note that a random telephone survey of 239 Chicago citizens conducted in 1982 also revealed favorable attitudes toward Angels. The majority of those surveyed believed that the Angels were helpful in preventing crime, thought the city administration should give official recognition to the group, and observed that they would feel safer on the subway if the Angels were present (Lavrakas, 1985).

San Diego citizens and transit riders perceived the Angels as more effective in reducing fear than the other groups surveyed based on mean scores (3.5 and 3.3, respectively). Police administrators perceived the Angels as minimally effective in increasing citizens' feelings of safety (2.0). Line officers and community relations officers indicated only slightly higher scores (2.2 and 2.3). Angel members rated themselves the highest with a mean score of 4.2.

Citizens interviewed in San Diego, transit riders surveyed in the East and Angel members rated the Guardian Angels higher than police respondents or city officials regarding Angel effectiveness in reducing crime. Respondents in the primary sites were asked to rate the effectiveness of the Guardian Angels in reducing crime on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being very effective and 1 being not at all effective. Combined mean scores on this question were as follows:

o Police administrators	2.1
o Police line officers	1.9
o San Diego citizens	3.6
o Transit riders	3.3
o City officials	2.5
o Angel members	4.0

Police respondents offered comments on the "crime-fighting" abilities of the Guardian Angels. Several indicated that the low visibility of the Angels minimizes their impact on crime, although they may increase citizens' perceptions of safety. Less favorable remarks perceived the Angels as vigilantes who lack motivation and leadership. Some law enforcement personnel suggested that Angels could be more effective by joining other crime prevention groups, projecting a better image, increasing their visibility and coordinating their efforts with the police.

TABLE 2
OPINIONS TOWARD GUARDIAN ANGELS
SURVEY RESULTS
1984

	Cumulative Mean Scores				
	Police & Transit Administrators N = 13	Patrol Officers N = 429	City Officials N = 9	Eastern Transit Riders N = 274	San Diego Citizens N = 210
I wish there were more Guardian Angels patrolling the streets.	3.2	2.3	2.8	4.1	3.7
Crime fighting should be done only by professional police.	3.2	1.9	3.4	3.4	3.2
The mayor and city officials should support the Guardian Angels.	3.2	2.4	2.8	4.1	3.6
I would like to see the Guardian Angels expand to other American cities which have a crime problem.	3.0	2.5	3.2	4.0	3.7
In general, I oppose the actions of the Guardian Angels.	3.8	2.7	3.7	3.9	3.9
1 Least favorable toward Angels	→				5 Most favorable toward Angels

Organizational Structure - Comparative Analysis of Citizen Volunteer Crime Prevention Groups

The Guardian Angels were compared to fifteen other citizen crime prevention groups to examine differences and similarities with respect to organizational structure and membership characteristics. The comparative analysis addressed the following organizational features:

- o Perceived purpose and activities
- o Recruitment procedures and training
- o Financial support
- o Factors related to membership.

Table 3 highlights the comparison between Angels and other groups. The narrative section focuses on the groups with a patrol component.

Purpose and Activities

Organizations with patrol components as part of their program are located in the Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania; Long Island, New York; Florence, New Jersey and Stockton, California. Although program activities vary, these groups have similar purposes which include: increasing citizen awareness of crime by community education, promoting active participation in crime prevention efforts and enhancing neighborhood security. The patrols in the East operate with assistance and direction from the local police departments. No weapons or force are employed on patrols and volunteers are expected to report suspicious activity to the police. Members are strongly discouraged from intervening in possible crime-related incidents. In Florence and Stockton, members engage in both walking and mobile patrols, usually consisting of two people. The other groups only engage in mobile patrols. The Stockton group functions to "observe and report" yet the leader indicated that this group will physically intervene in incidents if necessary.

While the citizen groups restrict their activities to local communities, the Guardian Angels is a national organization. Over a third of the Angel chapters in this study were initiated by Curtis Sliwa with the remaining chapters started by Angel members in other cities or on the basis of a community request. The major purposes of the Guardian Angels are to be a visual deterrent to crime, increase citizens' feelings of safety and provide positive role models for young people. In contrast to most citizen patrols examined, the Angels will intervene if they encounter a crime in progress, although physical intervention is viewed as a last resort to be used only to protect others from harm.

