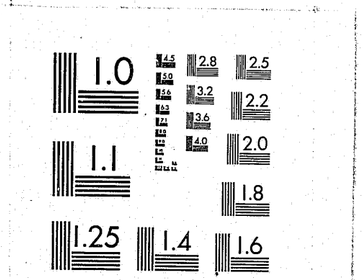

Urban Profile - Houston

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The Oscar Holcombe Administration - 1948-1952

Oscar Holcombe became mayor of Houston in 1947 (beginning in the 1920s, he had served several previous terms as mayor), the same year the voters abolished the city manager form of government and replaced it with a strong mayor system. It was a period of phenomenal growth for the city. In 1948, the Port of Houston was the second largest port in the country with the dollar value of freight handled exceeding a billion dollars. According to some indicators, Houston was the fastest growing city in the country. Building permits for 1948 totalled over $100,000,000 for the city and $266,000,000 for the county. In the same year, the city doubled its geographic size through a vigorous policy of annexation that was to continue unabated for the next 3 decades. In 1950, the city had a population of almost 600,000, an increase of 56 percent since 1940. Bank deposits increased by 280 percent in a decade and auto registrations by 89 percent. By 1952, the value of freight handled at the Port of Houston exceeded 2 billion dollars.

It was also a distinctly conservative city. Public facilities were segregated and Harris County was the only county in the state to give a majority of its vote to Strom Thurmond in the 1948 presidential election. In the same year, the electorate voted against city zoning by an overwhelming margin.

Oscar Holcombe comes as close to a political boss as Houston has ever had. Known as the "old gray fox", Holcombe's power was based primarily on his personal connections with city bureaucrats and key businessmen. Civil service protection for municipal bureaucrats, the absence of patronage, and the nonpartisan election system prevented him

from consolidating his power. In any event, Holcombe is the only mayor during the 1948-1978 period who is remembered for his efforts to establish personal control over the administrative apparatus.

With a few exceptions, Holcombe lacked a strong policy orientation. Although he had vigorously campaigned in 1947 to replace the city manager system with a strong mayor arrangement, he failed to use that power to effect fundamental change in the city. His continued efforts to establish personal control over the machinery of government appear to have represented an end in itself rather than a means to address and resolve urban problems.

Continued economic growth and expansion was the dominant issue in the city during the Holcombe administration. The mayor, despite his attempts to fashion a political machine, is remembered as a "handmaiden" of the business elite. Given his own business background, his identification with powerful business interests is not surprising. Houston during this period comes closer to apparent domination by a cohesive economic elite than at any other time during the 1948-1978 span. In fact, tales still circulate about the weekly meetings of powerful businessmen who came together in the Lamar Hotel to decide both economic and public policy issues. It is alleged that Holcombe never made an important decision without first seeking the advice and consent of this powerful group. No other group was sufficiently powerful or concerned to challenge business domination. Minority groups were extraordinarily weak during this period. Although a handful of black individuals filed suit to integrate the city golf course in 1950, I am not aware of a single incident of organized racial protest during the Holcombe administration. Minorities would have to wait until the Roy Hofheinz

administration to discover a champion.

It would be misleading to conclude that Holcombe attempted to accomplish nothing. His doubling of the geographic size of the city through annexation represents one of his major policy initiatives during the period and established a compelling precedent for all future mayors. Another accomplishment occurred with respect to public housing. Although it was completely out of character for a mayor who was closely identified with conservative business interests, Holcombe undertook a campaign in 1950 in support of public housing. Although the voters rejected a public housing proposal that same year, the city constructed a 350 unit housing project on donated land in 1952.

The police department was somewhat of an issue during the 1948-1952 period. During his 1947 campaign, Holcombe had strongly opposed efforts by the police to pressure the state legislature to pass a civil service law. He argued that civil service legislation would weaken local control of the police. The police association countered by arguing that recent instances of police brutality (involving whites) would not have occurred if civil service protections had been in effect to prevent the political appointment of poorly qualified officers. Despite his efforts, the Texas Legislature passed the bill and civil service took effect in 1948.

Although crime was not an issue of importance during the Holcombe administration, police corruption was. The incumbent chief, B. W. Payne, came under fire because an investigation revealed that several police officers had accepted payments to protect gambling activity in the city. In addition, another group of officers was involved in a local call girl operation. Payne's difficulties were compounded by the discovery

that one of the candidates in the 1950 mayoral campaign had an arrest record and that these arrests had been concealed by the incumbent chief. Payne eventually resigned and Holcombe immediately selected a new chief, L. D. Morrison, from within the department.

The department, for this period in Houston's history, experienced relatively large budget and manpower increases. Operating expenditures increased from $1,889,712 in 1948 to $3,531,424 in 1952, while the total number of policemen of all ranks grew from 386 to 632 (the number of patrolmen increased from 191 to 404). By contrast, police expenditures increased by only $38,000 during the three years of the Roy Hofheinz administration and the total police force grew by only 133 officers.

The major political issue of the period occurred outside of the jurisdiction of city government. Beginning in 1949, the Houston Independent School District Board took the first of a series of controversial steps that were to continue for the next 25 years. The Board refused to participate in the federally funded school lunch program. It argued that federal aid would ensure federal control of the schools. Later that same year, the Board outlawed Frank Magruder's textbook American Government. The Board specifically attacked a sentence in the text which suggested that although a capitalist country, the United States contained some socialist impulses. In 1951, a local chapter of the Minute Women organization was established in the city. They took as their mission a fight to the death with the Communists in the school system. Although the Minute Women would not accomplish their greatest mischief until later, their presence no doubt solidified the reactionary tendencies of the school board. Given the Board's past record, however, it appeared that it required little assistance in this direction.

The school board's activities during this period were an omen of things to come. With the Supreme Court's desegragation ruling in 1954, the Board would discover its true purpose in life and dig in for a bitter fight to the finish. The school board, rather than city officials, best reflected the values and attitudes of the dominant white middle-class during the decades of the 1950s and 60s. Few believed that Billy Graham's warning in 1952 that "most Houstonians will spend an eternity in hell" had anything to do with their politics.

THE ROY HOFHEINZ ADMINISTRATION -1953-1955

Roy Hofheinz comes as close to a populist mayor as Houston has ever had. Destined to become a powerful entrepreneur and builder of Houston's astro-dome, his most enduring personal and political legacy would be a future liberal mayor, Fred Hofheinz. Roy Hofheinz's mayoral administration remains a mystery. His championing of civil rights in early 1950s Houston remains inexplicable. It is still difficult today to beleive that he had the courage to "see blacks as people." The mention of his name still evokes strong reactions. According to Varree Shields, managing editor of the Forward Times (the largest black circulation newspaper in the south), Roy Hofheinz was seen as either "a hero or a motherfucker. He was a hero to blacks." To conservatives, he was supremely overbearing and arrogant. Everett Collier, vice-president of the Houston Chronicle,saw him as a dangerous man who sought to initiate class conflict between the rich and poor. To this day, Collier remains puzzled by Hofeinz's persistent attacks upon prominent Houston businessmen.

Roy Hofheinz's political philosophy was a complex blend of populism, liberalism, and boosterism. He tried to build a coalition of blacks and whites and unite them electorally under the auspicies of the Harris County Democratic Party at a time when Houston politics was dominated by big business. He advocated extending the right to vote in the local democratic primary to blacks during a period in Houston's history when such support was hardly destined to endear him to the white electorate. He campaigned in favor of higher government expenditures and better city services in black as well as white neighborhoods. He supported creating the office of police commissioner to oversee the operations of the police department, and he appointed a police chief who insisted upon equal treatment for blacks and whites. He eagerly sought federal funds at a

time when the "red scare" suggested that such efforts should ensure political suicide.

At the same time, Hofheinz had a Chamber of Commerce mentality so far as growth and development were concerned. He was jealous of Dallas' role as the pre-eminent Texas city. He has been characterized as a visionary who anticipated Houston's phenomenal economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Observers of the period describe him as a maverick, a wheeler/dealer, an entrepeneur, a mover, and an innovator. Apparently, he was colorful, arrogant, and supremely self-confident. He delighted in political fights with his city council, and savored attacks on the city's thoroughly conventional and eminently conservative and powerful business establishment.

The Hofheinz administration was and is an anomaly. It is an alien episode in the political history of the city. That there was substance as well as style to the man is attested to by the fact that one of the major issues of his administration revolved around Hofheinz's challenge of the police department. The events surrounding this issue are not particularly clear. It would be misleading to rely upon newspaper coverage of this period since the media did not devote much attention to the incident. In addition, the conservative management of the Houston Chronicle was a bitter foe of Hofheinz. (the paper refused to carry his political ads in the 1955 mayoral campaign.) With the help of informants, however, one can peice together a reasonably clear picture of what transpired.

Apparently, Hofheinz was committed to a reform of the police department. When he took office in 1953, Hofheinz retained the incumbent chief of police, L.D. Morrison. Hovever, a narcotics scandal involving several police officers as well as the publicity surrounding a house of prostitution in the city gave him an opportunity to seek new leadership. Concurrent with these scandals was the controversy surrounding the mayors proposal to create the position of police

commissioner to oversee the operations of the department. Both city council and the police strangly opposed the plan. Their opposition was heightened by Hofheinz's proposal to hire someone from outside of the department to fill the new position. The mayor argued that he had examined the files of each police officer in the city with the rank of sergeant and above and found none with professional backgrounds sufficiently impressive to qualify for the office.(It is significant that Hofheinz was the first and last mayor during the 31 year period under consideration to raise the insider/outsider issue with respect to police chief selection. After his administration, it was a foregone conclusion that each new chief would come from within the department.)

City council rejected the police commissioner proposal and Hofheinz, apparently against his better judgement, selected a chief from the department. His choice was a shocking one. The new chief, Jack Heard, was a 36 year old sergeant with only 5½ years of police experience. Although departmental reaction to the appointment is unknown, one can assume that it was negative.

Although an examination of departmental records and newspaper accounts for this period suggests that nothing significant happened under Heard's leadership, interviews with black community leaders indicate an attempt at fundamental change on the part of the new chief. The Jack Heard term as chief is still remembered by blacks as one under which minorities began to receive better police treatment. Heard was seen as a thoroughly professional chief who was "hard but fair." Apparently, he issued a directive prohibiting racial slurs on the part of individual patrolmen. Prior to Heard, "the police had a free rein in the black community." Heard, however, is recalled as someone who wouldn't tolerate police burtality in black neighborhoods. After Hofheinz and Heard departed office, the police returned to "kicking heads again." In fact, the city "returned to a period of police repression again."

The extent to which Heard was able to effect substantive change within the police department is unknown. It is significant, however, that his brief 2 year tenure as chief is still remembered by blacks as one in which police treatment of blacks dramatically improved. That this change occurred in 1954 and 1955 is even more striking. One can only speculate as to the later history of the police department if Hofheinz and Heard had been sufficiently powerful politically to remain in office.

That Roy Hofheinz lasted as long as he did is more surprising than that he was mayor for only 3 years. If we look at what he tried to accomplish during a period of almost rabid conservatism in the city, the anomaly of his administration will be brought into better focus. I have already mentioned his attempt to reform the police department. In addition, his administration is remembered as one during which city services improved in black as well as white neighborhoods. Further, Hofheinz sought federal funds for the city. However, the most striking illustration of the fact that the Roy Hofheinz administration was a radical departure from routine politics in Houston is reflected in those things that he was least successful in accomplishing. There is some indication that he attempted to fundamentally alter the power structure in the city by forging a coalition of blacks and whites to challenge the established power of the business community. There is a consensus of opinion that he "tried to bring blacks and whites together," that he "was strong on civil rights," that he supported the black right to vote, and that he was the first Houston mayor "to see blacks as people." He is remembered as a mayor who tried to make government more responsive to the average citizen. These policy orientations, in combination with his constant feuding with and attacks on both city council and the business community, suggest that he was attempting to build a political base from which

to challenge established interests. In fact, he was recognized even by blacks as a highly astute political opportunist whose sensitivity to the untapped electoral potential of black and poor neighborhoods was largely a function of the fact that he came from outside of the power structure. Prior to his term as mayor, Hofheinz had served as county judge of Harris County (an executive/administrative position) and he had few ties to the business community. His behavior becomes more understandable if it is assumed that Hofheinz recognized that upward political mobility in Houston for one with outsider status could only be achieved through appeals to the underclass. In response to charges that Hofheinz was an opportunist, it should be noted that at least on civil rights he did have strong convictions. In fact, one informant observed that he would have been a "flaming liberal" if political realities had permitted.

