

Policing by consent in the 1980s:

National initiatives and local adaptation in Sussex.

Alain Guyomarch

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Abstract

This thesis analyses "policing by consent" as an ideal of legitimate and effective public service provision, and the influence of that ideal on policy-making to reform policing methods, structures and powers in Britain during the 1980s. It considers the relevance of "policing by consent" both to the processes of policy initiation and adoption at the national level and to the practices of policy implementation at the local level in one rural provincial police force.

The thesis explains the incoherent nature of the reforms adopted and the conflicting goals of the various participants in the policy debates. The ambiguity of the concept of "policing by consent" allowed different objectives to be pursued behind a discourse common to most of the participants. Improving the public's estimation of the police service was only one goal of the policy makers; increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the 43 police forces of England and Wales was an equally important objective.

The thesis explores and explains the non-coincidence of the aims and preoccupations of the national policy-makers with those of many of the police officers responsible for implementing the reforms on the ground. By analysing how police officers in a non-crisis area, a rural county, react to and interpret both the reforms and the discourse about "policing by consent", this thesis extends and complements existing studies of public opinion and police attitudes in problem urban areas. If those officers feel less isolated than their urban colleagues they nonetheless resent both the imposition of policies irrelevant to their local circumstances and their own loss of self-esteem because of association with the negative public image of an increasingly "nationalised" police service.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Central reforms and local implementation: political goals and professional perceptions.

This thesis starts from a paradox. On the one hand, the 1980s have been marked by frequent and violent confrontations between the public and the police and by numerous public criticisms of the police for dishonesty, brutality, incompetence and racism. On the other hand, rarely has a decade witnessed so many public speeches about the need for public support for the work of the police or so many reforms of police structures and powers which, according to their authors, were inspired by the goal of restoring public consent for policing. Typical of this view was the statement of Sir Robert Mark, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and one of the best known chief police officers of the 1970s: "the most essential weapons in our armoury are not firearms, water cannon, tear gas or rubber-bullets, but the confidence and support of the people on whose behalf we act"¹. But if the discourse of those responsible for directing the work of the country's police forces appeared to be dominated by the traditional theme of a popular, respected and preventive approach - "policing by consent", the practice of policing seemed increasingly conflictual.

Behind this first paradox lurk others. Before the Conservatives came to power in 1979, their main criticism of policing was that it was ineffective.

¹ Robert Mark, Dimbleby Memorial Lecture, on BBC Television, 1972.

Crime rates continued to rise, the Conservatives argued, because the police were too badly paid and clearly under-equipped in materials, specialists and training to deal with the problems they faced. In contrast, the practice of the Conservatives in power, in three successive governments, has been primarily concerned with reducing inefficiency. Indeed, the Conservative leaders have attempted to follow the prescriptions of public choice theorists: as the market is inherently superior to the state for the provision of goods and services, they argued, everything possible should be privatised, public expenditure should be minimised and those "core" public services left within the state - including the police - should be run according to market principles, or at least on the nearest practical approximation. Our second paradox is, therefore, that of the opposition ideal of effectiveness - or "getting results" - being replaced by the governmental practice of a crusade to increase efficiency - or "getting better value for money".

There is a third paradox. The British Conservatives before 1979 were the champions of local government, and of local police forces accountable to local police authorities. In office during the 1980s, however, they imposed national standards and central controls to an extent hitherto unknown in British policing. In this respect the Conservative Governments of the 1980s appeared to be not only out of line with the traditions of their party but also in contradiction with their own avowed goals of restoring "policing by consent" by bringing police officers into closer cooperation with their local communities. These paradoxes have distinguished British debates about law and order from those taking place in other West European states.

Britain, like many of its European partners, has suffered from dramatically rising crime rates and outbursts of national and international terrorist activities during the 1980s. In Britain there have been numerous and massive outbursts of public disorder: football hooliganism almost every year, widespread urban riots in 1981 and 1985 and several violent

picket-line confrontations, especially during the 1984-85 miners' strike and the Wapping dispute in 1986. The tasks facing those responsible for policing in Britain were not very different from those of their counterparts in France, Italy, Spain or Germany.

Throughout Western Europe the last two decades have witnessed to widespread demands for governmental policies to reform policing. One immediate pressure for policing reform arises directly from the large and continuous rise in crimes, according to official statistics, and from the increasing frequency and scale of public disorder. Comparative crime statistics for West European states, collected by Interpol since 1950, illustrate these international trends². The only category of crime where no significant increase has occurred is that of murders, so the abolition of the death penalty does not appear to have had the effect of encouraging murders, which its opponents had forecast. This leveling-off contrasts markedly with all other categories. The total statistics for theft are the most impressive. Between 1950 and 1983, the number of reported thefts multiplied by 6 in Britain, by more than 10 in France, and by 5 in both West Germany and Italy. The incidence or the reporting of theft has increased so dramatically that in the 1970s Interpol decided to subdivide theft statistics. The crimes of