In addition to foot patrols, many Angel chapters also become involved in community-related activities based on requests from citizens, which provide the opportunity to increase their visibility with the public and a means to maintain the interest of the members. The supplementary activities are more typical of Eastern chapters, perhaps because these groups have been in existence longer than Western chapters. Some Angel groups have developed Junior Angel programs for youth from ages 11 to 15. Although these younger members are not permitted to patrol, they are encouraged to understand the value of community involvement by assisting senior citizens with various jobs such as raking leaves and shoveling snow. According to the Guardian Angels, the purpose of the junior program is "to help younger people feel better about themselves and bridge the gap between

TABLE 3
GUARDIAN ANGELS AND OTHER CITIZEN GROUPS
DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES
Surveys and Interviews, 1984

VARIABLES	GUARDIAN ANGELS - 25 CHAPTERS	OTHER CITIZEN GROUPS (15)
<u>Goals and Objectives</u>		
o Purpose	Prevent and deter crime	Prevent and deter crime
o Primary activity	Street/subway patrol	Community awareness and crime prevention education/patrol (3 groups)
o Leadership	Nationally controlled	Locally controlled
o Perceived effectiveness: (scale 1-5)		
- Preventing/reducing crime	4.0	4.4
- Increasing citizens' feelings of safety	4.2	4.2
<u>Operating Procedures</u>		
o Patrol activities		
- Primary type	Foot	Mobile
- Areas patrolled	Urban center city areas, residential sections, parks, concerts, and special events	Rely on police statistics, police suggestions, and community requests (50%); own neighborhoods (25%); whole city (25%). All patrol residential areas routinely.
- Law enforcement guided	No	Yes (75%)
o Bylaws/Guidelines	National (100%)	53% have
o Major source of funds	Various contributors and donors	Member contributions
o Monthly expenses	\$50 - \$200	\$10 - \$1,740
o Frequency of meetings	Three or more times per week	Every other month or less
o Relationship with police	16% written agreements 84% informal, but generally independent	87% informal agreements, generally supported by police
o Recruitment procedures:		
- Primary methods	Talking to people while on patrol	Community presentation and media coverage
- Screening volunteers	56% final decision is leaders	47% indicated not applicable
- Membership requirements	16 years of age, attending school, employed or looking for work, no serious felony record, participate in a training period, patrol once a week, carry no weapons, not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol	No specific requirements (53%), solicit dues from members (27%), regular monthly attendance (7%), minimum age of patrollers 18 and 21 (13%)
- Membership exclusion/termination	Disobeying rules and guidelines of the chapter, inability to get along with others, attitude and behavior reflecting desire for authority and glory, alcohol/drug abuse, carrying weapons, committing crimes	Substantiated criminal background, disobeying specific rules

TABLE 3 (Continued)

VARIABLES	GUARDIAN ANGELS	OTHER CITIZEN GROUPS
<u>Operating Procedures (Cont.)</u>		
- Desirable characteristics for being in group	Self-control, commitment, respect, self-respect, respect for law, reliability, dependability, patience, maturity	Caring and concerned attitude toward the community, interest in crime prevention, willingness to accept responsibility, law-abiding
o Training	Reportedly, three 2-hour sessions weekly for several weeks to include physical conditioning, self-defense, citizen arrest procedures, first aid, CPR, and simulated response to potential incidents	Of the citizen groups that patrol: keeping patrol logs, equipment use, procedures for observing suspicious activity and reporting to police
<u>Membership Factors</u>		
o Average number of members	20	45
o Range of group longevity	2 months - 5 years	2 years - 19 years
o Participation: (members' responses)		49%
- Percent who feel they are more active than other members	58%	
o Member characteristics:	117 members	47 members
- How long member	Two years or more (28%)	Two years or more (36%)
- Primary reason for joining	Desire to help people in need	To make community safer
- Participation in other volunteer efforts	35%	77%
- Satisfied with group (yes responses)	77%	100%
- Intend to stay indefinitely	64%	89%
- Sex	84% male	53% male
- Age	66% 20 or under	66% 50 or over
- Ethnicity	32% white	94% white
- Employed	51%	51%
- Education	59% less than high school	43% four or more years of college
- Income (annual)	38% less than \$5,000	62% \$25,000 or more
- Married	11%	72%

younger and older people." Other activities in which Angel chapters become involved include: assisting senior citizens with groceries; providing escort services to and from events to insure personal safety; collecting and distributing food and toys for local civic organizations; participating in community festivals and blood drives; searching for missing and runaway youth and giving community presentations about self-protection and ways to avoid victimization.