Hofheinz's innovations with respect to city services, the police department, federal aid, and civil rights stand in stark contrast to the Communist witch hunts of the period. The Minute Women, an organization whose membership included the wives of many of the city's social and economic elite, was at the height of its power. Talking as their motto "Guarding the land we love," they focused their attention on the educational bureaucracy. Their major success was getting the Houston Independent School District Board to fire a deputy school superintendent. Although a thorough investigation of the man's background revealed no "anti-American" affiliations, he was fired nonetheless. Another indication of the paranoia of the period is illustrated by the fact that a "subversive squad" was formed within the police department to enforce the state's anti-communist law. Amazingly enough, Jack Heard was the officer-in-charge at the time of his selection as chief.

It is likely that even a political moderate would have found survival difficult in such a climate. Although Hofheinz was re-elected to a second term, there is some indication that the power structure perceived him as something

more than a harmless eccentric whose obviously irrational behavior would have little lasting effect. Action was taken against him shortly into his second term. First, city council attempted to impeach him . When this effort failed, a city charter change was presented to the voters for approval. One of the provisions of the revised charter called for new city elections to be held only one year into Hofheinz's second two year term. This change was approved by the electorate and Hofheinz was subsequently defeated in the special election. The voters had had enough of Hofheinz's radical notions and he disappeared from Houston politics. His police chief, Jack Heard, vanished with him, only to resurface much later as sheriff of Harris County.

That liberalism could have co-existed with rabid conservatism, if only briefly, in 1950s Houston is surprising. That the dominant conservative political culture endured and prevailed, not to be challenged again until the 1970s when demographic shifts, changing racial attitudes, and the intervention of the federal government made such a challenge more acceptable, is not. Although it is difficult to assess the accomplishments (or the lack thereof) of the Hofheinz administration, I find little evidence to suggest that any Hofheinz policy had a lasting effect. The mayor's office was filled by a previous mayor (Oscar Holcombe) who perfectly fit the businessman as mayor mold. There was to be no deviation from this pattern until 1973. The leadership of the police department reverted to the usual pattern and, according to one black observer, minority neighborhoods saw a return of a long period of "police repression." Also, Hofheinz's attempts to forge a political coalition of blacks and white liberals did not survive his administration.

One can point to only a few changes. The city buses and the public library were integrated. Other than these symbolic gestures, however, one is hardpressed to document substantive policy shifts. Even the notion of questioning the leadership of the police department would not gain currency again

until the 1971 mayoral campaign of Roy Hofheinz's son, Fred Hofheinz. One searches in vain for evidence of a shift in political mood or style. The Hofheinz administration was akin to a minor natural disaster whose damage was minimal and was quickly repaired (without federal aid).

In retrospect, Hofheinz's political strategy was naive. To attempt and build a political coalition in which blacks would play an important role at a time when many blacks were even denied the right to vote, is either evidence of Hofheinz's powerful ideological convictions or an indication that he had taken leave of his political senses. In some respects, his championing of the underclass and his raising of expectations in black neighborhoods is ironic and, perhaps, even a bit cruel. For Hofheinz, his political defeat was only the beginning of a long and colorful career as a speculator and entrepreneur. It is not a little ironic that he became a powerful businessman himself. His monument was the Harris County Domed Stadium (the Astrodome) and he would make his home in the most lavish penthouse in that structure. Even Jack Heard rebounded from his police department experience. He would go on to take a high-level position with the Texas Department of Corrections and many years later he would be elected Sheriff of Harris County. Interestingly enough, his continuing popularity with blacks would play a role in that victory. Both men would enjoy considerable, even dramatic, success in the larger environment. Only for blacks would things remain the same.

One thing did not remain the same, however. In the August, 1955 city charter election the voters also approved the abolition of the ward system for selecting city councilmen. The new representational arrangement provided for the election of 8 at-large councilmen. Although 5 of the councilmen had to be residents of specified geographic districts, all 8 were voted on by the entire electorate. This system would endure until 1979 when the U.S. Department of Justice would replace this arrangement with a mixed ward/at-large

plan. Although it is difficult to assess the effects of the at-large plan on the subsequent level of minority representation in the city, it is interesting to note that one of the few enduring changes during the Roy Hofheinz administration may well have had negative consequences for the black community.

The District Attorney

Only two significant incidents occurred during the Roy Hofheinz administration with respect to the District Attorney. In June of 1953, Governor Allan Shivers signed a bill separating civil legal issues from the District Attorney's office. Civil matters would have to be handled by a County Attorney who would be appointed by the Harris County Commissioners Court.

Also, in March, 1954, the incumbent D.A., William Scott, was removed from office by the Texas Senate. Specifically, Scott was accused of running a house of prostitution in Houston. He was replaced by Dan Walton. Another charge against Scott alleged that he had put pressure on a grand jury to "lay off" with respect to an investigation of vice in the city.

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The Lewis Cutrer Administration - 1958-1963

In terms of policy issues and change, the city administration of Lewis Cutrer was the most boring and colorless of recent history. Construction of a new airport began and an additional source of industrial water was developed. Cutrer also air conditioned the city buses, integrated city buildings, annexed more land, and was instrumental in building a new charity hospital. There were no scandals in city government, minorities remained silent, and a zoning plan was again defeated in 1962.

Although Houston had the highest murder rate in the country in 1958, and although its murder rate was 2 1/2 times the national rate in 1961, crime was not a major issue. The department continued to grow at a moderate pace, from 869 policemen in 1957 to 1327 in 1963. Leadership of the department was not an issue. Upon assuming office in 1958, Cutrer retained the incumbent chief, Carl Shuptrine. The only leadership change of Cutrer's administration occurred in his last year in office when Shuptrine resigned to take the job of Chief Security Officer at the Port of Houston. The search for a new chief was an uneventful process. Cutrer interviewed 7 senior police officials and made his selection from this group. The complacency of the period is illustrated by one of the first public pronouncements of the new chief, H. (Buddy) McGill. McGill stated that he "contemplated no changes" in the operation of the department. However, he observed that he hoped "to see more friendliness between the officers. . .as well as with the public."

It is indicative of the lack of controversial issues during Cutrer's administration that one of the major issues in the 1963

mayoral campaign (in which Cutrer was defeated by councilman Louie Welch) revolved around Cutrer's raising of water rates.

The major development of the period was the city's continuing economic growth. By 1960, the city was the seventh largest in the country. In that same year, the value of building permits totalled $192,000,000 and in 1962 building permits valued at $240,000,000 were issued.

The only controversial issue of the period involved federal efforts to integrate the school system. Although a federal district judge had ordered desegregation in 1957, no progress was made for the next several years. In 1959, the federal court instructed the school district to develop a plan for the integration of the schools. When the plan was submitted in 1960, Judge Ben Connally called it a "palpable sham and subterfuge" and ordered that beginning in September of 1960, one grade per year would have to be integrated. By that September, however, only 12 black students were attending white schools. The resistance of the school board to court ordered integration would continue well into the Louie Welch administration, as would the city government's complacency with respect to crime, minority problems, and municipal services.

The District Attorney

During the Louis Cutrer administration, the District Attorney began to play an increasingly prominent role with respect to the crime issue. In fact, Frank Briscoe and Carol Vance (District Attorneys for the period 1961-1978) would become the central characters in a struggle to "crack-down on criminals," sensitize the public to the dimensions of the crime problem, enlarge the court system, increase the size of the prosecutorial staff, and revise the Texas Criminal Code. These two men became the most articulate and forceful advocates of change in response to crime. To a far greater extent than mayors, police chiefs, or judges, they consistently argued for public and governemntal recognition of crime as a policy problem of major proportions. They would play the leading roles in this process for two decades. Other public officials would comprise a supporting cast.

Although the above remarks more accurately characterize Carol Vance than Frank Briscoe, Briscoe was the first D.A. to agitate for increased governemntal support of the fight against crime. Even before officially assuming the position (he served from 1961-1965), Briscoe began to lobby the Harris County Commissioners Court for larger budgets to hire more and better paid assistant district attorneys. This campaign for greater expenditures was to continue throughout his term.

Briscoe advocated a "get tough policy." He pledged to work personally with the police on murder cases and to try murder cases himself. He also promised to eliminate plea bargaining in the prosecution of habitual criminals. In addition, Briscoe advocated jail sentences for persons convicted of carrying a weapon. This was specifically noted

as a departure in policy from the previous district attorney. Previously, conviction for illegal possession of a weapon generally entailed a fine.

Briscoe's initiatives received a favorable press. An editorial in the Houston Cronicle in July, 1961, praised him for delivering on his campaign promises. Other newspaper coverage noted that he had achieved an extremely high conviction rate in murder cases and that only a handful of cases appealed to higher courts had been reversed.

Briscoe also appointed several female assistant district attorneys and in April, 1965, he appointed Clark Gable Ward as the first black assistant district attorney. Interestingly enough, Briscoe would be accused of racism in his 1977 mayoral campaign against Jim McConn.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which Briscoe's activities as district attorney was simply political posturing. That he had higher political ambitions is illustrated by the fact that he resigned after only five years in office to run for Congress. In any event, Briscoe was the first public official to emphasize crime as an issue.

The Louie Welch Administration - 1964-1973

The election of Louie Welch as mayor was simply a continuation of the businessman as mayor pattern that had long characterized Houston politics. With the exception of a couple of riots in the black community, nothing dramatic happened during his administration. Economic growth and development was the major issue and the city rolled along, uneventfully, toward greater prosperity. There was always an undercurrent of discontent in the minority community, but with the exception of the school integration issue, it never surfaced for any sustained period of time. Houston would not experience major change in its political process and institutions until the mayoral administrations of Fred Hofheinz and Jim McConn (1974-78).

Louie Welch is best remembered for his boosterism. Other than his efforts to project a good business image of the city, it is difficult to identify him with substantive issues. It is noteworthy that after serving 5 terms as mayor he assumed the presidency of the Houston Chamber of Commerce. He is still perceived as an effective spokesman for the local business community. It would be misleading to conclude that Welch accomplished nothing of a positive nature. He did improve the existing municipal water supply and he developed an additional water source for the city. In addition, Welch supported improving cultural amenities in the city. During his administration, the Jesse Jones Hall for the Performing Arts (a gift from a private foundation), the Alley Theatre, and the Contemporary Arts Museum opened. For Houston, these represented a major cultural achievement. Also, a new airport was built and became operational in 1969.

However, Welch's policy orientation was negative rather than positive. He opposed zoning, higher taxes, and social welfare programs. It would be inappropriate to conclude that Welch opposed all budget expenditures. For example, city spending increased by 162% during his administration. However, Welch's intent was to maintain rather than to improve city services. He had a caretaker orientation. Municipal budgets increased each year not because Welch perceived a need to remedy inadequate services, but because more funds were needed to extend existing services to a larger population. The city population grew by 30 percent during the 10 years of his administration and the geographic size expanded from 360 to 501 square miles.

Even Welch's support of a vigorous annexation policy was predicated on the assumption that such a policy would ensure unfettered business growth and expansion. Everything that he did or failed to do during his administration was accomplished with a keen sensitivity to its impact on economic development. Welch took immense pride in the cultural achievements of the city during his term in office, in the Manned Spacecraft Center, and in the Astrodome. His primary concern was with the image Houston projected to the larger community. Was the image sufficiently attractive to enhance business growth? All proposed policy initiatives were evaluated in light of that query.