² On policing issues in other West European states see: J. Roach and J. Thomanek (eds.), *Police and Public Order in Europe*, London, Croom Helm, 1985; S. Shetreet and J. Deschenes (eds.), *Judicial Independence: the Contemporary Debate*, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff, 1985; G. Braunthal, "Public Order and Civil Liberties", in G. Smith, W.E. Paterson and P. Merkl (eds.), *Developments in German Politics*, London, Macmillan, 1989, pp.308-322; A. Guyomarch, "Adversary Politics, Civil Liberties and Law and Order", in P.A. Hall, J. Hayward and H. Machin (eds.), *Developments in French Politics*, London, Macmillan, pp.223-238, forthcoming. The crime statistics quoted here are from official *Interpol* reports and were kindly provided by the Home Office Library; some of the differences between police statistics and the results of crime surveys are discussed in J.J.M. van Dijk, P. Mayhew and M. Killias (eds.), *Experiences of Crime across the World: Key Findings from the 1989 International Crime Survey*, Deventer, Kluwer Law and Taxation Publishers, 1990.

burglary and of stealing cars have risen sharply in numbers. Only one category of offences, drug related crimes, has increased faster than that of theft, which is true throughout the four largest West European countries mentioned above. The increase in the number of frauds has been smaller, in spite of the growth of new forms of fraud with the appearance and wide usage of cheques, credit cards and computing services. Thus, the general trend in the four largest West European states is one of a major increase in the incidence of almost all types of reported crime. The most notable statistics are those of the "rate of crime per 100,000 inhabitants": in Italy, it rose from 456 in 1950 to 2124 in 1983, in Germany it increased from 2,657 in 1950 to 7,074 in 1983, whilst in Britain the figures were 1,209 in 1950 and 6,545 in 1983.

Like most statistics the Interpol crime figures must be treated with considerable caution. On the one hand, accurate international comparisons are difficult because of differences between national definitions of crimes. On the other hand, the statistics show only the number of crimes reported and there is considerable evidence that they under-estimate the number of crimes carried out. It is clear, however, at least for some kind of crimes, that the rate of reporting has changed in recent years. Hence, whilst police records show that the number of burglaries in England and Wales doubled between 1971 and 1985, other reliable social surveys indicate that this growth mainly reflects an increase in reporting these crimes³.

A number of different reasons have been suggested to explain this increase in crime reporting. One is that the provision of telephones in almost every home has made it much easier to report crime. A second reason is that the mass ownership of such consumer goods as stereos,

³ *Social Trends*, 1986, pp.186-7: table 12.4 shows that only half of all burglaries in 1972 were reported, whilst in 1987 this proportion had increased to 80%.

personal computers, televisions and videos means that the value of objects stolen is much greater than in the past and many more people take out insurance on their possessions. In most countries reimbursement by an insurance company after a burglary necessitates an official report of the committed crime by the police. It has also been argued that sexual offences, especially rapes, have increasingly been reported as the social stigmatizing of victims has decreased. In spite of all these reservations about the official statistics, in some categories of crime - drugs offences and thefts of cars are good examples - show indisputable evidence of a massive increase.

Crime statistics, however, whether accurate or not, are often important in influencing the attitudes and actions of both ordinary citizens and political leaders. Debates about improving police effectiveness tend to focus not only on the increasing totals and the changing patterns of reported crimes but also on police "clear-up" rates. In Britain the drop in the clear-up rates from 45% in 1971 to 35% in 1984 was frequently quoted to show the necessity of reforming police methods or of increasing police resources.

No similar statistics about public disorders have been cited, although politicians and police leaders have been increasingly concerned with such problems. Rioting, picketing and hooliganism are intrinsically difficult, if not impossible, to quantify or to compare. When they occur, however, they provoke serious debates about methods of prevention and control. Nonetheless, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not there has been a general European increase in such public disorders during the 1980s.

In England and Wales in the 1980s, five forms of public disorder have preoccupied the police, political elites and public in general. The first was hooliganism, especially in or near football stadiums. The second was domestic and international terrorism, including bomb attacks. A third form

was that of violent political demonstrations, of which the most celebrated were those of the anti-nuclear and animal rights movements. Fourth, there was considerable violence during industrial disputes, notably the 1984-85 miners' strike and the Wapping press dispute. Finally, the 1981 and 1985 urban riots provoked immediate and intense debates about policing, especially because of their location in deprived inner-city areas with large numbers of coloured immigrants and unemployed people.

These rising crime rates and the re-occurrence of large scale public disorders throughout West European democracies may, in part, be explained by the social, economic, technological and ideological changes affecting all these countries. Some of these changes may be classified as external to West European countries, since they mainly relate to international developments, for instance, traffic in drugs and international terrorism. Britain, however, has to deal not only with international terrorist activities, but also with the specific problem of terrorism related to Northern Ireland. Both these developments necessitate costly new specialized police services and new forms of police cooperation at the international level. The drugs trade has also a secondary effect on crime statistics, since addicts often turn to various crimes to pay for their drugs, so that burglaries, theft and prostitution have all increased as a consequence of drug abuse.

Demographic changes within Western Europe have had a great impact on crime and policing. In all major countries there has been a substantial increase in population. The population of France rose from 42,000,000 in 1950 to 54,346,000 in 1983, whilst that of Germany rose from 49,951,541 to 61,420,700 in the same period and the Italian increase was from 46,000,000 to 56,825,453. Britain was no exception to this trend: its population increased from 38,144,000 in 1950 to 49,606,800 in 1983. It would be logical to expect an increase in the total volume of crime proportionate to the population

increase. In practice, however, crime rates, as noted above, have increased much more dramatically.