Most of the San Diego organizations do not require any specific training of volunteers. The four groups with patrol components do require training, although only one specifies a certain number of hours. With the exception of the Stockton group, members are assisted by law enforcement in training of members. Instructions relate to accurate completion of patrol logs and procedures for observing and reporting suspicious activity.

The Guardian Angels training includes physical and mental conditioning, self-defense, procedures for citizen's arrest, first aid and CPR. The National Rules and Regulations state that several weeks are required for training, but chapters vary considerably with respect to time devoted to training.

Relationship with Police

Thirteen of the fifteen citizen groups have informal agreements with local police agencies. Law enforcement may provide support with respect to crime statistics, training and designating a liaison position to interact with the groups. The groups with citizen patrols are expected to notify police of areas patrolled. Patrols are likely to be directed by police when members do not patrol in their own neighborhoods.

As noted earlier, Curtis Sliwa has stated that close associations with law enforcement could have negative effects on the independence and autonomy of Guardian Angel chapters. However, formal written agreements have been developed with four police agencies, perhaps due to a perceived political expediency on both sides.

Recruitment Issues

Community presentations and media coverage were the primary means of recruiting volunteers for citizen groups. The organizations with multi-purposes generally have more difficulty recruiting and retaining members than groups with a neighborhood orientation.

Seven of the 15 citizen leaders indicated that screening of volunteers is not applicable to their groups. The remaining groups screen volunteers with some receiving assistance from police to determine potential criminal backgrounds. Eleven (11) leaders observed that known specific criminal background would exclude an individual from membership or result in termination. Disobeying the guidelines for citizen patrols would also lead to termination. More than half (8) of the groups have no specific requirements for joining beyond a willingness to become involved. Some of the citizen groups solicit dues and two groups have minimum age requirements for members who participate in patrols. The most desirable characteristic for volunteers, according to the majority of leaders of citizen groups, was a caring and concerned attitude.

Talking to people on patrol is the primary means for recruiting new members for the Guardian Angels. Problems relative to recruitment, expressed by 20 leaders, generally occur after the initial sign-up period, following extensive press coverage. At this time, a high proportion of potential recruits fail to show up for training. Leaders attribute this failure to a misunderstanding about the Angel purpose and an unwillingness to commit the necessary time to patrolling.

Retaining members is problematic as well, according to 80% of the Angel chapter leaders. Members quickly discover that patrolling is often a monotonous activity with little glamour or excitement. Also, the nature of the activity requires a team approach and Angels are sometimes subjected to verbal abuse. These factors along with inclement weather and conflicts with school or jobs lead to Angel recruits either leaving voluntarily or being asked to leave.

Disobeying the rules of the chapter was the primary reason given by almost all Angel leaders for terminating members. Examples of unacceptable behavior included disruptive behavior on patrol, solitary patrol and use of abusive language on patrol. Other members have been asked to leave due to alcohol or drug use, carrying weapons or committing crimes.

Three personal characteristics were identified as most important for being an Angel, according to the majority of leaders: self-control, commitment and respect. These traits were further described by observing that members must be disciplined, avoid overreaction and demonstrate a sincere concern about people. Respect was characterized by tolerance and acceptance of all people irrespective of race, gender or lifestyle.

Source of Funds

Nearly all the citizen groups (13) incur expenses relative to office space, telephone and supplies. Monthly expenses ranged from \$10 to \$1,740. Over half of the citizen groups (8) have received no donations and do not participate in any fund-raising activities. The larger groups have been recipients of contributions ranging from \$700 to \$17,000.

Types of expenditures cited by the Angel leaders are similar to other citizen groups (e.g., office space, telephone, supplies). Fifteen of the 25 Angel chapters (60%) have had office space donated. The patrol activity does not necessarily require a meeting place, but the need for a telephone and an area for training are important. The cost for T-shirts and berets is usually borne by Angel members unless provided through donations.