Welch firmly believed that the primary function of municipal government was a housekeeping one. Increasing the role of the public sector would not only be a misplaced emphasis but a dangerous one. Houston was a growing, dynamic city not because of the activities of government but in spite of governmental involvement. However, Welch was not adverse to invoking public authority when he believed that it

could serve the interests of the private sector. His support of a vigorous annexation policy is an illustration of this tendency. His strong support of an adequate industrial water supply and his efforts on behalf of the new intercontinental airport provide additional evidence in support of the argument. It is also noteworthy that he accepted federal funds for both projects.

Welch was never a racist. He was not loathed by the black community as his Chief of Police, Herman Short, was. In fact, the man did not evoke strong feelings. He projected the image of a business manager. He was crisp and efficient and self-confident. He was an unassuming person but he always left the distinct impression that he was completely in charge. If Houston had been a city manager city, Welch would have been the ideal city manager. As it was, he was a popularly elected mayor in a strong mayor system and he identified exclusively with the business community and the dominant white majority.

Welch did not champion social welfare programs and he continued his loyalty to a police chief who was abhorred by the black community because there was little in his background to permit an identification with the underclass. I have no doubt but that Welch recognized the economic plight of the ghetto and that he realized that these conditions were in part a function of past racial discrimination. Welch even sympathized with these problems. However, his failure to act to resolve the problems can be attributed to his sincere belief that local government had no responsibility to seek a redress of grievances. For a mayor who closely identified with the conservative white middle-class as well as with the city's banking, insurance, oil, and petrochemical interests, an advocacy of policies designed to meet the needs of the

black community would not only have been fiscally unsound but absurd. Welch did not refuse federal aid for blacks. In fact, Houston participated in many of the "great society" programs. However, he never felt a commitment to marshalling the resources of the city to do anything about minority problems.

Welch was a responsive mayor if the concept is defined as responsiveness to the dominant majority. His activities in office accurately reflected the attitudes and values of Houston's citizenry in the decade of the 1960s. Welch did little to establish a mass transit system because there was little sentiment in the white community for public transportation. He retained Herman Short in office because Short's "no nonsense" law and order image was a popular one. Welch did little to improve city services because the community expressed little discontent (with the exception of recently annexed areas) with existing service levels. Welch's essentially reactive nature is illustrated by his behavior with respect to one of the few policy initiatives that he ever took in the black community. In November of 1969, Welch announced that he would call on city council to approve a housing code to upgrade ghetto housing. It is noteworthy, however, that Welch waited until the electorate approved an amendment to the city charter which allowed a housing code before announcing his support.

Crime was never an overwhelming issue during the Welch years. Although it became more important toward the end of his administration, it never achieved the status of a major urban priority or occupied a prominent place on the urban agenda. This can probably be attributed to the fact that since crime rates were much higher in black neighborhoods, the white community failed to generate demands for action.

However, law and order in general, and Welch's chief of police in particular, were issues.

After assuming office in 1964, Welch retained the incumbent chief. At the end of his first year in office, however, a grand jury returned several indictments for gambling in the city. Although no police officers were involved and even though Chief McGill was specifically given a "clean bill of health," Welch interpreted the indictments as evidence of lax law enforcement. Welch noted that McGill had been "indifferent" to rising crime rates and pointed out that robberies had increased by 31 percent in 1963. It is ironic that crime rates would also rapidly increase druing the 9 years of the Herman Short reign, but Welch would not interpret this as evidence of either lax law enforcement or indifference.

In any event, Welch fired McGill and appointed Herman Short. Although the real reasons behind McGill's dismissal are unclear, it is probably safe to assume that Welch's motives were pure. He probably did believe that a new police manager could motivate the city's street patrolmen to higher levels of productivity. However, McGill's forced departure was controversial. The opposition centered primarily in city council. Various councilmen argued that McGill had been fired because Wlech wanted to exert greater influence over the department and he seized upon the gambling indictments and the crime rate as phony but convenient excuses to justify the removal of the incumbent chief. It was argued that McGill had done a good job and that his dismissal would be bad for departmental morale. (It is noteworthy that the departmental morale argument is frequently used in Houston with respect to police chief selection. Sometimes it is alleged that the removal

of a chief will be bad for morale. At other times, it is argued that the retention of a chief will be bad for morale. This latter variation on a tried and true theme was used effectively during the Fred Hofheinz years to strengthen the case for the dismissal of Chief Carol Lynn.)

Herman Short's maiden message to the press and the public and the nature of his first official act as chief were probably prophetic. He announced that one of the department's biggest problems was "public relations," but that public relations was really a problem for the individual officer. Although the true meaning of that statement is difficult to decipher, he probably meant to imply that there wasn't too much that the police management could or would do about the activities of street patrolmen. Although that belief may have expressed a sophisticated understanding of the element of street-level discretion on the part of the new chief, it was also a belief that would generate considerable policy-mainority tension in the years ahead. It is also significant that shortly after assuming office Short arranged a meeting with black community leaders. In that meeting, Short did not talk about improving "public relations," or recruiting minority patrolmen, or enhancing police responsiveness. Instead, he wanted to see if something could be done about the high crime rate in "Negro" neighborhoods.

One of Short's most basic and fundamental flaws as police chief was his total inability to see the black community as anything more than an unrelenting source of trouble. The police task was immensely complicated by the presence of black neighborhoods in the city and nothing that the police did would ever make a difference. Short viewed the police mission in simple terms. That mission was the maintenance of law and order. "Public relations" was not a police responsibility.

He never accepted the notion that the changing nature of the police function entailed political as well as order maintenance tasks. I find no evidence to indicate that Short was a racist. He was simply an unbending personality who was unwilling to compromise what he considered to be his own high standards of professional conduct. Although no reliable empirical data are available to address the issue, there is little reason to believe that the police treatment of minorities dramatically improved after Short left office. In fact, the publicized cases of police brutality suggest that they actually fared less well. The major difference between Short and his successors did not revolve around the issue of whether the Short administration brutalized blacks while subsequent chiefs prohibited such behavior. Instead, the fundamental difference was that later chiefs devoted considerable resources to "public relations" in the minority community while Short rejected that approach. That Short accurately reflected the dominant value system of the white community is supported by the fact that his 9 year tenure was the longest of any of the 9 chiefs of police during the 1948-1978 period. Several lasted only 2 years. To rely only on the recollections of blacks and liberals with respect to his administration would be misleading. Short was popular with both the public and the police. It is much less likely that his administration would be remembered as a period of police repression if Fred Hofheinz had not made him a major issue in his 1971 and 1973 mayoral campaigns.

Short's feud with blacks over police treatment of minorities came to a head over three specific incidents of racial violence. In 1967, students at Texas Southern University barricaded a major street which ran through the campus. In the subsequent police response, several

students were injured, several hundred were arrested, a considerable amount of student property was damaged, and one policeman was killed (apparently by a police bullet). Although the police responded in force, there is little soild evidence to support the allegation that police treatment of the students was brutal. Later that same year, violence erupted in the Sunnyside area of Houston. Blacks were outraged over the killing of a black man by a white service station operator in the neighborhood. The police responded in massive force to the subsequent rioting but few injuries were reported.

In November of 1967, Mayor Welch testified before a United States Senate Committee investigating the TSU riot. He was true to form when he observed that the racial violence in Houston could be directly attributed to the activities of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Four years in office had done little to change his opinions. His remarks illustrate a fundamental misunderstanding of the minority condition.

The last major incident of racial violence during the Welch/Short administration occured in July of 1970. In a shoot-out between the police and members of the black People's Party, 3 persons were injured and the party chairman was killed.

It is safe to conclude that Houston experienced relatively little racial turmoil during the 1964-1973 period and that the police response to racial violence was, if not highly commendable and distinctly professional, at least relatively restrained. Nothing appeared to change in the city as a result of black discontent (although it is difficult to assess the extent to which Houston's applications for federal funding were given impetus by the outbreak of racial violence).

Black anger and frustration focused even more clearly on Herman Short and this anger was given an outlet in the 1971 and 1973 campaigns of Fred Hofheinz.

The police department, at least in terms of growth, did not remain static under Short's leadership. During the 1964-1973 period the sworn police force grew from 1249 to 2207 (an increase of 77%) while the number of black officers increased from 45 in 1967 to 167 in 1973. Police expendutures grew from $9,672,000 in 1963 to $34,955,000 10 years later (an increase of 261%). Police salary gains were much less dramatic. Both entering and maximum patrol salaries grew by only 40% during the period. Louie Welch gave Short a free hand in running the department and Short's budget requests were routinely approved by the mayor and council. Short experienced little difficult in justifying his budget increases. In 1966, the International Association of Chiefs of Police recommended that a city the size of Houston should have 2600 policemen. Houston had only half that number. Sufficient funds for the police department have never been an issue. Recruitment of police officers, rather than obtaining adequate revenues to provide for additional patrolmen, has consistently been the more significant issue.

These manpower and expenditure changes were not matched by corresponding policy innovations. Other than the creation of a Community Relations Division in 1967, a perfunctory reorganization of existing police divisions, and the initiation of work on a new police communications center, little changed during the Short tenure. In terms of policy, Short is best remembered for what he refused to do. He consistently attacked federal funding of the police and refused to accept federal monies. Short argued that federal support ensured federal

control and he, for one, intended to maintain the independence of the Houston police.

That Louie Welch allowed Short to run the department pretty much as he saw fit is illustrated by the federal funding controversy. If Welch had participated in the shaping of departmental policy, it is likely that he would have sought federal aid. Although a conservative by virtue of both thought and deed, Welch was not adverse to seeking federal support for a variety of municipal projects. However, Welch probably felt that Short's adamant refusal of federal money was a small price to pay for the services of a chief who had once been mentioned by George Wallace as a possible presidential running mate. In Houston in the 1960s, it was good politics to have that sort of man on your leadership team.

The major issues in Houston during the decade of the 1960s were economic growth, low taxes, school integration, and police-minority relations. Although educational policy is controlled by a separate unit of government, the developments in this policy arena will be briefly traced. Essentially, the history of school integration during this period represented a continuation of past resistance on the part of the school board. In 1965, the NAACP and local black leaders were still protesting segregation. These protests included peaceful demonstrations and a boycott of the schools. The school board tried a variety of measures to avoid integration. For example, a bond issue was proposed and approved by the voters which significantly improved available facilities but which maintained the existing pattern of segregation. Later that year, the school board relented and voted to integrate the schools by 1967 and accept federal funds. In 1966, however, blacks

filed a suit in which they criticized the board's progress toward integration.

By 1968, over 45% of black students were attending schools that were at least partially integrated. In 1969, however, the Justice Department charged that many schools were still segregated. The federal district court was petitioned to abolish the "freedom of choice" plan that had been implemented by the school board. The court held that the board would have to adopt an alternative method to achieve integration by 1970-71. In 1970, the school board agreed to accomplish complete integration and comply fully with the court's ruling. Parent organizations bitterly protested the board's decisions. Later that year, the Justice Department filed suit against the Houston Independent School District in which it alleged that segregation continued and that Chicanos as well as blacks were systematically excluded from white schools.

The Welch administration was witness to the culmination of a long and bitter struggle between liberals and conservatives on the school board over communism, federal aid (the school district did not agree to partake of the federal lunch program until 1968), "quality education," and integration.

The District Attorney

The Carol Vance tenure as district attorney (1966-1978) was clearly an example of intense professional dedication and commitment to the process of forcing public authorities and political institutions to recognize and respond to the crime problem.

Immediately upon taking office in 1966, Vance began to lobby for higher staff wages in order to prevent resignations in favor of more lucrative positions in private practice. This theme would prove to be a persistent one throughout his tenure. Vance made much of the fact that low pay was the major reason for the frequent loss of experienced prosecutors. He argued that inadequate salaries accounted for the resignation of 11 assistant district attorneys in 1966 and for the loss of 15 in only 6 months in 1969.