This trend may partly be explained by the fact that populations have not only grown but also changed in several significant ways. One such change concerns the age structure of society. The proportion of young people in the population rose massively in the 1950s and 1960s; in the 1970s and 1980s, however, the birth rate fell and it was the over 65 year olds who increased in total and relative numbers. The spatial distribution of populations has changed markedly with inter-regional movements, urbanisation and immigration. In France, Germany and Italy inter-regional population movements have been great. In the United Kingdom there has been a notable "drift" to the south-east, although the net effect of inter-regional movements has been much smaller than elsewhere in Western Europe. Nor has Britain known the rapid and large-scale post-war urbanisation of its continental neighbours, although it has witnessed massive changes in the social and economic structures of its cities. They often reflect the decline of Britain's older "smoke stack industries" and the impact of another major demographic change: the arrival of massive numbers of immigrants from the New Commonwealth. Like Britain, France and Germany have both received large numbers of immigrants, whereas until recently Italy was a country of emigration. Inevitably, the prevention and investigation of crimes in a highly mobile and culturally heterogeneous society are much more difficult than in a stable homogeneous society.

A second type of change with major policing implications is that of technological innovation. The appearance of the motor car as a mass consumer good has been one of the biggest sources of problems for West European police forces. Not only are cars relatively easy to steal and to dispose of, but their use has provoked a mass of new legislation defining a

large number of new crimes or offences (including speeding, parking obstruction and drunken driving) which require huge police resources for effective application. Another direct consequence has been the creation of antagonism between many middle class car owners and police officers or traffic wardens. One British writer summed up the effect: "popular support for the police was undermined by the task of enforcing unpopular laws against a section of the community which was basically law-abiding and would never consider themselves as criminals in the true sense"⁴.

Like their continental counterparts, the police forces of England and Wales were expected to meet all the challenges, new and old, of crime, disorder and terrorism in the 1980s. In Britain, however, politicians, journalists, academics and interest-group leaders alike insisted on the ideal of securing active public support for, and trust in, police officers and their work. Right across the political spectrum and at all levels in society, there have been calls for a return to the traditional model of "policing by consent".

This thesis concerns both the theory and practice of policing. It has two major objectives. The first is to analyse this idea of "policing by consent" and its use and abuse in debates about, and reforms of, police structures, methods and powers in Britain since 1979. The second is to examine how the officers of one provincial police force implemented and responded to the reforms decided nationally. The importance and originality of this thesis lies in its contribution to explaining the non-coincidence of the aims and preoccupations of the national policy makers and those of many police officers responsible for implementing the reforms on the ground. The aim is to complement existing studies of public opinion about police work and surveys of police attitudes in problem areas by studying how police officers

⁴ M.S. Pike, *The Principles of Policing*, London, Macmillan, 1985, p.19.

in a non-crisis area, a typical rural county, react to and interpret both the recent reforms and the discourse about "policing by consent".

The starting point of this study is an examination of the meaning of "policing by consent". The first questions addressed by this thesis concern this concept, and the answers reveal its ambiguous, multi-faceted nature. One simple example of this ambiguity is the notion of police "accountability", which is widely recognised as an essential element for public consent to exist⁵. On the one hand, police forces should, in theory, be neutral; they should not be accountable to party or partisan majorities. On the other hand, they should not be totally autonomous, and some form of democratic supervision by both national and local governments is necessary. Furthermore, for many Labour politicians the idea of increasing accountability meant improving *local* supervision whilst for Conservatives better accountability implied greater central government *financial* control of police forces. In short, a common discourse about consent may disguise very different meanings, values and goals.

A second central theme of this study is the increasing centralisation inherent in the recent reforms. Most of the reforms since 1979 involved the imposition on the country as a whole of measures designed to meet certain specific local problems - and notably those of the hostility between trade unionists and police and between ethnic communities and police in inner-city areas. Most county police forces, like the one studied in this research, have no major problems either with inner city areas or with ethnic communities. Most have little need for specially trained riot police, except to "lend" them to their metropolitan neighbours. Whilst other reforms, especially those about police powers, civil liberties and improving

⁵ J. Baxter & L. Koffman, *Police, the Constitution and the Community*, Oxford, Professional Books, 1985; see also: L. Lustgarten, *The Governance of Police*, London, Sweet and Maxwell, 1986.

efficiency, applied to the entire country, the underlying problems were greatest in metropolitan areas. This misfit between many of the nationally imposed policies and local needs and goals, between the political goals of policy makers and the every-day pre-occupations of local professional police officers may help to explain the real difficulty in improving relations between the police and the public in many non-metropolitan areas of Britain, despite the considerable efforts made. Thus by clarifying the nature of these problems of local implementation of centrally decided reforms, this thesis contributes to academic debates about the politics of public order, crime and civil liberties which has been waging in Britain over the last decade.

In these debates the many actors involved have taken a variety of approaches and focused on several different aspects of the problems. Before the late 1970s there had been some political discussion of police problems since the implementation of the 1964 Police Act and the minor structural changes arising from the 1972 reform of local government. In the later years of the 1974 to 1979 Labour Government, however, several aspects of police behaviour and organisation were increasingly the subject of political and academic debates.