Angel chapter expenses ranged from less than \$50 per month to just over \$200. Estimates of dollar amounts received through donations and contributions varied from less than \$50 to \$10,000, with 17 chapters reporting under \$1,000. Donations are received from a variety of social and civic organizations. Most chapters send all money to the national headquarters and are subsequently reimbursed for their expenses based on funds available in their chapter's account. In 1984, the national organization received \$35,390 in donations and contributions, while reported expenses were \$45,566. Most chapters have participated in fund-raising efforts on a limited basis but this activity is not strongly encouraged by leader Sliwa. He suggests that the values inherent in the Angel philosophy may become less meaningful with a focus on raising funds. The Sliwas' income is derived from Lisa Sliwa's modeling activities and compensation from speaking engagements.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- o Evidence suggests that the Guardian Angels become involved in crime-related incidents, based on patrol logs and reports by citizens and police. However, the extent of their involvement cannot be substantiated due to limited data available. Police also admit that Angels, on occasion, have assisted them while on patrol. However, most police and some citizens expressed concern over inappropriate interventions which may result from inadequate training. Additionally, patrols are infrequent in cities with a limited number of members. These factors affect the potential for impacting crime.
- o The Guardian Angels had minimal impact on violent crimes in one urban downtown area, but patrols may have had a short-term effect on property crimes when their visibility was at peak levels. Also, Guardian Angels have provided assistance to citizens and have assisted police in a limited number of crime incidents. These efforts can have positive impacts on the criminal justice system.
- o Most citizens feel that the Guardian Angels increase citizens' feelings of safety. Older citizens and females were most likely to hold these views. Extensive research has demonstrated that feelings of safety and, correspondingly, fear of crime are influenced by a myriad of factors, incorporating personal characteristics, environmental attributes (density, crime rate) and perceptions of the environment (street lighting, neighborhood problems) (Lavrakas, 1982). The extent to which the Angels affect citizen fear of crime warrants further study in areas where the Angels are more visible than in San Diego. Also, controlled comparative analysis should be undertaken with citizens who see the Angels regularly and those who do not.
- o It is apparent that citizens hold views about Angels' effectiveness that are quite different from law enforcement personnel and city government officials. Citizens and Angel members rated the effectiveness of the Guardian Angels in reducing crime higher than did police and city government officials.

Most police administrators and city government representatives agreed that the Angels' patrols are beneficial and nearly half stated that patrols should continue in their cities. However, the majority were reluctant to describe their official position toward the Angels as supportive.

Citizens, on the other hand, held more positive views toward the Angels. Citizen perceptions about the effectiveness of the Angels may be associated with how often they see the Angels and the activity observed. In some cities, like Cleveland, Angels are quite visible performing both a "helping" role and an "order-maintenance" role as they assist people on buses and urge riders to stay behind the lines where the buses stop.

Transit riders in the East were more likely to be aware of Angel patrols than citizens and merchants in downtown San Diego. Citizen opinions may not only be associated with Angel visibility but also with the nature of the subway patrol compared to a street patrol in a specific neighborhood. The transit systems are more or less neutral territory compared to communities in which feelings of loyalty, pride and ownership are more evident. Guardian Angel

patrols may be more acceptable on the subways than in residential neighborhoods where Angel patrols have not been specifically requested. These observations require further examination to determine if the opinions of neighborhood residents differ from transit riders and the extent to which differences are due to the nature of the patrol (i.e., subway vs. street patrol).

- o Features of the Guardian Angels organization suggest the potential for generating an informal social control mechanism. Conditions such as a cohesive, small group, frequent contacts and similarity in beliefs and social characteristics foster informal social control which may be linked to crime prevention and fear of crime (Greenberg, 1985; Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Lavrakas, 1982). Findings from studies on police foot patrol have shown that more police officers walking the beat may not reduce crime but may increase citizens' feelings of safety due to the presence of informal social controls (Trojanowicz & Banas, 1985; McGovern, 1983).

Citizen perceptions toward the Angels may be related to perceived assurance that the Angels will seek and maintain a sense of order. In areas where there is an imbalance of "respectable" versus "unrespectable" people, the citizenry desires a social control mechanism (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The Angels may contribute to this sense of control and be recognized as a potential for intervention.

