American Homicide Supplemental Volume (AHSV)

Policing (P)

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Policing

The tables and figures below examine the size of police forces in selected American cities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the relationship between the size of the police force and the homicide rate in those cities. The data on policing are available in Roussey (1996) and Monkkonen (1981, 1994). The data on homicide arrest rates by the police are from Monkkonen (1994), unless otherwise noted. The homicide rates (which are victim based) are from the sources noted in *American Homicide*. Note that there is a much higher correlation between arrests for drunkenness and the number of police per 10,000 persons than there is between arrests for homicide or actual homicides and the number of police per 10,000 persons per year. Arrests for moral offenses and disorderly conduct correlate well with the number of police, but arrests for homicide and actual homicides do not.

Table of Contents

References

Monkkonen, E. H. 1981. *Police in Urban America, 1860-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---. 1994. *Police Departments, Arrests, and Crime in the United States, 1860-1920* [computer file]. Ann Arbor: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

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Roussey, D. C. 1996. *Policing the Southern City: New Orleans, 1805-1889*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press.

Figure P 1

**Number of Police Officers in Major Cities in the United States, 1842-1856
(per 10,000 persons)**

	Number of Police	Year
Boston	15	1856
New York City	17	1855
Philadelphia	17	1856
Charleston	48	1850, 1856
Mobile	33	1842
New Orleans	33	1854
New Orleans	18	1855
New Orleans	27	1860
Richmond	41	1850
Savannah	43	1854

Source: Roussey (1996: 24).