The first concerned police salaries and conditions. This item was placed on the political agenda by the public relations campaigns of the Police Federation (the official representative organisation of all officers below the rank of superintendent) and the activities of its spokesman and sympathisers in Parliament and the media. In response the Government set up an official inquiry, the Royal Commission on conditions of service in the police. The result, the Edmund Davies Report⁶, considered both the

⁶ *Committee of Inquiry on the Police, Report I and II*, Cmnd 7283, London, HMSO, 1978.

entire system for negotiations over police salaries and conditions of employment and the levels of pay appropriate for 1979.

Whilst this report was produced in reaction to demands coming from within the police service, two subsequent official reports were drafted in response to criticisms about the police from the public. The first, the Scarman Report⁷, was the fruit of the official inquiry conducted by Lord Scarman into the origins of the 1981 Brixton riots. Criticisms against the police for racism, brutality and loss of the confidence of the public had become increasingly frequent in newspapers and on radio and television since the death of Blair Peach in police custody in 1979 and the riot in Bristol in 1980. Publication of the Scarman Report did not, however, close the debate; rather it inspired many new research projects.

One line of inquiry focused on public opinion. Many polling organisations (often paid by newspapers), academic sociologists and even a number of official bodies set out to investigate the precise extent of public dissatisfaction, the particular groups concerned and the variations over time. Both the Home Office, by means of its own Research and Planning Unit, and the Metropolitan Police, by its commission of a major study of the police and people in London from the Policy Studies Institute contributed to this process of measuring the scale of the problem of public distrust. In 1988 a rather different kind of study was commissioned by the Metropolitan Police from the specialist corporate-image consultants Wolff Olins, and its 1989 report provoked the adoption of the "Plus programme"

⁷ Lord Scarman, *The Scarman Report: the Brixton Disorders*, 10-12 April 1981, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1981.

specifically to win public support⁸. Paradoxically, the publication of the results of these investigations, by repeatedly focussing attention on the problem may have encouraged yet further distrust.

A second approach concerned the definition and exercise of police powers. Indeed, the second official report, that of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, which appeared in 1981 focused on this subject. This inquiry had been instigated as a response to strong but contradictory demands: from police organisations for greater powers to fight crime, and from civil liberties groups for tighter controls on police actions, especially in the application of the "sus law"⁹. Once again the official report not only provided answers but also provoked new questions. Civil liberties groups, including the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL), judges and barristers, academic lawyers and criminologists, the Home Office Research and Planning Unit and the specialist services of local authorities, notably the Police Monitoring Unit of the Greater London Council, all volunteered their knowledge, views and arguments about the re-definition of police powers. New discussions of these issues were provoked by each major police scandal revealed by the media, which meant that in the 1980s rarely a year passed without the debates being re-opened.

A third line of research was that of public-order policing techniques. Once again contributions were made by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, academics, local governments and police authorities. The Greater Manchester Police Authority even set up its own committee of

⁸ D.J. Smith *et.al.*, *Police and People In London*, 4 vols., London, Policy Studies Institute, 1983; on the Wolff Olins study, see *The Economist*, 10-16 February 1990, pp.27-28.

⁹ R. Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, Harvest Press, Brighton, 1985, p.167; *Report of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure*, Cmnd 8092, London, HMSO, 1981.

inquiry into the 1981 Moss Side riots¹⁰. Whilst some wished to draw conclusions from Northern Ireland or the United States about more effective militaristic riot techniques - the "conflict model" of policing - others pointed out that more coercive and confrontational policing would not reinforce public confidence in the British police, but rather undermine it. The 1984 miners' strike and the News International dispute at Wapping in 1986 re-launched these debates¹¹.

A very different focus of research and debate was that of the methods and devices suitable for restoring public confidence in the police at the local level by developing closer contacts between local police officers and their communities. Particular attention was focused on community policing projects including crime prevention panels, local television and radio programmes, school liaison officers, neighbourhood watch schemes and attempts to reintroduce "the bobby on the beat"¹². Many researchers, often sponsored or encouraged by police forces, attempted to assess whether such initiatives were effective either to fight crime or to restore public confidence in policing.

Inevitably, much "in-house" police and Home Office research was entirely concerned with improving intelligence and detection methods and equipment. The application of computers to criminal investigation was in its infancy in Britain before the 1980s, and the research and debates of that decade were to have a major impact on police spending and training,

¹⁰ P. Scraton, *The State of the Police*, Pluto Press, London 1985, p.84.

¹¹ J. Shapland & J. Vagg, *Policing by the Public*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988.

¹² For a recent discussion of most of these projects and their results, see: R. Morgan and D.J. Smith (eds.), *Coming to terms with policing: Perspectives on policy*, London, Routledge, 1989.

increasing both. The accuracy and admissibility of tape recorded and videoed evidence were widely discussed. Cooperation between the police and other local services, often referred to as the "multi-agency approach", was another innovation to improve effectiveness which inspired research and debate. One approach to assessing effectiveness was to make an area crime survey over a specific time period; the 1986 and 1989 Islington Crime Surveys were succesful examples of this type of study¹³.