- o The comparative analysis highlights distinct differences between the Guardian Angels and other groups dedicated to similar purposes. Primary differences include the fact that the nature of the Guardian Angels' activity involves a greater potential for danger and time commitment on the part of members and the group has strong leadership exerted at the national level. While both citizen groups and Guardian Angels demonstrate features common to organizations, the characteristics of members vary considerably. There are few organizations like the Guardian Angels that purposely recruit multi-racial groups of young people to commit time and energy to community crime prevention.
- o The Angels offer an alternative approach for citizen involvement in crime prevention by providing positive role models for the youth in need of such models, bridging the gap between older citizens and adolescents and reducing the fear of crime for certain segments of the general citizenry. Limited evidence suggests that Angel chapters that enjoy working relationships with other community organizations and become involved in activities beyond street patrol are more likely to be perceived favorably by the community. These activities also contribute to these chapters sustaining members.
- o Curtis Sliwa exhibits charismatic qualities that motivate young minority youth to be positive role models by becoming involved in volunteer crime prevention efforts. Sliwa recognizes the underlying motivations associated with volunteerism such as a desire to be liked, a desire to perform, a need for a position of authority and an opportunity to meet an unfulfilled need in their lives c.f. (Routh, 1972). Sliwa also realizes the value of recognition, feedback, reinforcement and mobility within an organization c.f. (Naylor, 1967).

By tapping a previously unrecognized group of young people, Sliwa offers what is perceived as a worthy mission. He "dares" the Angels to "care" and

combines the macho image with an orientation that supports the value of helping others. In essence, Sliwa makes it "cool" to be an Angel.

- o The most significant feature of the Guardian Angels may be that they represent a group of young people generally recognized as contributing to the crime problem.

Several Angels admitted to previous affiliation with gangs. Examining the research literature concerning youth gangs reveals parallels to the Angels with respect to motivation and structure. In his profile of gangs in Philadelphia, Friedman notes that weakened parent control and poorer family relationships may contribute to youth seeking out peer groups within the neighborhood (Friedman, 1975). And Yablonsky summarizes the Chicago school perspective which views the internal weakness of the family as a contributing factor in gang membership. This condition is associated with low self-esteem and encourages young persons to seek loyalty and unity from gang membership to alleviate feelings of inadequacy (Yablonsky, 1966). The gang provides a vehicle for the symbolic evidences of manhood such as physical prowess, status and power. According to the literature, the predominance of female-based households and the absence of a strong father figure intensifies the needs to assert masculinity (Yablonsky, 1966). On the positive side, the gang structure provides the potential to develop the characteristics of loyalty, leadership and individual competence.

The frustrations experienced by inner-city youth as well as the basic problems faced by adolescents may be associated with the motivations of young people who join the Guardian Angels. The Guardian Angels provide an opportunity for youth to meet their own needs in a constructive manner and also allow a positive contribution to the community.

Consideration of youth as a resource rather than a collection of problems to be solved by adults is the central theme expressed in the book, The Value of Youth. The contributing authors observe that there are few opportunities for youth in American culture to gain a sense of usefulness and meaningful participation. Young people need to feel competent and useful. Like all individuals, youth need confirmation that their efforts are needed. If they are not provided opportunities to achieve those needs in an acceptable way, they will seek their own means which may be unacceptable as well as destructive.

Some communities have recognized that "as involvement in socially useful projects intensifies, commitments to antisocial behaviors are weakened" (Pearl, et al., 1978).

In the early 1980's, the AC Transit Company in Oakland, California, was experiencing serious problems of vandalism, harassment and drug activity on the city buses. The charismatic leadership of a transit administrator is credited with bringing together Oakland gang leaders, service providers and businesses to address this issue. By establishing a youth council comprised of gang leaders and enlisting private sector support to develop programs to provide jobs for young adults, the community reduced crime on the transit system and gave young minority youth a stake in their community.

Two programs in San Francisco recruit young Black and Brown adults to reduce high crime in specific neighborhoods and improve police-community relations. Program participants patrol the streets, provide on-the-street counseling and perform conflict resolution efforts when the potential for violence is likely. The programs developed from a grass-roots, community effort and are supported with general funds. The young adults hired by the programs find gainful employment and opportunities for contributing to an improved quality of life in their communities.

Programs like those described and perhaps also the Guardian Angels have the potential for providing youth a stake in the larger community in such a way that brings about meaningful development of their own abilities. The positive outcomes of such an approach are described by Arthur Pearl (1978): "...a means to develop initiative and self-determination with opportunities to gain a sense of satisfaction by participating in the decision-making process."