Vance also engaged in an unrelenting criticism of the state code of criminal procedure. Beginning in 1966, he attacked state law which allowed the defendant to pick either judge or jury to assess sentencing (Vance preferred judge sentencing), he criticized the provision which required written confessions, he advocated limiting defendants to a single felony probation, and he argued in favor of increasing the length of sentence sereved before convicted felons qualified for parole. In addition, Vance consistently advocated stiffer penalties for illegal possession of firearms and for murder. He specifically attributed Houston's high murder rate to the light sentences imposed (he favored the death penalty) and to the alleged tendency of juries to assess lighter sentences in those cases where one black was accused of murdering another.

Vance's increasing local prominence was matched by professional recognition. In 1966, he was elected to the board of directors of the National Association of District Attorneys, in 1968 he became treasurer, in 1970 he was made vice-president, and in 1971 he assumed the presidency of that organization. At the state level, he chaired and served on a number of special commissions and committees concerned with the crime problem and he became a favorite witness before legislative committees. Vance's increasing public visibility refueled his efforts to dramatize the dimensions of the crime problem.

He attacked Supreme Court decisions, he supported a "stop and frisk law," he advocated gun control legislation, he favored denying bond to convicted felons, and he proposed a revision of the criminal code to allow a single trial for defendants accused of several offenses. As the city's and county's most visible, articulate, and forceful spokesman for the crime issue, Vance insisted that an effective attack upon the crime problem required more than a revision of the criminal code. He criticized public apathy in general and jurors in particular. Early in his term, he began a "report card" system (based on convictions and length of sentence imposed) for jurors in criminal cases. He also called for a doubling of the Houston police force and for new tax revenues to support the increase. One of Vance's most persistent themes was his advocacy of more criminal district, county criminal, juvenile, and JP courts to handle the backlog of cases.

Vance was the first public official to advocate change in response to juvenile crime. In addition to his plea for more juvenile courts, he criticized laws that "overprotected" juveniles. A specific innovation was his request to all law enforcement agencies in the county

for copies of those juvenile cases that they believed warranted action on the part of the district attorney. Previously, area police forwarded case information to the Juvenile Probation office. Juvenile probation authorities would then decide which cases required action on the part of the juvenile courts. Vance criticized this procedure. He alleged that repeat offenders often escaped prosecution.

It would be misleading to conclude, however, that Vance was held in universally high regard. His advocacy of a "get tough" policy extended to politically sensitive areas. Consequently, his professional objectivity was questioned by some segments of the community. For example, he devoted considerable time and effort to an unsuccessful prosecution of obscenity laws. He also supported legislation to impose stiffer penalties with respect to participation in civil disorders, he opposed legislation to make first time possession of marijuana a misdemeanor offense, and he opposed police citizen review boards (he argued that the grand jury system provided an effective oversight function). However, it would also be misleading to conclude that Vance's advocacy never extended to an identification with "progressive" approaches to the crime problem. Although much was made of the fact that at one point he had followed a practice of sometimes dropping charges against those defendants who agreed to join the army, it should also be emphasized that he consistently supported establishing a drug treatment facility for addicts.

Vance vigorously pursued federal funds. In fact, his efforts to strengthen the prosecutor's office were most successful at the federal level. Not surprisingly, his major innovations were federally funded. These programs included a "Career Criminal Project" to focus

prosecutorial attention on the repeat offender (initiated in 1975), an organized crime division established in 1972 (Vance argued that the Mafia was trying to move into Houston in force), a 1972 project to deal with drunk drivers, and a criminal screening program first established in 1970. The goals of this program were to eliminate cases unlikely to result in convictions, to handle examining trials in JP court, and to recommend bond. In 1972, the screening project was expanded to include the operations of the Houston Police Department. Prior to 1972, persons arrested by the Houston police were brought before a Justice of the Peace for initial processing. Charges were filed with the JP court and the District Attorney played no role in the process. As a result, a large number of cases were eventually dismissed by the D.A. for a lack of sufficient evidence to prosecute. With the establishment of a "Central Intake Division" at the Houston Police Department, the District Attorney's office was able to make an immediate determination as to whether the available evidence supported the filing of charges against arrested persons. An Assistant District Attorney examined the case of each suspect shortly after arrest, and thereby eliminated a number of cases that previously would have entered the criminal justice system through the JP courts. The District Attorney's Office credits the federally funded screening program with a significant reduction in the number of those cases that previously would have consumed vast amounts of time and resources before eventual dismissal.

Carol Vance was the most consistent, articulate, and forceful advocate of public recognition of, and governmental response to, the crime problem during the entire 31 year period under consideration. He consistently called for revisions of the state criminal code to strengthen

the prosecutorial effort, he supported major innovations to reduce the case backlog and ensure speedier trials, he agitated for more courts, prosecutors, and better pay, he vigorously pursued federal funding, and he supported a number of educational programs to combat public apathy. Vance's long tenure, the nature of his office, and his high professional standing and visibility provided him with a pulpit from which to preach his doctrine of change. There is little doubt that he took full advantage of these opportunities. Other highly placed public officials who enjoyed similar opportunities did not.

THE HOFHEINZ ADMINISTRATION - 1974-77

The election of Fred Hofheinz as mayor in 1973 appeared to represent, at least initially, a departure from politics as usual in Houston. The major issue in the 1973 campaign was the controversy surrounding the incumbent chief of police, Herman Short. To blacks, Short was a symbol of police repression and brutality in the minority community. It is impossible to determine, however, how blacks really felt about Short. The difficulty with an analysis of the sort presented here is that one is often forced to reach conclusions that are based on only limited evidence. Survey data on black attitudes toward the police in general, and Short in particular, during this period are simply not available. Evaluations of Short may actually have been less negative than is commonly thought to be the case.

In any event, Hofheinz elevated the Short controversy to major issue status in the 1973 campaign and the electorate quickly divided along pro and anti- Short lines. It should be emphasized, however, that Short rather than crime was the dominant issue. Since Short was identified as a "law and order" chief, that element was also important in the campaign. Hofheinz promised that he would remove Short and select more responsive police leadership while his conservative opponent, Dick Gotlieb, endorsed Short's policies. It appears as if Hofheinz's opposition to Short may well have played a major role in the campaign. The minority community strongly supported his candidacy and this support apparently ensured his election. Although blacks would likely have voted for Hofheinz in any event, his opposition to Short may have encouraged larger numbers of blacks to vote.

The aftermath of the Herman Short issue would plague Hofheinz throughout his administration. During the campaign, Hofheinz had not only promised to remove Short as chief, he had also pledged to make the department more responsive to the

minority community. It was indicative of Hofheinz's inexperience and lack of appreciation for political and bureaucratic realities that he selected a new chief who would inevitably antagonize powerful elements within the police department. In his search for a reform chief, Hofheinz bypassed senior officials and made his selection from the lower echelons of the administrative structure. Hofheinz's choice was a relatively junior official, Carol Lynn. Lynn was only a captain in charge of personnel at the time of his appointment. Apparently, Hofheinz felt that senior police officials were too closely tied to Herman Short and that only an outsider would be sufficiently independent of the Short legacy to embark upon a reform of the department.

It is indicative of Carol Lynn's own trepidation in accepting the position of chief that he demanded and received the rank of permanent assistant chief as a condition of appointment. Since the position of chief carries no guarantee of tenure, Lynn may well have anticipated that his administration would be a short one. It was. Lynn was almost immediately beseiged and plagued by a variety of problems and controversies.

To the police department's credit, there is no evidence that either high-ranking officials or street officers initially resisted Lynn's leadership. Certainly, antagonism existed on the part of those officials who had been passed over in the selection process. In addition, Hofheinz's opposition to Herman Short in the campaign ensured that as mayor he would be less than popular with the police. Short was a popular chief within the department. He had a reputation for "taking care of his men" and for protecting them from outside political interference and it was inevitable that attacks on Short would be interpreted and and perceived by the rank-and-file as attacks on the department itself. However, the controversy over Lynn's leadership developed for other reasons. The resentment of Lynn and Hofheinz was a background rather than a precipitating factor in the chain of events that subsequently unfolded.

In part, Lynn's difficulties were brought on by his own ineptitude and bad luck. His initial policy statements confirmed that he intended to undertake a series of reforms. Lynn promised to emphasize the recruitment of minority policemen, to apply for federal funds, to improve police-community relations, to establish better "supervision" of the department, and to improve handling of citizen complaints. Specifically he initiated a program to bring the Vice, Narcotics, and Criminal Intelligence Divisions under his personal control. It had recently been discovered that the Criminal Intelligence Division was maintaining files on various local political figures. Barbara Jordan, black Congresswoman from Houston, was listed under a file labelled "miscellaneous niggers." Lynn also pursued an investigation of corruption in the Narcotics Division and another of illegal wiretapping activities on the part of various police officers.

Lynn's credibility was first called into question when it was discovered that he had used confidential police reoords in the consulting firms he had operated before he was appointed chief. More significantly, Lynn resorted to wiretaps of his own in an effort to eliminate corruption within the department. He argued that the only way to gather solid evidence was to record the conversations of witnesses he interviewed. These various escapades received widespread publicity. Eventually, the Houston Police Officers Association published a statement in the daily newspapers in which they deplored the impact of these developments on police morale and sugested a lack of confidence in Lynn's leadership. The various scandals were seized upon by Dick Gottlieb and Frank Briscoe (mayoral candidates in 1975) and by Jim McConn (city councilman and future mayor). Lynn's leadership became a major campaign issue.

The situation deteriorated to the point where jokes about Lynn were circulating within the department and there were even alleged instances of insubordination to the chief. His situation quickly became untenable and he

resigned. He had serwedfor only 18 months.

The Lynn administration can be interpreted according to several different perspectives. First, it could be argued that both Hofheinz and Lynn exercised incredibly poor judgement. In retrospect, it is clear that Lynn was a poor choice as chief. Hofheinz assumed that "outsider" status was necessary if his reforms were to be effectively implemented and his appointment of Lynn institutionalized that assumption. The price that Hofheinz paid, however, for a chief who would be more loyal to the mayor than to the departmental power structure, was an inability to rely upon support from the police elite when Lynn became embroiled in a number of controversies. There was no indication that the department attempted to rally around their embattled chief. Given Hofheinz's attacks on Herman Short in the 1973 campaign, his appointment of a junior official as chief, and the new chief's own investigations of police activities, this lack of departmental support should not be surprising.

There is also considerable evidence to suggest that Lynn was a man of poor judgement. His use of confidential police records in his various private business activities and his recording of private conversations at a time when such activities were receiving national attention, cast considerable doubt on the soundness of his judgement. Lynn's subsequent behavior confirms that evaluation. After resigning as chief, he assumed the position of assistant chief. Shortly thereafter, he was indicted and eventually convicted and sent to federal prison for extortion.

Lynn's personality characteristics compounded his difficulties. He was a quiet, shy, and retiring man who fared badly in press conferences and public statements. Although I certainly am not suggesting that a chief with a more dynamic and forceful personality could have effectively reformed the police department during this particular period in its history, it is likely that Lynn's

retiring nature hampered his efforts to deal with his problems. No one ever accused Lynn of inspiring confidence in his leadership.

From another perspective, one could argue that Hofheinz's and Lynn's efforts to reform the department encountered powerful resistance from a police bureaucracy that had long enjoyed autonomy from political interference. In support of that argument, one could point to the similar experience of Jack Heard as Chief of Police during the Roy Hofheinz administration. Efforts to make the police more responsive to minorities and to make police officials accountable to executive leadership will always be interpreted as attacks on police professionalism. Such reforms will be perceived as attempts to politicize the department and will be seized upon by conservative politicains always eager to ally themselves with the police.

Although both of these interpretations are somewhat accurate, I think still a third perspective best explains what happened in the police department during this period. First, Hofheinz and Lynn were the key actors in the reform process. There was little public support for a fundamental reform of the department. Neighborhood groups, the business community, the media, and even minority organizations were largely apathetic. Although this public and group indifference allowed Hofheinz to exercise considerable discretion in his approach to the police problem, the absence of a well-defined mayoral constituency ensured that fundamental reform would be difficult to achieve. Second, the police officers' association became more active during this period. It was generally thought that minorities would be the big winners during the Hofheinz administration. It could also be argued that police officers saw the Hofheinz and Lynn administrations as an opportunity to increase their influence. Certainly, Hofheinz's remarks during the campaign in support of municipal employee unions may well have heightened that expectation. The greater role played by the police union is significant because its goals conflicted with Lynn's vision of reform.