Last, but not least, there has been a wide-ranging debate and much research about improving the efficiency of police methods, structures and equipment. The adoption of this managerial perspective was greatly stimulated by the Conservative Government's Financial Management Initiative (FMI) and the 1983 Home Office circular to police authorities and chief police officers imposing FMI principles on the police service¹⁴. Whilst academic researchers have contributed to this attempt to apply management science techniques to policing, much of the work has been done by police agencies or other official bodies. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, individual local police forces, the Audit Office for Local

¹³ T. Jones, B. Maclean, and J. Young, *The Islington Crime Survey*, Aldershot, Gower, 1986; A. Crawford, T. Jones, T. Woodhouse and J. Young, *The Second Islington Crime Survey*, London, Middlesex Polytechnic Centre for Criminology, 1989.

¹⁴ On the application of the FMI to the police, see: C. Horton & D. Smith, *Evaluating Police Work*, London, PSI, 1988, p.243; on the FMI itself, see *Financial Management in Government Departments*, Cmnd 9053, London, HMSO, 1983, and *Progress in Financial Management in Government Departments*, Cmnd 9297, London, HMSO, 1984; the basic idea was to improve "economy, efficiency and effectiveness" by reorganising services into "cost centres" so that senior civil servants should operate as managers with clearly defined responsibilities, objectives and "performance indicators" by which their results could be judged. High productivity was to be rewarded by merit payments in the form of performance bonuses. See also: National Audit Office, *The Financial Management Initiative*, London, HMSO, 1987.

Authorities, and the Police Requirements Support Unit at the Home Office have all been drawn into discussions over such thorny questions as the setting of precise objectives for individual police units and the definition of performance evaluation criteria for policing in general. Schemes to improve both public relations and investigative techniques, hitherto discussed mainly in terms of effectiveness, have been re-assessed in terms of cost-effectiveness.

In many of these debates the primary concerns have been with the output and productivity of the police as "producers" or with the satisfaction of the "consumers" - the government, local governments, ethnic communities, trade unions or the general public. Here our focus on "policing by consent" reveals some of the perceptions of the producers of the conflicts of goals. It demonstrates that the police are unlikely to produce consistent results if they perceive inconsistent objectives. The very ambiguity of the concept of "policing by consent" has confused rather than clarified police perceptions of their objectives.

This thesis is original in complementing these existing studies both by analysing the significance of the concept of "policing by consent" in national policy making and in examining its relevance to local policy implementation. The first section of the thesis concerns the national drafting of reforms affecting the work of the police forces. It examines the views of policing by consent held by different policial parties, academics and journalist, as well as those of police professional organisations. It considers the ways in which these groups participated in the political and administrative processes of making new laws and rules affecting police functions and powers. The focus here is on the interpretation of policing by consent within British police forces, and the influence of this interpretation on the ways in which the police contributed to the determination of their own role. This discussion is limited to reforms affecting the police forces of

England and Wales. The exclusion of those of Scotland and Northern Ireland is justified by the differences in the problems and in the governmental and legal structures of those two parts of the United Kingdom.

The first chapter of this section examines the concept of "policing by consent" and its links with other elements in British democratic theory. It reveals that whilst most theorists recognised a common core of features essential for public consent of policing to exist, there is little consensus about the relative importance of these different features. It shows that the requirements for creating or re-establishing consensual policing differ from those needed for its maintenance when it already exists. Finally, this discussion underlines the inherent contradiction of governmental goals during the 1980s. The objectives of radically transforming society precipitate conflict and public demonstrations, whilst those of increasing social harmony and respect for the rule of law recognise and encourage socio-political consensus. The former requires coercive policing; the latter permits public consent for policing.

The second chapter of this section considers the origins of the concept of "policing by consent" in the historical evolution of the British police system since the creation of the first professional police force in London in 1829. Three aspects of this process of historical development emerge as of central importance. The first is that the earliest professional police structures were themselves influenced by traditional views that communities should police themselves and by liberal reactions to the image in Britain of the despotic police systems created on the continent, notably by Napoleon. The second is that much of British police history has been singularly unconsensual: the periods of widespread public esteem for the police have been shorter and less numerous than many writers imply. Finally, it emerges that the local identities and community linkages of

police forces had been undermined or at least significantly weakened long before the Thatcher Government was elected in 1979.

The third chapter analyses the problems and political pressures which led to the drafting of major reforms during the 1980s. Here, particular attention is paid to both the discussion of devices intended to increase public confidence in and support for the police and the contributions to the debates from professional police sources. Considering the police as a profession involves paying particular attention to three different aspects of professional organisation. The first is the official hierarchy. Like all public services, the police has a pyramidal structure but the discipline and control exercised by supervisors over their subordinates in that pyramid are more like those in the army than those in education or social security. Each of the police forces has a chief constable (or a commissioner in the London police forces) and these chief police officers represent the apex of the official professional hierarchy and wield considerable power. There is a second aspect of professional organisation, that of internal inspection and research by policemen of police work. The British police service like other professions has its own specialised agencies for maintaining and improving standards and methods. Finally, there are the representative organisations of all police officers, the Police Federation, the Superintendents' Association and the Association of Chief Police Officers. All represent the views of their members about many aspects of professional activity, in addition to their "trade-union" concerns of wages and conditions. In examining the attitudes and behaviour of the British police, it is important to distinguish these three types of professional organisations and to examine the degree of consensus or disagreement between them.