Figure P 2

Patrol Police in Northern Cities, 1860-1920

Patrol Police in Northern Cities, 1860-1920
(per 10,000 persons per year)
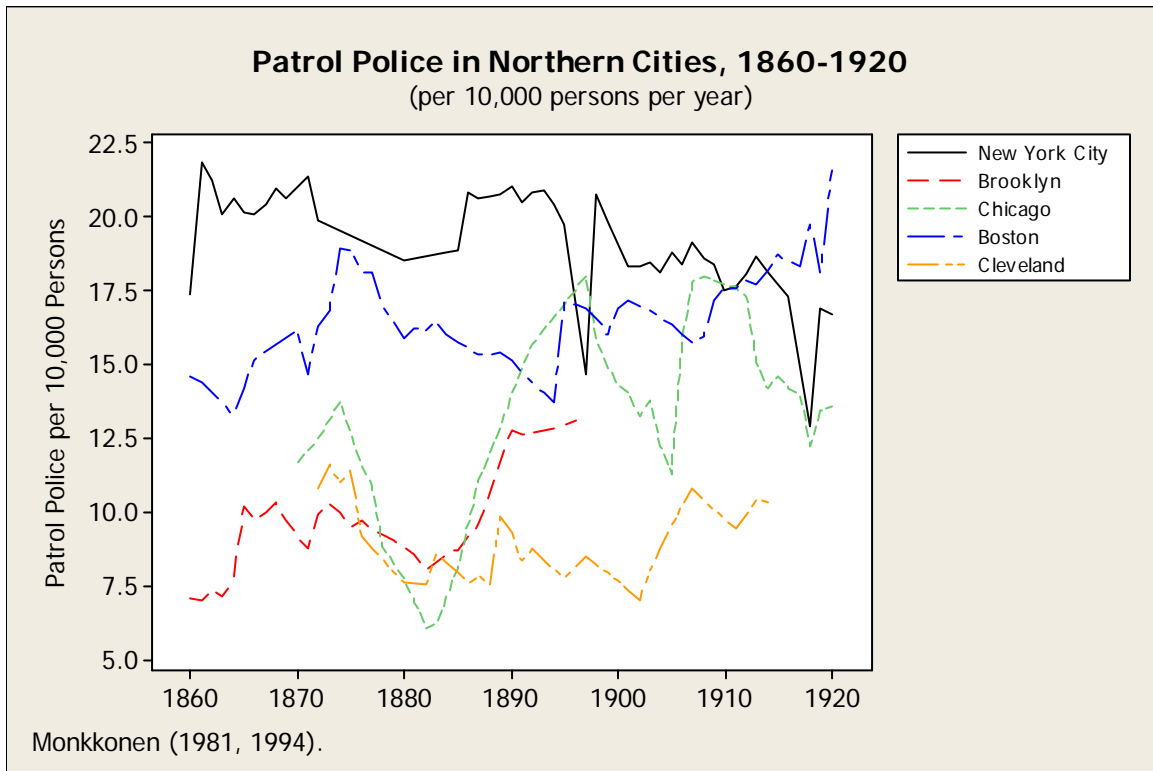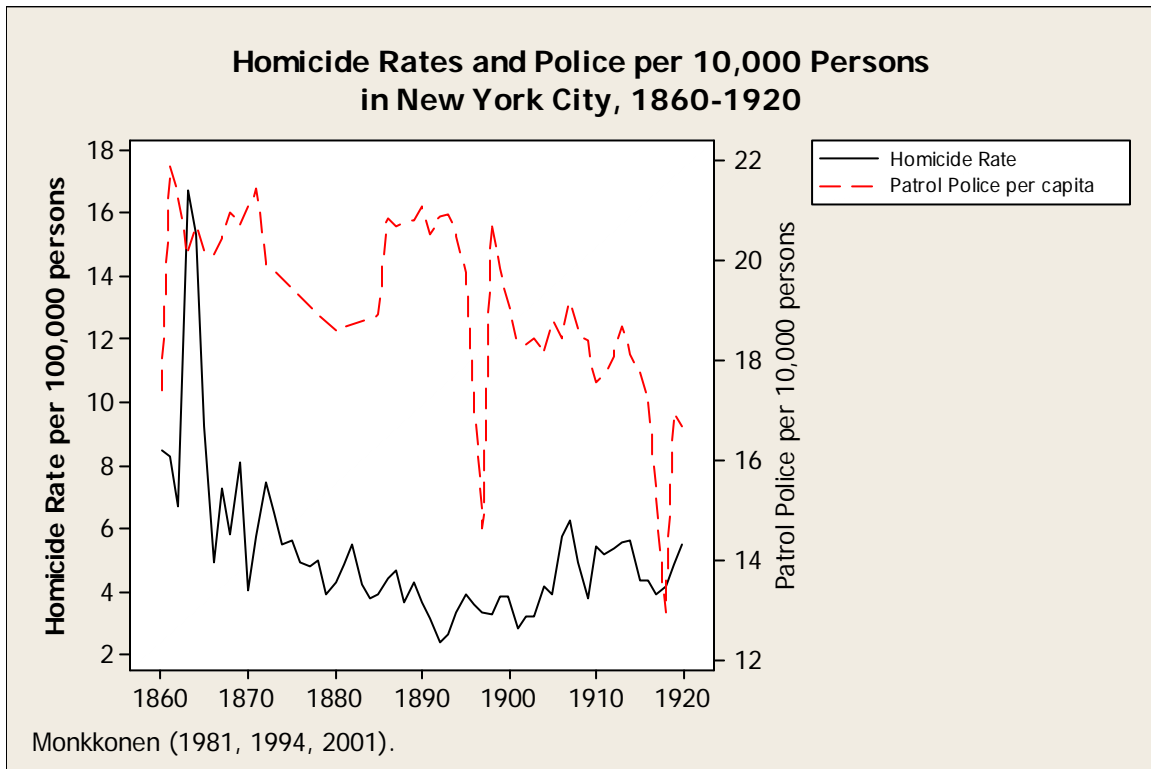
Monkkonen (1981, 1994).

Figure P 3

New York City Homicide Rate versus Patrol Police per 10,000 Persons, 1860-1920

Homicide Rate versus Patrol Police per Capita, 1860-1920

     - 0.30 + 0.295 Patrol Police per capita
     R-squared = 3.6

Homicide Rate versus Patrol Police per Capita, 1865-1920

     3.25 + 0.075 Patrol Police per capita
     R-squared = 0.8

Homicide Arrest Rate versus Patrol Police per Capita, 1860-1920

21.5 - 0.619 Patrol Police per capita
R-squared = 8.1

Drunkenness Arrest Rate versus Patrol Police per Capita, 1860-1920

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- 764 + 55.0 Patrol Police per capita
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R-squared = 36.3

NOTE: The number of patrol police per capita correlated most strongly with arrests for drunkenness, suggesting that the police were most effective at (and concerned with) maintaining public order. The homicide rate rose and fell almost independently of the number of patrol police per capita, although the association was slightly positive for the homicide rate and slightly negative for the homicide arrest rate.