The police association was concerned with issues such as salaries, fringe benefits, and internal grievance procedures. Lynn's investigations of police corruption were perceived as a misplaced emphasis at best and as a strategy designed to destroy public confidence and police morale, at worst. The police union's questioning of Lynn's leadership (if not outright opposition) contributed, no doubt, to his final demise.

Another factor was important in accounting for Lynn's inability to establish and maintain leadership of the department. Although Fred Hofheinz was perceived as a liberal during the campaign, the evidence suggests that he was forced to adapt to prevailing political realities. A less charitable evaluation would conclude that he was an opportunist with no firm convictions beyond remaining in office. One of the first political realities that Hofheinz probably learned was that Lynn was the wrong choice as chief and that reform of the department would be considerably more difficult than initially anticipated. In short, Hofheinz failed to support Lynn and his reform program as vigorously as he might have. The evidence is not sufficient to support the conclusion that Hofheinz abandoned Lynn. It is, noteworthy, however, that Hofheinz's next two appointments as chief were much more acceptable to the police establishment.

At first glance, it appears as if the police department realized some very significant gains during the Hofheinz administration. For example, police operating expenditures increased by 114% (from $35,000,000 to $75,000,000) in only 4 years, while police salaries (both entering and maximum) increased by nearly 40 % , and the number of sworn officers increased by 31% (from 2200 in 1973 to 2884 in 1977). If we compare these gains with those for the previous mayoral administration, however, they appear less striking. During the Louie Welch administration (1964-1973) police strength increased by an average of 8% a year, police expenditures grew by 26%, and police salaries by 4%. During the

Hofheinz administration the increase in police strength was 8% per year, for police expenditures it was 28%, and for police salaries it was 10%.

A similar pattern is noted for expenditures for the city as a whole. During the Welch administration, city spending increased an average of 16% a year. The comparable figure under Hofheinz was 17%.

These comparisons are significant. Fred Hofheinz entered Houston politics as the first liberal mayor since his father had held the office in the early 1950's. Louie Welch's conservatism was legendary. It was anticipated that Hofheinz would increase the role of government, improve city services, and develop new programs. Welch was closely identified with the status quo orientation of the business community. Hofheinz was perceived as an innovator and activist during the campaign while Welch had emphasized continued economic growth, low taxes, and low public expenditures during his administration. Hofheinz vigorously pursued federal monies for the city and appointed a police chief who pledged to seek federal funds for the department and double the size of the police force. Welch's chief of police categorically refused to accept federal aid for the department. Hofheinz promised to reform the police department and was opposed by the police during the campaign while the previous mayor, Louie Welch, was considered to be strongly pro-police and gave his chief, Herman Short, a free hand in running the department.

However, the apparently different policy orientations of the two mayors were not reflected in either city or police expenditure patterns. Police manpower and police and city spending grew at about the same rate during the Welch and Hofheinz administrations. Considering the fact that the population of the city grew at an annual rate of 3.5% during the Hofheinz administration and only 3% during the Welch terms, the similarity in the rate of expenditure increases is even more surprising.

Two additional sets of statistics are also revealing. Although Hofheinz had promised to increase the number of minority policemen, the gains in this area were not particularly striking. The number of nonwhite sworn officers increased from 167 in 1973 to only 323 in 1978. Blacks did not fare much more poorly during the Welch administration. In 1967, there were 45 black sworn police officers (data are not available for earlier years). By 1973, there were 167 black officers. The gains made during the Hofheinz administration are even less impressive when one considers that data on the number of nonwhite officers for the 1967-1972 period include only blacks. After that time, the nonwhite statistic includes Mexican-Americans, Orientals, and American Indians as well as blacks.

The police did make significant gains in at least one area, however. During the entire 10 year Welch administration, police salaries (entering and maximum ranges) increased by only 40%. This rate of salary increase was achieved by the police under the Hofheinz administration in only 4 years. Given the fact that the police opposed Hofheinz during the campaign, it is noteworthy that their most dramatic salary gains were achieved during his administration. Why were the police the big winners under Hofheinz? The most intriguing explanation holds that Hofheinz attempted to buy off the rank-and-file by delivering significant annual salary increases. According to this interpretation, he sought to convince the police that his alleged anti-police bias was more myth than reality. Futher, the new mayor quickly learned that, at least so far as police issues were concerned, the police themselves were the major (and perhaps the only) constituency. Minority group organizations were electorally oriented and were little concerned with policy implementation. Opposition to Hofheinz's program to reform the department centered in the department itself. Confronted with a powerful institutional source of opposition, Hofheinz perceived the conflict with the police as a no-win situation. Concerned in the long-run only with

advancing his personal political career and, in the short run, with his re-election prospects, Hofheinz decided to champion police interests. This orientation became particularly compelling when his conservative opponents seized upon the various Carol Lynn controversies as an opportunity to discredit Hofheinz. Anticipating that his relationship with the police would become a major campaign issue, he attempted to defuse police discontent by supporting the demands of the police for better pay.

Unfortunately, the available evidence could be interpreted in a number of other ways. Hofheinz may have felt that higher salaries were needed in order to attract additional officers. Inflation may also have been a factor. The acceptance of federal funds during the Hofheinz administration may also have played a role. Further, other city employees may have achieved similar salary gains during this period. And finally, the greater visibility of the police officers association may have influenced expenditure patterns. Likely, a multivariate rather than a unidimensional explanation would be most convincing. In any event, it is significant that one of Hofheinz's lasting influences on the police department was to initiate a period of substantial pay increases.

It would be misleading to conclude, however, that pay raises were the only significant accomplishment of the Hofheinz administration. At least one other fundamental, if subtle, change occurred within the police department. Again, however, this change is not amenable to verification through available aggregate data. Instead,it is based largely on my impressions gained through personal acquaintances with the various chiefs of police during the 1973-1978 period. It was Hofheinz's accomplishment that (at least for the rest of the decade) after Herman Short left office, Houston would not again have a chief of police whose primary reference group was the police hierarchy. Hofheinz's 4 chiefs (Lynn, Clark, Bond, Caldwell) were, if not better qualified in a strictly

professional sense, certainly less dogmatic and more open to new ideas than Herman Short. Short's public image was one of coolness, aloofness, and even arrogance. He was an authoritarian personality isolated from the larger community. Hofheinz's chiefs were much more political. In fact, his last two chiefs (Bond and Caldwell) were highly effective public relations types who devoted enormous amounts of time and evergy to serving as spokesmen for the department. They recognized and were sensitive to the growing power and discontent of the minority community and sought to establish better relationships with these groups. This change in leadership style from the Welch to the Hofheinz administration was nothing short of dramatic.

It is misleading to conclude that leadership change was inevitable, that this shift in style was simply a reflection of more fundamental change in the larger community (growing power of minorities, increasing diversity of the group structure,heightened demands, enhanced awareness on the part of the civic and corporate leadership). This assumption is dubious because it ignores the probability that if Hofheinz's conservative opponent had been victorious in the 1973 mayoral campaign, he would have retained Herman Short in office and Short's successor would have been handpicked by the incumbent chief. The assumption is faulty because it ignores the fact that Herman Short enjoyed widespread support among the public, the police, and city council. The leadership style of the Houston police department changed during the decade of the 1970's because Hofheinz was elected mayor. His defeat would probably have delayed such change indefinitely.

Whether leadership change produced substantive policy change is difficult to assess. We have already seen that average annual police expenditure and manpower increases did not differ appreciably for the Welch and Hofheinz administrations. Similarly, the number of minority policemen did not increase dramatically during the Hofheinz terms. However, there is some indication that the department became

much more concerned with its image during this period. For example, Chief Bond established an internal affairs division to deal with charges of police misconduct. He also appointed a public information director. Chief Caldwell established a program to monitor the probationary period of new patrolmen, implemented a Spanish language training program for police officers, and expanded the operations of the community relations division.

It is difficult to ascertain whether these innovations were anything more than cosmetic in nature. For example, efforts to hire more minorities were not particularly successful. Did the minority recruitment program experience less than dramatic results because minorities were not interested in joining the department or because the departmental commitment was less than total? Even if these changes were largely symbolic, however, they do suggest that the police during this period were engaged in a re-appraisal of their appropriate role in the community. As a result, the department became much more self-conscious and aware of its public image. That this new sense of direction was manifested, in part, in public relations gimmickry should not detract from an essentially genuine effort to more effectively respond to the larger community.

It should also be emphasized that little evidence exists to support the argument that during this period both high-ranking police officials and the rank-and-file were a source of massive resistance to the new chiefs'efforts to redefine the organizational mission. Observers often note that the major police-related issue during this period was the inability of Hofheinz and his various chiefs to establish and maintain control of the department. In support of that argument, they point to the fact that Hofheinz had 4 chiefs in 4 years. Closer examination reveals, however, that with the exception of the first chief (Carol Lynn), the taking and leaving of office did not deviate from normal patterns. Hofheinz's second chief (R.J. Clark) was appointed on a purely interim basis. When Hofheinz was re-elected in 1975, he made a permanent

appointment. This new chief, "Pappy" Bond, was a warm, personable, even gregarious man who enjoyed widespread support. That Bond resigned in 1977 to run for mayor attests to the fact that the new style of chief represented a radical departure from the Herman Short stereotype. There is no evidence that Bond resigned as a result of either public or departmental opposition. Bond's successor (Harry Caldwell) also enjoyed strong support. Caldwell was a highly articulate and persuasive spokesman for the police department and was retained in office by a more conservative mayor (Jim McConn) in 1978. Caldwell finally resigned in 1980 to take an extremely lucrative position in private business.

At first glance, the rapid turnover of chiefs during the Hofheinz administration appeared to reflect a failure on the part of the mayor and the police leadership to reslove fundamental conflict and division within the department. Closer scrutiny of events and developments during that period does not support that conclusion. Leadership changes did not provoke a reaction on the part of the rank-and-file (with the exception of the Lynn administration). The routine of police operations was little affected. Minority groups did not press a series of demands upon the department. Essentially, their role was a passive one. This period in Houston's history cannot be characterized as one of raucous conflict in which a myriad of groups sought to institutionalize their biases regarding the appropriate police mission. Interestingly enough, the Hofheinz administration was one of relative clam. Minority group discontent with the police would not erupt until a liberal mayor (Hofheinz) had been replaced by a more conservative one (McConn).

It would by highly misleading to conclude that crime and the government's response to crime was the major issue during Hofheinz's adminstration. During the 1973 campaign, the incumbent chief, Herman Short, rather than crime was the dominant issue. Attention focused on police leadership and police conduct in the minority

community rather than upon rising crime rates. A number of other issues were also important during the Hofheinz administration. For example, the low level of city services (particularly in recently annexed areas and minority neighborhoods) received considerable attention. Public transportation, the general question of taxing and spending, and minority hiring were other significant issues. Police-related issues focused on leadership of the department and police conduct in the minority community rather than upon crime rates.

Crime was a "deep background" factor rather than an issue that required constant attention and concerted action. There was no sense of urgency involved. Addressing the crime problem was never accorded the status of a major urban priority. In fact, Hofheinz had few if any policy priorities. This became more evident as his term progressed. It is inaccurate to maintain that he accomplished nothing. Hofheinz did change the leadership of the department, he did increase the level of federal funding, and he did improve some city services (the sewer system, for example). In addition, some progress was made in regard to minority hiring. The most visible gains in this respect were the appointment of blacks as city attorney and director of civil service. Although these accomplishments should not be discounted, it should be emphasized that the Hofheinz administration (in terms of concrete results) fell far short of its supporters' expectations.