Police organisations represent only a fraction of the actors in a complex public-policy process and this study does not ignore the participation of the other actors. On the contrary, one objective is to assess

the relative significance of police views compared with those of other bodies. This thesis examines the contributions to the debates about the problems of policing and the proposals for reforms made by political parties, newspapers, television and radio, academic researchers, judges, pressure groups, as well as from the police themselves. It examines the decisions taken by governments to change the laws and rules which set the framework of policing. It also assesses the relative influence of police views over the choices taken by the political executive.

The implementation of these reforms in one non-metropolitan police area, that of Sussex, is the subject of the second section of this thesis. Here the goal is to analyse the impact of police officers' views of "policing by consent" on the changing nature of their own work and to examine the practical execution of the new policies and the problems faced by the officers in carrying out their work and the reforms in that area. Each of the three chapters concerns a different aspect of the implementation process: the institutional and organisational changes, the attitudes and behaviour of police officers of all ranks towards those reforms and the problems of policemen of working in and with the community.

This choice of the Sussex Police Force reflects the wish to complement rather than duplicate the studies which have already been carried out in the Metropolitan Police District and other major urban areas. One objective was to focus on an area where the problems of policing are not exacerbated by partisan political confrontation between Labour dominated police authorities (or Labour-run London boroughs) and the central Conservative Government. Equally, an area without major problems of seriously impoverished inner city areas or hostile ethnic communities was sought. The forces of Kent, Essex and Sussex were chosen as potentially suitable for such a case-study and the Deputy Chief Constable and Police Authority of

Sussex, the first approached, generously accepted to authorise and facilitate this research.

Table 1: The 11 medium county police forces¹⁵.

	Total police no.	Population	Population per officer	Size in hectares	Hectares per officer
Avon and Somerset	3,039	1,404,000	460	479,708	157
Devon and Cornwall	2,860	1,463,000	518	1,027,516	363
Essex	2,815	1,453,000	526	359,207	130
Hampshire	3,136	1,664,000	532	415,765	133
Kent	3,012	1,511,000	514	373,060	127
Lancashire	3,232	1,381,000	437	306,346	97
Nottinghamshire	2,319	1,008,000	439	216,365	94
Staffordshire	2,179	1,027,000	474	271,615	125
Sussex	2,941	1,398,000	478	378,448	129
Thames Valley	3,617	1,940,000	543	574,956	161
South Wales	3,169	1,297,000	417	225,121	72

The results of this case study, whilst of considerable interest in analysing the wider political problems of policing reforms, cannot be taken as representative of those which might be found in all the police areas in England and Wales. The value of these results reflects both the nature of the case chosen and the overall approach of the study as described below. In many respects the Sussex Police Force is, however, highly typical of the

¹⁵ Statistics from: Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary, *Annual Report*, London, HMSO, 1988.

many non-urban forces in prosperous, rural and southern counties of England and Wales.

The Sussex Police is in practice very similar to the 10 other middle-range police forces (listed in Table 1) which together serve a population of almost 15.5 million people, nearly one third of the population of England and Wales. This police organisation cannot be compared with either of its close neighbours serving the Greater London area. The Metropolitan Police Force, by far the biggest in Britain, numbers 26,900 officers, ten times as many as the Sussex Police Force, whilst the City of London police with only 788 officers in the "square mile" is the smallest British police force in numbers of men and area. Nor is the Sussex police force very similar to those serving the other big metropolitan areas. Table 2 below shows that these metropolitan police forces have a high density of police officers for the population and areas they serve. The comparison of tables 1 and 2 shows the very real differences between two types of police force.

Table 2: The big metropolitan police forces.

	Total police no.	Population	Population per officer	Size in hectare	Hectare per officer
Gr. Manchester	6,949	21,580,000	372	128,674	19
W. Midlands	6,889	2,624,000	389	89,943	13
W. Yorkshire	5,292	2,052,000	393	203,912	39
Merseyside	4,764	1,457,000	311	65,202	14
Northumbria	3,521	1,437,000	413	557,171	160
S. Yorkshire	2,995	1,296,000	439	156,049	53

*the areas of the Northumbria Police Force is exceptional in serving both the densely populated Tyne and Wear agglomeration and rural Northumberland.

The 2,941 officers of the Sussex Police serve the two administrative counties of East and West Sussex, which together had a population, in 1986, of 1.37 million people over an area of 378,000 hectares (see Map 1, below). The police force is the only joint public service covering the two administrative counties of East and West Sussex. The total police area has a very mixed population. In the North are Crawley and Gatwick (where Britain's second busiest airport is located) which form the fringes of the Greater London agglomeration. South is a rich rural area sprinkled with small towns. The high population of this area reflects the fact that it has more commuters than farmers (see Map 1 below), and this commuting population is served by a massive network of roads and railways radiating out from the capital. On the south coast of the area are the biggest towns, ports and holiday resorts. Only the Brighton-Hove conurbation, with 232,300 inhabitants (1988), a university, a polytechnic, a major conference centre and a number of light industries, can be described as a big town. Other south coast towns include Hastings (81,900), Eastbourne (80,400), Worthing (97,400), where the tourist industry is important. The small port of Newhaven also deals with a considerable cross-Channel traffic.