Figure P 4

**New York City Homicide Rate versus Patrol Police per 10,000 Persons, 1851-1920**

New York City Homicide Rate (per 100,000 persons per year) versus Patrol Police (per 10,000 persons), 1851-1920
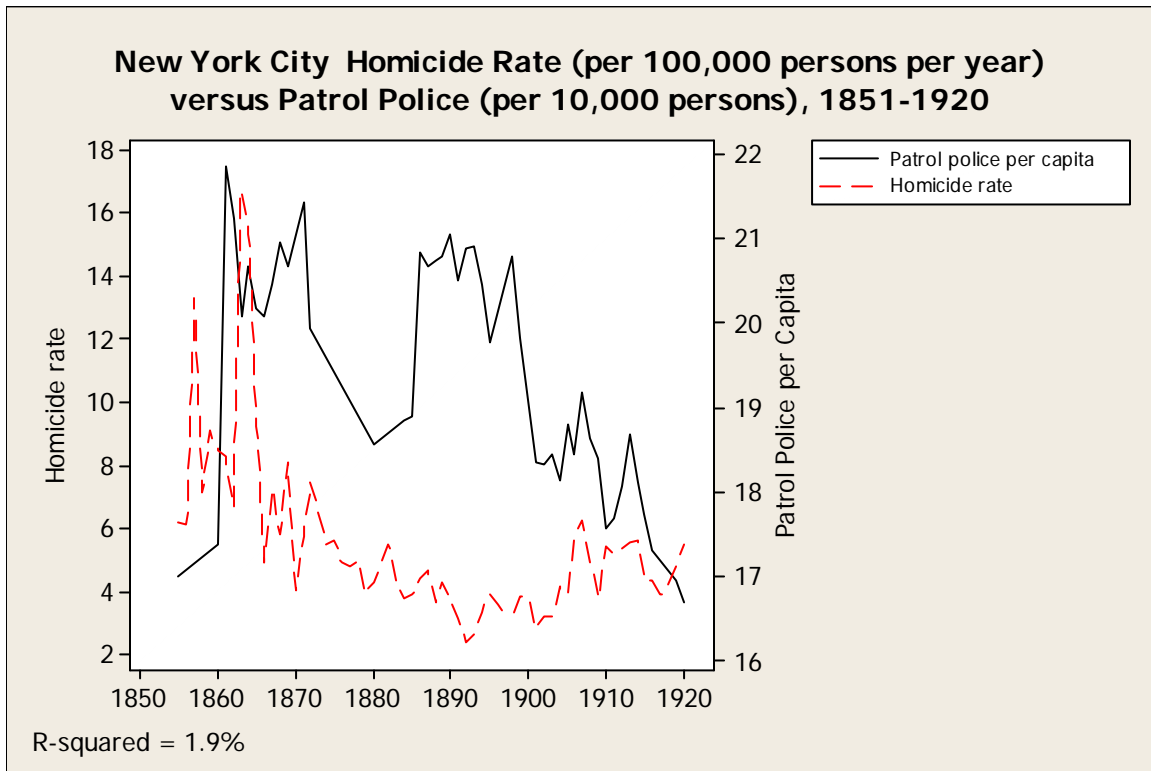
R-squared = 1.9%

Homicide rate = 21.5 - 0.619 Patrol Police per capita

R-squared = 8.1

NOTE: The regression equation finds a weak and negative correlation between the homicide rate and patrol police per capita. More patrol police per capita are associated with lower homicide rates.