Some observers hold that his failure to accomplish more can be attributed to the fact that Hofheinz was an opportunist who soon realized that he would need business conservative support in future political contests, and that the pursuit of liberal and social welfare programs would antagonize these elements in the community. In support of that argument, they point to Hofheinz's opposition to attempts to change the at-large electoral system. In 1975-76, minority organizations and liberals filed suit in federal district court (a case in which

I testified) challenging the constitutionality of the at-large arrangement. Hofheinz opposed the attempt to replace the existing electoral system with single-member districts. It is even alleged that his appointment of a black as city attorney was predicated on the assumption that the city's support of the at-large arrangement would profit from the advocacy of a black city attorney. The federal court upheld the at-large plan for electing city councilmen. Liberals viewed Hofheinz's position on the controversy as another indication of his essentially opportunistic nature. According to this interpretation, Hofheinz supported the at-large system because there was little sentiment in either the business or dominant white community for change. Consequently, he sacrificed his liberal principles in anticipation of future political support from these groups.

A more charitable and realistic explanation would contend that Hofheinz's election and administration were aberrations so far as normal city politics are concerned. He could not have been elected in 1973 or re-elected in 1975 without at least some moderate/conservative support. Blacks and liberals alone were not sufficiently powerful to accomplish that task. That he did win (against an articulate conservative candidate) in a fundamentally conservative community is surprising. One is almost tempted to suggest that there is an undercurrent of populism in Houston politics that infrequently bubbles to the surface. I see no other way to explain the likes of the Roy and Fred Hofheinz administrations. Both men were radically different from the traditional businessman as mayor pattern that typically characterizes Houston politics, and their elections and re-elections challenge easy assumptions about Houston as a consistently conservative and thoroughly business dominated community.

In any event, Hofheinz was under continuous attack by conservative contenders for his job throughout his administration. That he adapted to political realities and emerged as more moderate, pragmatic, and even opportunistic than

his supporters would have liked is not, for a man who harbored career ambitions that extended beyond the political boundaries of Houston, particularly surprising. That he accomplished less than expected is not as surprising as the fact that he accomplished as much as he did. Hofheinz changed the leadership style of the police department, he accepted federal aid for the department, he questioned police conduct in black neighborhoods, and he made at least a symbolic gesture in the direction of increasing the number of blacks and females in management positions in city government.

Hofheinz set the political tone for the city for the rest of the decade. There is a consensus of opinion among observers that minorities began to play a greater role in the political life of the city during this period. In the vernacular, "the power structure began to open-up." The business dominance of the city was challenged. Political sensibilities were heightened and more groups entered the political arena. Crime as an issue played little role in this process of change.

THE JAILS

Although the crime issue did not produce major change in the city of Houston during the Hofheinz administration, the same conclusion cannot be reached for Harris County. In fact, governmental responses to crime (at least indirectly) resulted in some of the most significant innovations with respect to the corrections system during the entire 31 year period under consideration. It is noteworthy, however, that these changes were a function of judicial intervention. Local officials failed to initiate action until forced to do so by the federal court.

In February of 1975, Judge Carl Bue of the federal district court for the

southern district of Texas decided a case that had been filed by inmates of the Harris County jail in 1972. In that decision, Judge Bue found county jail facilities grossly inadequate and ordered that the defendants (Comissioners Court and Sheriff) remedy the situation. The Commissioners Court and Sheriff signed a consent order in which they agreed to improve conditions. Subsequently, the Commissioners Court scheduled a bond election in September, 1975, and the voters approved $15,000,000 for the construction of a new jail and renovation of existing detention facilities. The new jail is currently under construction.

In August, 1975, the plantiffs in the original case charged that Commissioners Court and the Sheriff's department had failed to abide by the provisions of the consent order in which they had agreed to comply with federal and state standards. In that motion, the plantiffs also questioned the adequacy of the $15,000,000 proposed for new jail construction. In December of 1975, Judge Bue handed down a second decision in which he agreed with the plantiffs' allegations. He futher ordered a series of changes in the city/county criminal justice system.

First, the court deplored existing jail facilities in the county and concluded that they "represented some of the most dire and inhumane conditions in correction facilities across the United States." It was noted that the jails were built to hold 1150 inmates but currently held an inmate population of 2500. Specific criticisms were made about the lack of beds, "intolerable stench," inadequate heating and ventilation, improper care and treatment of mentally ill prisoners, drug addicts, and alcholics, insufficient number of guards and staff workers, prevalence of inmate "goon squads," homosexuality, and torture of fellow prisoners, inadequate reacreation opportunities and facilities, absence of fire escapes, inadequate medical treatment and "feeding" facilities, and absence of educational and vocational training facilities.

The court blamed these conditions on overcrowding and focused its remedy

on the inadequacy of the county pre-trial release program. Specifically, the court noted that 1700 of the 2500 jail inmates in 1975 were pre-trial detainees and that 500 of this number "were characterized by the Sheriff as inmates immediately eligible for release on recognizance under even the most stringent standards of review." It was futher noted that a prisoner accused of a felony spent an average of 4 months in jail before trial. Six months was not uncommon.

The Harris County pre-trial release program was established in 1972. Its budget in 1975 was only $132,000. Of this amount, $105,000 came from a fee levied on professional bail bondsmen. Although an inadequate budget and staff contributed to the ineffectivenees of the agency, the primary weakness of the program could be traced to the fact that staff members were prevented from interviewing prisoners in the Houston city jail. Since 80 percent of all persons arrested and sent to the Harris County jail were initially processed at the city jail (a temporary detention center), this limitation severely restricted the effectiveness of the program. The District Court estimated that prisoners at the county jail had a 75 percent chance of not being interviewed by personnel from the pre-trial release agency. The court further noted that,

> By far the most significant single factor influencing the agency's lack of success was the organized effort of commercial bail bondsmen to sabotage the agency. The bondsmen see the agency as a potential economic threat to their 'market' - those arrested persons who can afford money bonds but who at the same time are eligible for release on recognizance without having to compensate commercial bondsmen. Thus threatened, the bondsmen have admittedly brought considerable political pressure to bear on both city and county officials to hamper efficacious operation of the agency . . . Credible evidence demonstrates that the decision of City of Houston police officials in 1972 to deny access to the agency resulted, at least in part, from this political pressure.

In order to remedy overcrowded county jail conditions, the federal court ordered a service of sweeping changes in the criminal justice system. These changes included the following:

1. Transferred control of the pre-trial release program from the Harris County Commissioners Court to the Harris County Criminal District Courts (state courts).

2. Ordered that all pre-trial detainees be considered for release.

3. Ordered the county to establish a pre-trial release program at the city jail.

4. Instructed the Commissioners Court to propose a budget to support the implementation of a computerized system to keep track of persons released under the pre-trial program.

5. Established a list of qualified attorneys from which counsel for indigent defendants could be drawn.

6. Created two new "annex courts" in the county to hear the cases of defendants housed in the county jails awaiting trial. These two courts were to continue to operate until the average time from arrest to trial declined to 90 days.

7. Established a preliminary hearing program to insure that defendants charged with a violation of state law would be brought before a magistrate within 24 hours.

8. Jail conditions were to be inspected at least once a month by a county health inspector. In addition, the court ordered changes with regard to inmate clothing, diet, medical care, education and training, and recreation.

9. Ordered that a program be established to treat alcholics and drug addicts among the jail population.

10. Ordered that procedures be established to accomplish psychiatric and psychological screening of prisoners and that special provisions be made

for mentally ill inmates.

11. Provided for the segregation of prisoners (separation of pre-trial and convicted persons).

12. Ordered that the jail staff undergo a training program.

13. Ordered a pay equalization for jail personnel.

14. Ordered that the number of jail employees be increased to insure one jail guard per 20 prisoners.

15. Ordered that the Commissioners Court and Sheriff submit a huge number of special and monthly reports to allow the federal court to monitor the progress of county officials with respect to the various court ordered changes. This particular order was significant because it required jail, commissioners court, and sheriff's department officials to begin recording and maintaining a variety of statistical data for the ciminal justice system. Prior to the court order, little of this data had been collected on a systematic basis.

16. Appointed a federal ombudsman to monitor and evaluate the implementation process. This appointment insured a continuing federal judicial presence in the operations of the local criminal justice system.

The various federal district court decisions have had a significant influence on the local corrections/court system. As a direct result of federal intervention, a new jail was built, existing correction facilities were rennovated, the processing, treatment, and training of inmates dramatically improved, two new criminal district courts were created, an effective pre-trial release program was established and insulated from political control, the counsel for indigent defendant program was strengthened, a preliminary hearing procedure to protect the rights of defendants was implemented, the number of jail guards increased, training of corrections personnel improved, the application of computer technology to criminal justice operations was enhanced,

and the collection and analysis of court/corrections data improved.

It is significant that there was little resistance to these changes. Although local county officials had failed to propose remedies for obvious deficiencies in the corrections system, they willingly accepted a variety of federally induced policy innovations.

The Jim McConn Administration - 1978-Present

Since McConn did not take office until 1978 and since the significant developments of his administration did not occur until 1979 and 1980, my comments on his term will be brief. In general, the McConn administration represented a continuation of trends begun under Fred Hofheinz. A Mass Trasit Authority was finally established although mass transit in Houston means purchasing more buses. In an attempt to defuse a taxpayer's revolt, McConn froze property taxes at 1977 levels until a re-evaluation of all property in the city could be accomplished.

Crime became more important as an issue than at any other time during the 1948-1978 period. Again, however, crime as an issue was intertwined with police treatment of minorities. It has always been exceedingly difficult to separate the two issues in Houston and the McConn administration was no exception. Significantly, police treatment rather than crime has always been the key issue for minorities. Minority discontent with the police crystalized around the Joe Campos Torres case (a drowning by the police of a Chicano suspect). Coupled with various police shootings of suspects, minorities became much more vocal in their demands that something be done about police behavior than at any other time in Houston's history. It is noteworthy that this now powerful minority bloc included Chicanos as well as blacks. In fact, the only significant racial disturbance of the period involved a confrontation between Chicanos and the police.

Something of a very fundamental nature happened during this period with respect to police-minority relations. Throughout the 31 year period, minority discontent with police treatment had focused

almost exclusively on the police chief. It seemed as if minorities believed that all that was required to accomplish a dramatic improvement in police behavior toward them was the replacement of a repressive chief with an enlightened one. This perception is seen in the entire history of police-minority relations during the Louie Welch and Fred Hofheinz administrations (1964-1977).

During the last years of the Hofheinz administration, however, minorities finally got an enlightened, progressive, and highly professional chief. Even the minority community did not question Chief Harry Caldwell's sincerity, fairness, and professional dedication. However, instances of police brutality continued to surface and at even a faster rate than in previous years. (This does not mean, of course, that the actual number of such incidents was greater under Caldwell. The number may have actually decreased. Minorities and the media may simply have been more sensitive to police mistreatment). There was an important lesson to be learned from this development. The police chief was extremely limited in terms of his ability to control the behavior of individual patrolmen. Although long a commonplace observation to academics, it came as a shock to minorities. Police mistreatment may have had more to do with the values and attitudes of the street officer, and the way in which these attitudes were a reflection of the dominant political culture of the larger community, than with the policy orientations of the police chief.

In any event, it is significant that the targets of minority frustration and even rage tended to shift during this period from the police chief to extremely lenient jurors (who even on changes of venue tended to dismiss charges of police brutality or assess very light

sentenses) and to the District Attorney for a failure to effectively investigate and vigorously prosecute.

It is also significant that police funding became, for the first time, an issue in city politics. Both McConn and Caldwell devoted considerable effort to a program to recruit more police. However, the decision to freeze taxes at 1977 levels (in an effort to defuse an active taxpayer's revolt) limited the availability of adequate funds. It is noteworthy that the police officer's association has become extremely active with respect to police salaries and has suceeded in pressuring city council to place the issue before the voters in the 1980 elections. There appears to be a consensus of opinion that the key to effective recruitment is higher salaries (to say nothing, of course, about its influence on police morale).