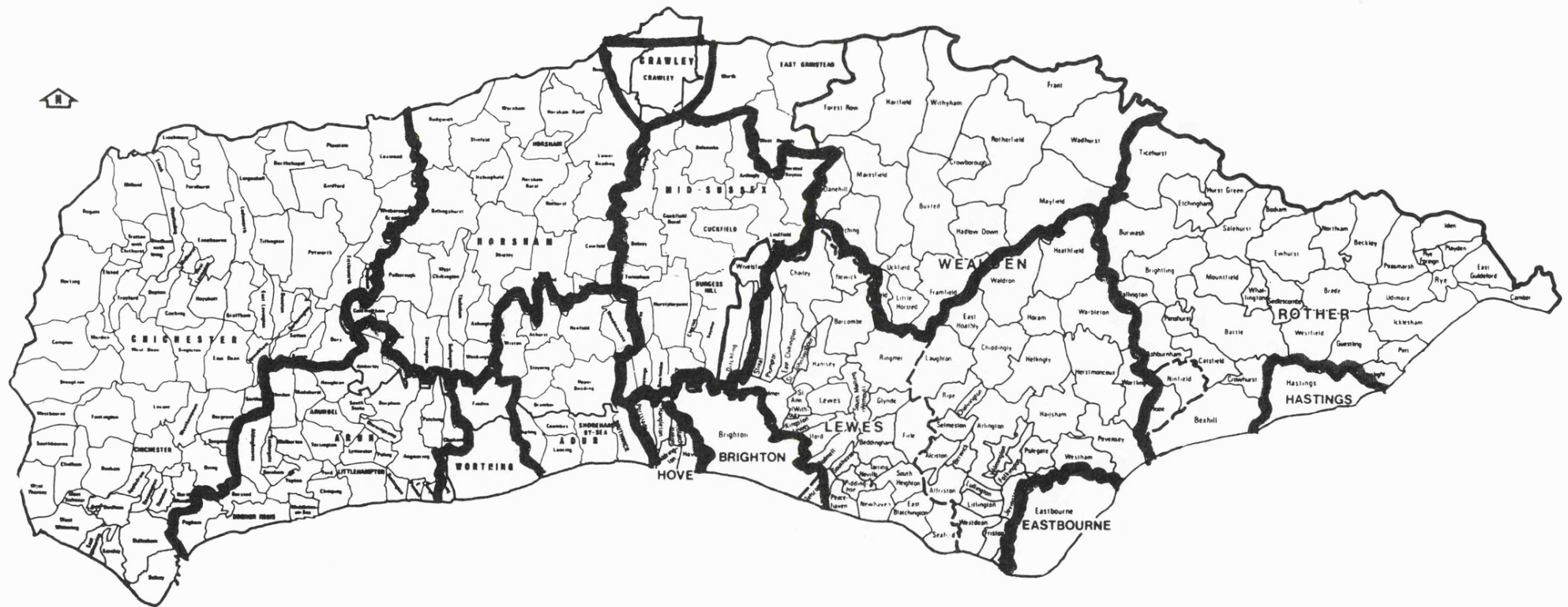
Every summer both counties experience a massive tourist influx including Channel Ferry travellers, day trippers, language students from the Continent, and more traditional sea-side holiday makers. The Sussex Police Force does not, however, have to face the problems of impoverished inner city working-class and immigrant counties (except marginally in Crawley or Brighton). The socio-economic structures of East and West Sussex are typical of the prosperous areas of the south-east surrounding

London rather than those of London itself or of other industrial and highly urbanised regions¹⁶.

The political composition of the two counties, which largely reflects the socio-economic conditions of the voters, makes this police area interesting for study. Its parliamentary representation has been dominated by the Conservative Party throughout the period 1979 - 1989. So too have the two county councils, and, as a consequence, the police authority. The two main urban district councils, however, have a Labour majority. Crawley had a Labour majority throughout the 1979 - 89 period, but Brighton was won by Labour in 1986. Most other district councils were in the hands of the Conservatives. In many ways, this area could be described as typical of the heartlands of Conservatism in the 1980s.

The two sections of this thesis rely on different kinds of data obtained from very different sources. The first section relies mainly on secondary sources - newspapers, books, articles, official reports and doctoral theses - but adopts an original perspective. The second section, however, draws on primary sources, first internal documents of the Sussex Police Force, the Police Authority and the Brighton Police Consultative Group and on the notes of fieldwork observation in three Sussex police stations (Brighton, Chichester and Crawley) and on patrol in cars and on the beat with officers of those stations. It is also based on the written records of 196 interviews based on an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix 1) carried out between February and July 1989. The sample represented approximately 6% of the total personnel of the Sussex Police Force and the strengths of the different ranks were represented almost exactly proportionately in the sample.

¹⁶ Tourist information brochures from Sussex Police Force.



This case study highlights both the intrinsic standardisation and centralisation of the reforms of the 1980s and the contradictions between their avowed goals and prescribed methods and the views and beliefs of the men entrusted with their implementation. It shows that many aspects of these reforms were in fact irrelevant to the circumstances of a county like Sussex.

High salaries and ever increasing spending on costly new technologies and the training needed to operate them have meant an escalating police bill, and although central government has not imposed cash limits on its grants to the local police authorities its exhortations to them to improve efficiency have become increasingly insistent with each new Home Office circular. This in turn has led to a management revolution within each police force. Hence, whilst government ministers, police leaders, local political leaders and journalists alike have repeatedly called for a return to "policing by consent" reforms to that end have only been part of the total package - and not the most important part.