- o In varying degrees, the Guardian Angels' organization reflects some features identified in the literature as contributors to stability and maintenance of citizen crime prevention groups (Marx and Archer, 1973). These include:
 - Approval of the community they presume to represent;
 - A strong charismatic leader;
 - A positive ideology that affirms what the group supports as well as what it opposes.
- o Other factors related to group maintenance, according to Marx and Archer (1973), are financial support and legitimacy from local government. Neither of these conditions are applicable to the Guardian Angels. With regard to finances, Sliwa acknowledges that contributions from private citizens and organizations are helpful, but he is reluctant to accept funds from any government entity and does not actively encourage fund-raising by local chapters. His justification for this position is associated with his feelings about the concept of the Guardian Angels and his desire to remain independent and autonomous. He observes that the motivation for helping and protecting people could be diluted with a focus on fund-raising. He feels that commitment to the Angel concept might be negatively redirected if the organization became financially comfortable.
- o Sliwa also believes that positive relationships with police and city officials are not necessary for Angels to fulfill their mission. While he recognizes that formal agreements may urge local officials to communicate with Angels and such communication can reduce potential conflicts, he is unwilling to encourage close ties with public entities. It should be noted that some individual chapters have developed positive associations with police agencies. Sliwa accepts these interactions and in most situations respects the chapter leaders' efforts to sustain such communication. This is in line with another feature of stability: varying regulation by police (Marx & Archer, 1973). The authors of the "Urban Vigilante" conclude their study by observing that the groups most likely to survive are those that accommodate to the official power structure. However, they add an interesting paradox by stating that the "accommodations that help a group stay in business can estrange it from its presumed constituents. It is difficult to enjoy official toleration without being exploited or subverted by authorities" (Marx & Archer, 1973). Sliwa appears to recognize this potential.

- o Our observation of the Guardian Angels confirms the reasons identified by Marx and Archer as to why local officials are reluctant to support groups that attempt to deter disorders or prevent crime:

- Groups are not held accountable;
- Power of groups is not legally subscribed;
- Screening of members is inadequate.

In Reactions to Crime, McPherson and Silloway (1981) elaborate on the inherent tension between police and groups that take the initiative to prevent crime without assistance by police. These authors state that most crime reduction programs that are government funded define crime in the legalistic sense and have strong ties to the police, who are most comfortable when they direct the prevention activities. When citizens take the lead and exclude law enforcement or activities do not correspond with police opinions, officers feel threatened (McPherson & Silloway, 1981). This rationale may underlie the reluctance of police administrators to openly support the Guardian Angels and explain the negative and often hostile remarks by line officers. Our research suggests that law enforcement and local government officials may be unclear about the Angel organization and mission and are uneasy about features relative to membership.

The National Rules and Regulations of the Guardian Angels state that the first 50 volunteers cannot have arrest records that include felonies. Thereafter, only individuals with arrests for serious crimes are excluded. However, the screening process, in most cases, is inadequate because it relies on the volunteer to provide this information.

- o The results from this study do not support the label of vigilantism often attached to the Guardian Angels by the popular press and representatives of law enforcement. However, the reluctance of police administrators to officially support the Angels may stem from a police perception that places the Angels within the context of vigilantism. In their study of 28 vigilante groups prevalent in the 1960's, Marx and Archer found that supplemental or adversarial relationships with police did not determine positive or negative feelings of police toward such groups. The authors suggest that police often oppose supplemental groups (organized to provide assistance to police) because of the professionals' dislike of sharing authority and prestige with an amateur, even nominally (Marx & Archer, 1973). Probably more relevant to the Angels, the police fear the groups will make tactical mistakes and abuse their power, according to Marx and Archer. The potential for abuse by Angels was mentioned by many police personnel in the present study.

Although our evidence is limited, few specific instances were noted in which Angels intervened inappropriately; however, most line officers felt that this had occurred. Inconsistent or inadequate training of members may be associated with such actions and can also impact the physical safety of the Angel members or result in false arrests. Police administrators expressed concern about liability of police agencies if Angels were endorsed by law enforcement.

- o This study pointed out features of the Guardian Angels organization both similar to, and different from, other citizen groups organized to prevent

crime. The differences may provide insight into the relative longevity of the Angels and the continued emergence of new chapters. A significant feature may be the conceptual framework in which most citizens operate compared to the Angels. Research suggests that citizens most likely to participate in crime prevention efforts are those who are integrated into their community and address other community issues along with crime (Lavrakas, 1982). Yet the motivation of the Guardian Angels is guided by other factors that may contribute to sustaining the Angel organization.