There is little doubt but that the power structure in the city has changed considerably in recent times. Minority groups have become much more active. They are now a group to be reckoned with. The old business elite has given way to a much more diverse set of business leaders. The new corporate management in the city reflects a more cosmopolitan orientation toward issues such as police-minority relations, transportation, and municipal services. (It is noteworthy, however, that the business community has never appeared to take much of an interest in police-related matters.) The greatly increased diversity of the group structure has complicated the mayoral task. Although a businessman by background (he balanced his councilmanic duties with building and real estate interests), McConn has been forced to balance the demands of a variety of competing groups. It is likely that he would be a much less activist mayor if the complacency that characterized

the Welch and Cutrer administrations existed today.

It is indicative of the multiple constituencies that McConn has to serve that he has sought to hire more minorities and that he has vigorously pursued federal funding for minority neighborhoods. At the same time, however, white middle-class organizations have also become more vocal. In previous administrations, these groups were inclined to limit their political concern to educational policy. Recently, however, they have instituted a taxpayers revolt that has significantly affected available revenues. The white middle-class has also become much more demanding with respect to municipal services. Specifically, they have concentrated their demands on street conditions and drainage. The increased organizational activity of municipal employees, particularly the police officers and the firefighters, has also complicated McConn's balancing act through their insistent demands for higher salaries.

The McConn administration was also witness to a fundamental reform of the electoral arrangement. In 1979, the Justice Department charged that extensive annexation had diluted the voting strength of minorities in the city and ordered a change in Houston's at-large system for selecting councilmen. It is significant that the city leadership did not appeal this decision. A mixed district/at-large arrangement was developed by council and approved by the voters. The 8 at-large seats were abolished and replaced by 9 councilmen elected from districts and only 5 from at-large races. It is significant that in new city elections held in 1979, 3 blacks and one Chicano were elected to council. Previously, minorities could claim only one black representative.

Conclusion

In many respects, the most bitter, persistent, and divisive issue in Houston during the entire 31 year period was education. The school board was the dominant institutional actor in a continuing conflict that involved communism, federal aid, and integration. More than any other issue, educational policy reflected a bitter struggle over which values would prevail. It often, if not always, brought out the worst in Houstonians and seldom the best. Education as an issue would not begin to play out as an issue that was capable of engaging the vast energies of the dominant white middle-class until the 1970s.

Crime as an issue did not become important until the last years of the Louie Welch administration and even then it was primarily a problem for minorities. Although Houston's murder rate always provided good copy, it was a grisly statistic in which Houstonians almost took a sort of perverse pride. It was a measure of their rugged individualism, an indicator of their brawling, wildcatter, frontier spirit. It was an eminently acceptable price of glorious growth. (Houston's #1 murder ranking is probably less important to the citizenry since the Houston Oilers have become legitimate play-off contenders in the National Football League.) In their saner moments, however, Houstonians realized that murder was something that "Negroes" did to each other while having a good time on Saturday night and that, consequently, it was little to become unduly alarmed about. In any event, Herman Short guarded the door for a decade and his celebrated independence from federal control ensured his effectiveness.

Crime rates did increase, of course. However, crime never became a highly important issue for the dominant white community and they never

demanded that government undertake significant change to resolve the problem. Although crime never became an overwhelming public issue, the numerous middle and upper-class neighborhoods in the city that prominently announce the patrol presence of private police forces testify to the fact that Houstonians may have invoked a private sector solution to address the problem.

Of course, many may have exited the city in response to crime, but it is more likely that those that departed did so because of blacks, the public schools (which may be the same thing), and the certainty of finding even lower taxes in the suburbs. (It is ironic that Houston's mayors have traditionally crossed up the participants in the white flight process by pulling them back into the fold through annexation.)

The major police-related issue in Houston during the 1948-1978 period was police-minority relations rather than crime. The catalyst for change in the enduring police leadership controversy was the black community and the sympathetic regime of Fred Hofheinz. Their dramatization of the issue effected some fundamental, if gradual, change in leadership style. Houston's latest police chiefs have been much more sensitive to the minority community than earlier chiefs.

Crime fighting in the city, as opposed to leadership selection, has traditionally been left to police bureaucrats and the typical police response has been to issue a call for more policemen and to blame lenient judges. Few innovations have been undertaken by the department. Instead, an effort is made to hire more officers to conduct motorized patrol. In addition, a large percentage of the small patrol force is devoted to the white community's real concern - traffic. Out of a total of 911 policemen assigned to street duty in 1967, 42% were assigned to the traffic division. The figure for 1968 was 39%, for 1969

it was 40%, for 1970 it was 39%, for 1971 it was 37%, for 1972 it was 37%, and for 1973 it was 37%.

Until the McConn administration, the department has had a relatively easy time with budget requests. Traditionally, more positions are routinely budgeted than can be filled. In general, the police bureaucracy has dominated the process of responding to the crime problem. The political leadership has generally agreed to their demands. I find no evidence that any political leader in Houston ever gave any thought to developing a strategy for dealing with crime. Instead, mayors and councilmen reacted to departmental initiatives. The entire process was a clear illustration of deference to administrative expertise. Even Fred Hofheinz's concern with police operations was limited to police relations with the minority community. It should also be noted that under Hofheinz, the police themselves were big winners. Salaries significantly increased during this period.

The single most articulate, persuasive, and forceful advocate of policy change in response to crime during this period was the District Attorney, Carol Vance. He consistently demanded more courts, more prosecutors, more police, higher salaries, speedier trials, stiffer sentences, tougher jurors, tighter bond requirements, a crack-down on juvenile crime, a special emphasis on career criminals, streamlined procedures, and a revising of the state criminal code. That he diluted some of his effectiveness by devoting considerable attention to "obscene" books and movies, to marijuana use and flag desecration (Vance once announced that he would no longer prosecute local clothing stores under the state flag desecration law after his staff concluded that the only item of clothing that clearly violated the law was an astronaut suit),

should not detract from his prominent role in publicizing and even dramatizing the crime issue. That he had a harder row to hoe than the Houston police is illustrated by his constant, incessant badgering of the Commissioner's Court for more and better paid assistants.

Houston Addendum
9/22/80

Explanations

In this section, I will deal with two related issues. First, why didn't crime become an overwhelming issue in Houston? Second, what was the response to crime and which groups and institutions controlled that response? I will suggest several reasons as to why crime never became a key issue in local politics.

(1) Crime rates in Houston are much higher in poor and black neighborhoods than they are in white, wealthy areas (Mladenka and Hill, 1976). Although we discovered a curvilinear relationship between income and personal crimes (but not for property crimes), the fact remains that crime is a more serious problem for blacks than for whites. For example, the correlations between percent poverty and percent black and personal crimes in 1973 were .93 and .81. Although these associations tell us nothing about how white neighborhoods perceived increases in the rate of crime, the variations in the absolute level of crime suggest that whites had less reason to elevate crime to the status of a major urban issue than did blacks. Of course, the absolute level of crime may be irrelevant. Even if crime rates were comparatively low in white neighborhoods, dramatic increases in the level of crime might be sufficient to transform crime into a major urban issue. I do not mean to imply, therefore, that relatively lower crime rates in white neighborhoods ensured that the issue would never gain much salience. However, the evidence does suggest that at least in terms of the distributional pattern crime was predominately a poor, black, and inner city problem.

(2) Although perceptions of crime are probably more important

than actual crime rates in determining its status as an issue, an analysis of citizen-initiated contacts with public authorities about urban service problems revealed that citizens in Houston seldom complained about crime or inadequate police protection (Mladenka, 1977). Instead, major service priorities included drainage, sewerage, traffic/transportation, and street repair. Crime might have become more of an issue if other service problems had been less severe. For example, the flooding of residential areas occurs after every major rainfall. Land subsidence caused by rapid industrial and residential development has immensely complicated the situation. Heavy rains prompt thousands of complaints from outraged citizens. For many citizens, crime as an issue has an exceedingly difficult time competing for attention with the flooding problem.

My analysis of citizen contacts with public authorities in Houston revealed that crime was not a particularly significant issue for those citizens who communicated service grievances to government agencies. Participants in the service demand process were much more likely to express their discontent with those services that had a direct, immediate, and continuous impact on their daily lives. Street conditions, sewerage, drainage, and the absence of city services in newly annexed areas dominated contacting activity. The gross inadequacy of a variety of basic municipal services in Houston may well have overwhelmed crime as an issue.

(3) Although I do not have the data to directly address this issue, it appears as if many middle- and upper-class neighborhoods in Houston responded to the crime problem, in part, by invoking a private sector solution. Many residential areas contract with private security

firms to provide police protection. I can only speculate as to the factors responsible for this development. First, it may be that many citizens believe that the police department is incapable of effectively dealing with crime. My analysis of police response times revealed that it takes an average of 38 minutes from the initiation of a citizen call for police assistance in Houston until the arrival of the police (Mladenka and Hill, 1978). In-progress calls were responded to in 27 minutes while not-in-progress calls required 50 minutes. Many police departments do a much better job at responding to citizen requests for police service. For example, burglary reports in Boston were responded to in only 9 minutes (Larson, 1972). This same category of calls required 52 minutes in Houston.

These response times, given the manpower shortage in the Houston police department, are not surprising. In 1971, the average number of police per capita in the 10 largest cities was twice that of Houston. In the same year, the average number of officers per square mile for the ten largest cities was over six times that of Houston (26 to 4).

Table 1

Average Response Time by Type of Call in Houston - 1973

Type of Call	Number of Minutes
Robbery	36
Burglary	52
Theft	55
Juvenile Disturbance	38
Family Disturbance	30
Other Disturbance	23
Discharge of Firearms	39
See Complainant	48
Shop Lifting	37
Suspicious Subject	28
Malicious Mischief	47
Prowler	20
Serious Disturbance	21
Breaking In	29

N = 660

Many neighborhoods in Houston may well have reacted to the situation by resorting to a private market solution. Of course, the more fundamental question is why these same neighborhoods did not insist that political leaders significantly increase police patrol levels. The answer most likely is buried in the political culture of the community. Interviews with bureaucrats, elected officials, and knowledgeables strongly suggest that one of the dominant values in the city is a belief in a limited role for government. Continued economic growth and low taxes take priority over high levels of municipal services. The dominant middle- and upper-classes prefer to augment public services with privately financed and delivered services.

Such a strategy, of course, may well operate to the advantage of the better-off. By opposing increased public support of essential services, the wealthy not only keep taxes low but they also enjoy sole use of those services purchased in the private sector. Police patrol manpower in Houston is distributed on the basis of crime rates. That is, high crime areas (black and poor neighborhoods) are assigned more police officers than low-crime, wealthy parts of the city (Mladenka and Hill, 1978). Therefore, any increases in patrol manpower would disproportionately benefit high crime neighborhoods. If the wealthy perceive that they would shoulder the major part of any new tax burden (while the benefits of increased police service levels would be disproportionately consumed by other groups), it would be in their best interests to oppose an enhanced role for the public sector in the service delivery process. Public bureaucracies most often employ need, demand, or equality as the appropriate standard for distributing resources. Privately financed services permit the operation of a

willingness and ability to pay bias.

It may be that crime did not become a major public issue in Houston because a concerted effort to address the problem would have required a massive investment of resources. By invoking a private sector solution, wealthy neighborhoods not only avoided a tax increase but they also insured that they alone would enjoy the benefits of privately funded police services.

The following incident in Houston politics is consistent with the above interpretation. For the past several months the Houston Police Officer's Association has vigorously campaigned for a pay increase. The police argued that the inability of the department to attract more officers could be directly attributed to low salaries. They further maintained that a failure to pass the proposed pay raise (approximately 20%) would result in the resignation of a large number of officers, would have a negative affect upon morale and performance, and would eventually contribute to a rise in crime. The police union circulated a petition and suceeded in securing the required number of signatures necessary to bring the pay issue for police (and firemen) before the voters.

In August, 1980, the proposition was soundly defeated. Of course, the outcome is also consistent with a number of other explanations. Some may have voted against the proposal because they believed that city council rather than the electorate should have resolved the issue. (The City Controller opposed the pay raise for this reason.) Others may have felt that the increase sought was too high, or that better salaries would not improve performance or attract more police officers.