Figure P 5

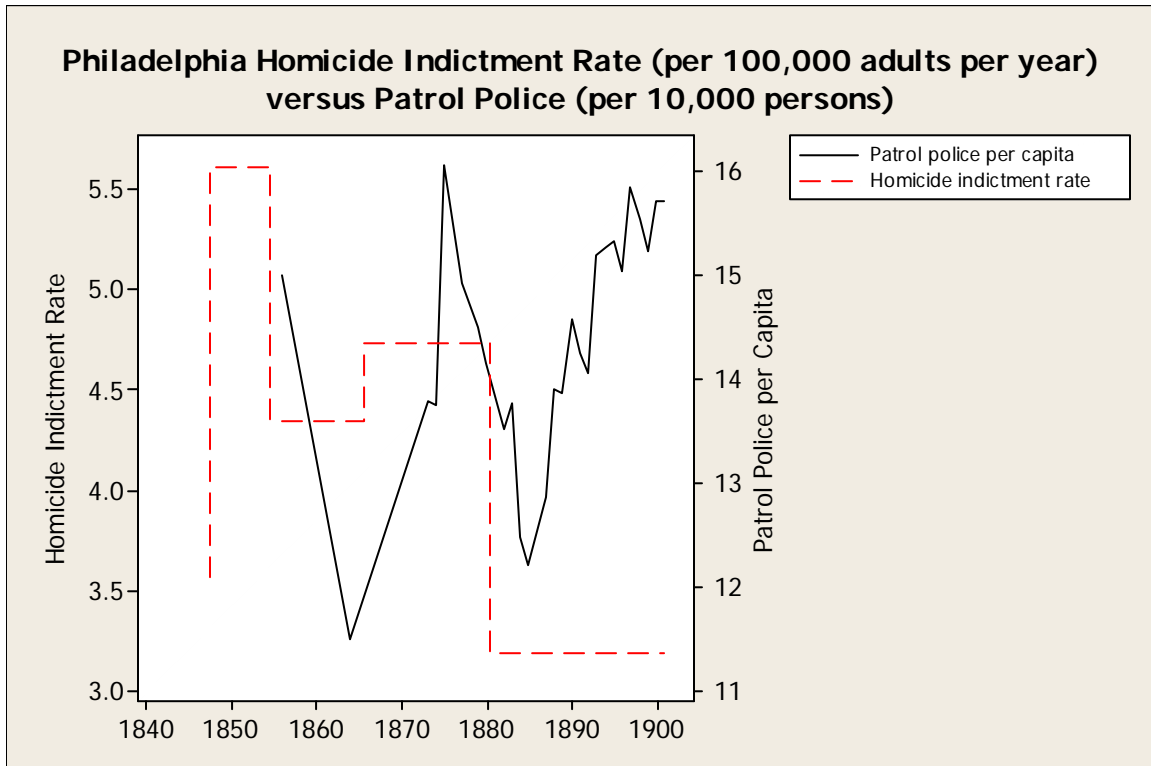**Boston Homicide Arrest Rate versus Patrol Police per 10,000 Persons, 1851-1920**

Boston Homicide Rate (per 100,000 persons per year) versus Patrol Police (per 10,000 persons), 1851-1920
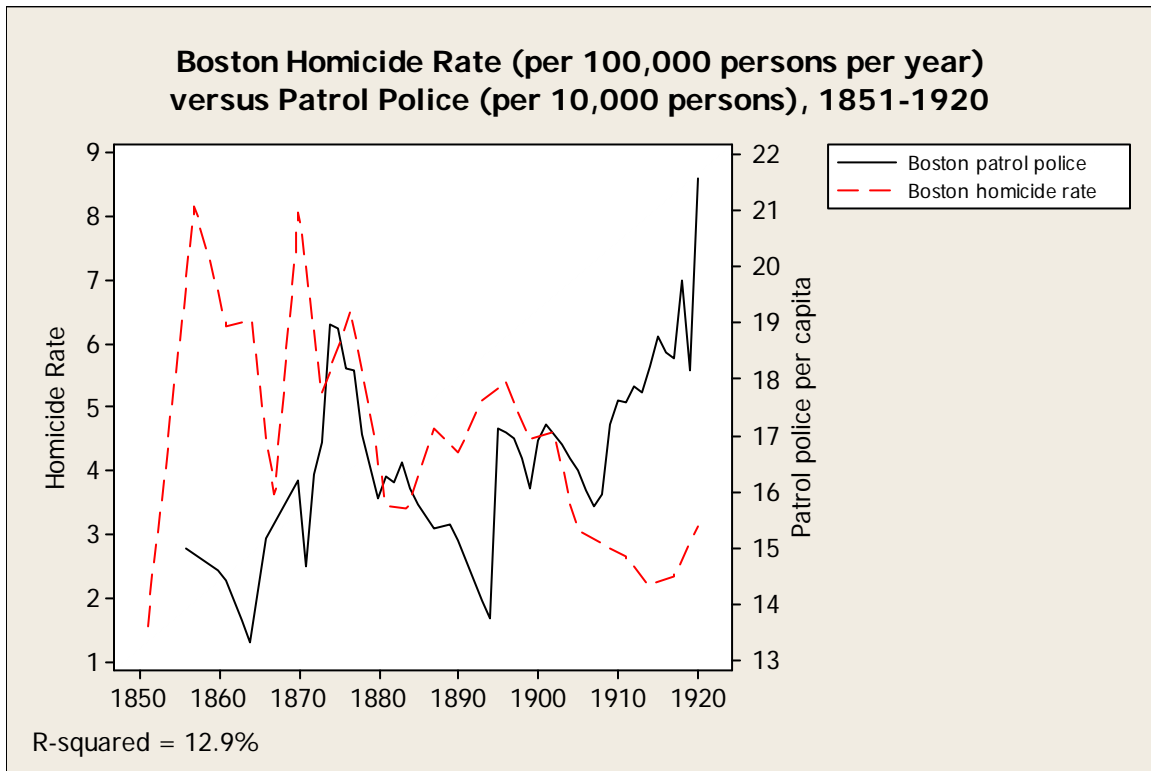
R-squared = 12.9%