The Guardian Angels organization presents an interesting form of crime prevention with some features that simultaneously contribute to, and detract from its stability and effectiveness, such as its relative autonomy and independence, the composition of members (inner-city minority youth often perceived as perpetrators of street crimes) and the nature of leadership provided by Sliwa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study and the review of relevant research regarding citizen crime prevention efforts have led to the following observations regarding ways the Guardian Angels could improve their approach to crime prevention and deterrence:

- o **Guardian Angel chapters should adhere to the National Rules and Regulations.**
 - Particular attention should be given to the minimum age of members.
 - Screening of recruits should be improved (i.e., possibility of felony arrests should be verified, references should be checked).
 - Uniforms should be standardized (i.e., T-shirts worn on outside so insignia is visible; no metal studs on wrist bands) to insure that Angels can be easily identified and not confused with a gang.
 - Angels should interact with police in a positive manner in areas patrolled.
 - Record keeping regarding patrols should be improved, including more complete recording of all contacts, detailed descriptions of interventions and names of suspects and witnesses. This kind of information may be useful in police investigations and in situations when Angels are asked to testify in court.
- o **The Guardian Angels should increase their interaction and coordination with other citizen groups.** The other groups could be crime prevention oriented or community-issue oriented. This type of interaction would increase the visibility of the Angels and allow citizen groups to learn about the objectives of the Guardian Angels. This recommendation is consistent with the literature which suggests that groups that expand their focus beyond crime prevention are more successful in sustaining members.

- o **In each city, Angel chapters should increase public awareness regarding the objectives of the group.** This can be accomplished through media coverage and presentations to police departments, schools and community groups.
- o **Training for Angel members should be standardized in terms of nature and scope.** Each member should receive a specified number of hours of training in the following areas: self defense, legal issues pertaining to citizen's arrests, first aid, CPR and appropriate intervention for specific types of incidents. A mechanism for testing members' competence should be employed upon completion of training.
- o **To improve efforts to recruit members, the national leader should participate in local recruitment drives on an ongoing basis.** More members would increase visibility, allow for more frequent patrols and possibly strengthen their potential deterrent effect.
- o **The Guardian Angels should seek rapprochement with police, community leaders and decision makers in cities where there is not a clear understanding of respective roles.** The Angel mission must be clear and include the following caveats:
 - Angels do not take the place of police;
 - Angels have specific capabilities and limitations;
 - Angels have the potential to provide support mechanisms for communities.

If police personnel are apprised of the Angels' objectives, areas patrolled, and requested to assist the Angels with screening of potential members and/or citizen arrest procedures, police may acknowledge ways that Angels can assist in preventing and deterring crime. The Angels may benefit from positive recognition by police and could direct their patrols based on sound information concerning high crime areas or specific crimes that could be impacted by Angel patrols.

- o **Prior to setting up new patrols in neighborhoods, Guardian Angels should first meet with community leaders to identify concerns and needs of the citizenry and the types of groups in existence to address these problems.** Angels need to determine the tolerance level of the community with respect to types of crimes and incivilities and be sensitive to the reluctance of the community. Without the support and positive recognition of large and influential segments of the community, the Angels may be viewed with distrust and skepticism.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This report provides an overview of the Guardian Angels and places this group within the framework of citizen crime prevention. The findings raise issues that warrant further study:

- o The impact of citizen patrols on serious crime, incivilities and citizen fear of crime requires research that would employ different models of patrols with a capacity to manipulate patrol styles and frequency of patrols in different experimental settings.

- o Research also should be conducted on the relationship between citizen patrols, order maintenance and social control, citizen feelings of safety and incidence of crime.
- o The findings from this exploratory research concerning the issues of recruitment, training, leadership and relationships with police can provide the focus for future examination in more controlled settings and may be helpful in the formation of other citizen patrols.
- o This study suggests that inner-city minority youth can be motivated to contribute in positive involvement in the community. The dynamics involved in this process should be explored further by evaluating current programs that use this approach and development of pilot programs that focus on youth participation in the community. As Edward Wynne succinctly states: "The survival of any society depends on its ability to create successive groups of mature adults who are committed to the continuity of its major traditions." (Wynne, 1978)

The results of this study should contribute to the current knowledge regarding citizen patrols. Such patrols represent a unique form of crime control and have increased in this country, yet research has been limited regarding their effectiveness, the potential for involvement of youth and their relationship to law enforcement. It is suggested that more extensive research be conducted based on the exploratory findings presented in this study of the Guardian Angels.

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