It is noteworthy, however, that one widespread argument employed

against the proposal held that property taxes would dramatically increase (the figure generally mentioned was in the 25% range) if the proposition was approved by the voters. When forced to make a choice between more police (or at least better paid ones) and no tax increase, the voters expressed a clear preference for the latter.

Although these developments are certainly open to a number of interpretations, the outcome of the pay raise election simply does not suggest that crime is a major issue on the urban agenda (or at least in those neighborhoods with heavy voter turnout). Instead, the evidence is consistent with the argument that crime is not a major problem in many neighborhoods and that low taxes are more important than ehanced police service levels. (Of course, I am ignoring the possibility that crime is perceived as a major issue but that it is further perceived that the police can do nothing about it.) It is also noteworthy that in 1962 the police also demanded that the voters approve a pay raise (during the Lewis Cutrer administration). Again, the electorate defeated the pay increase proposal.

(4) The structural characteristics of city government may also have been significant. There is probably little incentive for officials elected under an at-large electoral arrangement to identify with the particularistic service needs of neighborhood residents. The fact that crime rates were much lower in some neighborhoods than in others may have had less to do with the low visibility of the crime issue than the fact that other neighborhoods with high crime rates had few mechanisms for expressing their service grievances. No neighborhood politician seized upon the crime issue. The absence of a ward system of representation in Houston may well inhibit the communication

of service demands to public authorities. Although I don't want to make too much of this point, my own research reveals that city councilmen in Houston play a much less active role in the citizen demand process than ward aldermen in a machine city such as Chicago (Mladenka, 1979). However, actual policy outcomes do not appreciably differ in the two cities (Mladenka, 1980a, 1980b).

Interestingly enough, Houston's ward system was abolished during and with the strong support of the liberal administration of Mayor Roy Hofheinz. Prior to 1952 Houston had an at-large representational arrangement. In 1952, the voters amended the city charter to provide for the election of city councilmen from districts. During this same period Roy Hofheinz was elected mayor and immediately engaged in a long-running feud with city council. Prior to his election, Hofheinz had been a protege of the incumbent mayor, Oscar Holcombe, and was perceived as a safe, establishment figure. Upon election, however, his political ideology underwent a fundamental transformation and Hofheinz emerged as a populist who began to attack (in his own words) the downtown business "fatcats." City council strongly opposed Hofheinz's various policy proposals. In an effort to fashion his own political coalition, Hofheinz began to make an appeal to blacks and the white working-class. As part of that effort, he proposed that the ward system be abolished and replaced with an at-large arrangement. Hofheinz's reasoning was that the ward system diluted the voting strength of blacks and poor people by limiting them to a few safe seats on council. Although these groups were guaranteed some representation, the ward arrangement insured that they would always remain a minority. Hofheinz argued that an at-large system would enhance the representation of blacks

and poor whites because they could vote as a bloc and influence the outcome of all, rather than a few, councilmanic races. Of course, this rather novel reasoning is refuted by conventional wisdom which holds that at-large systems penalize minorities in terms of level of representation. In any event, the ward system was abolished by the voters in 1955. The expected coalition of blacks and poor whites never materialized and, until recently (when the at-large system was replaced by a mixed ward/at-large arrangement), blacks have never held more than one seat on the 9 person council.

The absence of political parties in Houston may also have been a significant factor. In general, Houston politics is not dominated by conflict over issues. There are no parties to seize upon issues, dramatize them, suggest appropriate policy responses, and mobilize voters and groups in support or opposition. Of course, it may be that the nonpartisan electoral arrangement is a consequence rather than a cause. A number of other factors could account for the absence of issues. Also, there is no way to determine if crime would have emerged to occupy a dominant position on the urban agenda even if political parties had been active.

(5) It is likely that crime would have become a more significant issue if the various mayors had chosen to make it so. Houston has a strong-mayor system. Traditionally, the mayor introduces all city ordinances. He develops the budget and appoints and removes department heads. He easily commands media attention. Generally, the city council supports the mayor's policy proposals. The council's primary function is to meet twice a week and react to the mayor's initiatives. The part-time nature of the council is illustrated by the fact that it was not until 1977 that councilmanic salaries were increased from $3600 a year.

The mayor is the dominant political figure in local politics. With

few exceptions, he controls the urban policy agenda. I do not mean to imply that no issue becomes significant unless the mayor acknowledges its relevance. Some issues have endured for the past few decades ("quality" education and school desegregation) even though the mayor pays little or no attention to them. (Educational policy is made in a governmental arena removed from mayoral jurisdiction.) However, an issue is much more likely to achieve salience if the mayor mobilizes the considerable resources at his disposal. Houston's mayors possess this power even though there are no political parties upon which they can rely for support. In fact, the absence of an effective network of politically organized groups in the city may contribute to the mayor's control of the urban agenda. There is little competition over agenda setting.

However, no Houston mayor has ever made crime a major issue. I have no doubt but that they could have assigned it high priority in the political life of the city if they had so chosen. Why they did not is unclear. I have already argued that crime did not appear to be a major problem for many groups in the city. If we accept that assumption, and if we further accept the argument that the mayor is typically most responsive to the dominant white middle- and upper-class groups in the city, then the failure of crime to emerge as a key issue on the mayoral agenda should not be surprising. The dominant themes in Houston have been low taxes and economic growth and Houston's mayors have been sensitive to those concerns.

However, the mayor is not a complete captive of public opinion. He can, if he wishes, create an issue where none existed before. That Houston's mayors were not so disposed with regard to the crime problem requires further explanation. Why didn't Louie Welch (1964-1973) and Fred Hofheinz (1974-1977) seize upon the crime issue during a period when crime rates

were rising? For the Louie Welch administration, a partial answer is to be found in Welch's relationship with his chief of police, Herman Short. Welch had appointed Short early in his term and Short served as chief throughout Welch's 10 year administration. The mayor completely deferred to Short's judgement about police matters. He had complete confidence in Short's leadership and supported his various policy positions even when those initiatives conflicted with his own inclinations. For example, Welch accepted federal monies for various urban programs while Short refused to consider federal support. Chief Short controlled the policy agenda. He was a highly political chief in that he became identified as a staunch defender of conservative values. For Short, the key issue was "law and order" and his solution was an ideological rather than a pragmatic one. Lawlessness was a consequence of the breakdown of value systems at both the family and societal levels. If moral decay was the root cause, then even a "cop on every corner" would do little to reverse the process.

Crime was less of an issue during the 1964-1974 period in Houston than it might have been because Louis Welch permitted Herman Short to define the dimensions of the issue, and because Short dealt with the problem in an unorthodox fashion. If Short had publicized rising crime rates and had vigorously supported traditional responses (more manpower and equipment, better salaries, etc.), I believe that the crime issue would have achieved greater visibility and salience than it did. Instead, Short approached the crime situation in abstract terms. Societal "permissiveness" was the cause. His responses were essentially negative. He devoted considerable effort to dramatizing his refusal to accept federal funds. The issue became one of maintaining the "integrity" of the police. Short believed that if Houston took federal money it would lose control of its

own police force. Attention was diverted from the crime problem and focused instead on the issue of political control.

In part, crime failed to achieve major issue status because of Short's leadership. Conservative elements in the community applauded his refusal to accept federal funds and his unwillingness to take action in response to complaints from the minority community (Short opposed a civilian review board). Liberals and blacks were convinced that Short would have to go before other issues could be addressed. Short himself became the issue. Crime was lost sight of in the process. It is interesting to speculate about the outcome of the crime issue if a personality such as Carol Vance (the District Attorney) had been chief during this period. Although Vance was also perceived as a conservative, he was a much more forceful advocate of governmental response to the crime problem. His proposals were specific and concrete rather than abstract. He consistently argued for more manpower, more money, more courts, better training, and tougher laws. However, ance's constituency was the county rather than the city and he generally focused his attention on the prosecutorial and judicial stages of the criminal justice process.

The police leadership variable continued to play a crucial role after Short left office. Fred Hofheinz had made much of the need to replace Short as chief during his 1973 mayoral campaign. Short, in turn, declared that he would not serve under the liberal Hofheinz and resigned when the latter was elected. However, the leadership controversy continued. Carol Lynn's investigation of police corruption and the subsequent controversy that arose surrounding Lynn's illegal wiretapping activities again diverted attention from the crime issue. Personalities, corruption, and charges of police brutality dominated the police agenda.

The police department itself, rather than crime, was the major issue during the 1964-1977 period. In particular, the controversies that enveloped the Short and Lynn administrations so obscured the crime issue that it is impossible to determine how crime would have fared in the absence of a variety of complicating factors. That the leadership variable was significant cannot be denied. If Mayor Louie Welch had not given Herman Short a free hand in running the police department, and if Short had been less of an ideologue and more of a pragmatist, it is likely that more attention would have been given to the crime issue. As it was, Short the symbol dominated the debate over the appropriate police role and his legacy continued to structure the debate after he left office. Fred Hofheinz's problems with the police department can be attributed in large part to Herman Short's failure to address certain issues during his administration (police corruption, brutality, relationships with the minority community). Short's appointment as chief in 1964 was a major factor in ensuring that crime as an issue would never achieve a prominent place on the urban agenda.

(6) Although crime rates were higher in black neighborhoods, crime never became a major issue for the minority community because a number of other issues were more significant. Jobs, housing, police brutality, and segregated schools dominated the urban agenda for blacks. In fact, Chandler Davidson agrues that because of the weakness of the group structure in the minority community, blacks have never been able to effectively press their demands on city government. He maintains that there are four types of black organizations in Houston: affiliates of national organizations such as the NAACP, local black organizations with political goals, local organizations that are not primarily political such as churches, and white

dominated organizations (Harris County Democrats). Davidson argues that local organizations with political goals have not been effective because they tend to operate on an ad hoc basis, because they lack resources, and because their objectives are often at odds with those of conservative black leaders. Black churches are alleged to lack political power because their goals have seldom been political, while other local organizations such as the Twentieth Century Club are really "eating clubs" for black professionals and have few political objectives. Black membership in white dominated organizations is thought to be ineffective because these organizations pursue moderate goals.

More fundamentally, however, Davidson attributes the lack of group strength to the small number of black professionals in the city and to the low income level of the black community. Although this analysis may have something to offer in terms of accounting for the ineffectiveness of black political action, it fails to adequetely explain why blacks were active with respect to some issues and why they ignored others. For example, desegregation was a continuing issue during the decades of the 50s, 60s, and 70s, in large part, because of black protests that took the form of both legal action and non-violent demonstrations. In addition, Fred Hofheinz emphasized minority hiring and the police leadership issues in his 1971 and 1973 mayoral campaigns, in part, because of black concern with these issues. Therefore, we are confronted with the question of why some issues were important for blacks but crime was not. Again, part of the answer is to be found in an examination of the police leadership issue. Black opposition to Herman Short was so intense that crime as an issue was overwhelmed. Apparently, Short was perceived by blacks as the most prominent symbol of discrimination against the minority community.

The elimination of brutal treatment at the hands of the police became the key issue.

Another factor that contributed to the low visibility of the crime issue in the black community was the perception that crime had always been a problem for blacks and that nothing could or would be done about it. My interviews with black informants revealed that blacks in Houston tend to accept crime as a fact of life. High crime rates have always been a characteristic of black community life and there is little expectation that any thing can or will be done to resolve or even address the situation. As a matter of fact, the three blacks I interviewed noted that the enormity of the problems in the black community made crime a distinctly secondary (if not irrelevant) issue. They tended to attribute high crime rates to more fundamental problems such as unemployment and discrimination. Black demands tended to focus on these issues rather than crime because crime was perceived as a consequence rather than a cause of the black plight. These same informants offered rather sophisticated interpretations of the crime problem. They felt that a higher level of police resources would probably do little to reduce crime rates and that increased attention to crime might well divert attention from more fundamental problems in black neighborhoods.

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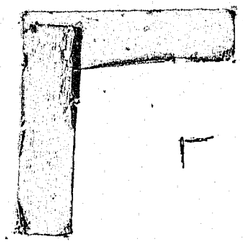

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