Homicide arrest rate = - 12.5 + 1.13 Patrol Police per capita

R-squared = 25.6

NOTE: The regression equation finds a moderate and positive correlation between the homicide arrest rate and patrol police per capita. More patrol police per capita are associated with higher homicide arrest rates.

Figure P 6

**Philadelphia Homicide Indictment Rate versus Patrol Police per 10,000 Persons, 1847-1901**

Homicide indictment rate = - 18.0 + 1.56 Patrol Police per capita

R-squared = 60.1

NOTE: The regression equation finds a strong and positive correlation between the homicide indictment rate and patrol police per capita. More patrol police per capita are associated with higher homicide indictment rates.

Figure P 7

Chicago Homicide Rate versus Patrol Police per 10,000 Persons, 1879-1920
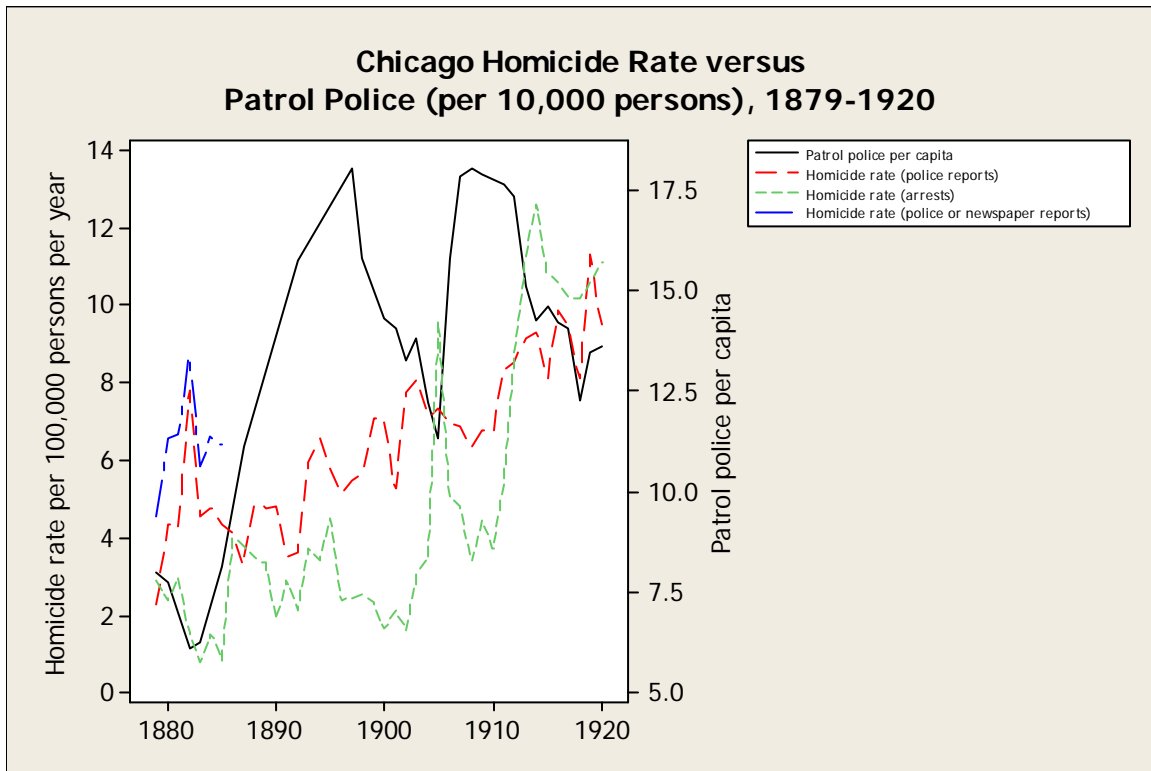
Homicide arrest rate = 0.68 + 0.339 Patrol Police per capita

R-squared = 9.6

NOTE: The regression equation finds a weak and positive correlation between the homicide rate and patrol police per capita. More patrol police per capita are associated with higher homicide rates.