SECTION 1

**Policies to restore "policing by consent" in
the 1980s.**

Chapter 2: Police, politics and "policing by consent" in Britain.

This chapter examines the concepts of "police" and "policing by consent" and their place in British democratic theory. It reveals that the definition of "police" varies between different countries, but there exists a core notion - of State powers and professional organisations for the maintenance of order, for the prevention and detection of crime and for the enforcement of the law. It shows that most theorists recognise that public acceptance of policing is essential in all liberal democracies and admit that certain preconditions are required. Many British theorists argue that mere acceptance is insufficient; active public support, or "consent", is the standard that they set for their home-land. But if there is some consensus about the theoretical merit of attaining this standard, there is no agreement as to what is required to do so. Several different features necessary for this ideal of popular or consensual policing are identified by different theorists, but their relative importance is disputed. In addition, the requirements for creating or re-establishing such consensual policing differ from those needed for its maintenance when it already exists. Finally, this chapter shows the inherent contradiction between the objective of radically transforming society, which precipitates conflicts and public protests and requires coercive policing, and that of re-establishing public consent for policing which depends on social harmony, respect for the rule of law and a wide measure of socio-political consensus.

The police in the political system

Who or what is "the police" in the modern liberal democratic State? Dr. Johnson asserted that the word "police" entered the English language from French and in the 18th century had been generally used to refer to the royal force which maintained law and order in France¹. In fact, the meaning of "police" in 18th century France was underestimated by Dr. Johnson. "Police" was virtually synonymous with "government"; "In its original, global meaning, police was intrinsically linked with the definition of the role of the State and covered not only public law but also private law or even welfare and property rights"². During the 19th century, however, French usage of the term evolved considerably; police no longer referred to the whole domain of State action but only to the maintenance of public order. By contemporary British standards, however, the concept was still very broad: it involved "judicial police" (the control of public disorders, the investigation of crimes and arrest of suspects), but also "administrative police", which covered the preventive and surveillance measures necessary for public order, the security of individuals and property and public health. "Police" denoted both certain types of powers and the officials who exercised those powers³.

The gradual limitation in French usage of the meaning of "police" is typical of a general evolution and clarification of the functions and powers of institutions in most modern liberal democratic states. In Britain, as in

¹ B. Chapman, *Police State*, London, Macmillan, 1970, p.11.

² translated from: Jacqueline Gatti-Montain, "La notion de police dans l'oeuvre de Maurice Hauriou", in C. Journe (ed.), *Police et Politique*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1988, p.40.

³ *Ibidem*, pp.35-47.

other West European states, police functions and powers were slowly distinguished from those of other public officials, and police officers became identified, and identified themselves, as a distinct service of the State. The domaine of policing is now recognised as being distinct from - but overlapping - the competences of other branches of the State, and notably of the political executive, the judiciary, the army and the civil service. The locations of the precise boundaries between these arms of government are difficult to establish and may vary from time to time and from country to country. One example of such differences between countries is that police officers check passports in France, but in Britain this task is performed by civil servants. An example of changes over time is that of the transfer in 1986 of the responsibility for prosecuting from the British police to the new Crown Prosecution Service. The difficulty of determining such boundaries does not mean that the central characteristics of each branch of the State cannot be identified.

The core functions of policemen and police forces are the prevention and investigation of crimes and the maintenance of public order, and the most distinctive power of police officers is that of using coercive force against the State's own citizens in normal peacetime. Police officers are delegated, by the political authorities, and on behalf of society, the legal right to employ physical coercion: within their territorial competence, they can arrest anyone suspected of committing a crime, and restrain anyone attempting to disrupt public order. For Carl Klockar this power of employing physical force is the essential characteristic of the police: "Police are institutions or individuals given the general right to use coercive force by the State within the State's domestic territory"⁴. David Bailey also underlines this idea: "Police exists whenever the application of physical

⁴ C. B. Klockar, *The Idea of Police*, Law and Criminal Justice Series V3, London, Sage, 1985, p.10.

constraint can be shown to be regarded as legitimate by the community⁵. The British concept of police, then, is of a specialized agency for the enforcement of law and maintenance of order, with the legal right to use coercive force when necessary.

No country, however, even in theory, gives its police forces a monopoly of the right to use coercive force on behalf of the State. The armed forces also exist to employ force, if necessary, but primarily for the defence of the State against external enemies. Nonetheless, soldiers may be called upon in emergencies to assist the police in dealing with domestic disorders, as in Northern Ireland. The theoretical distinction between the police and the army is thus not easy to establish. In practice in some States there is deliberate overlapping of their roles: in France the *Gendarmerie* provides the police force for rural areas and part of the riot police, but it is also part of the army and, as such, answerable to the Ministry of Defence⁶. The position of the *Carabinieri* is similar in Italy. So, too, in Britain, before the creation of the first professional police forces, the troops were frequently called out to control demonstrations and stop riots. Furthermore, in most countries, the armed forces act with the police as ultimate emergency services to deal with natural disasters and to maintain essential public services when necessary.

There are a number of other specialised public services whose agents may be empowered to use specific kinds of coercive force in the

⁵ D. Bailey, *Pattern Of Policing: A comparative International Analysis*, New York, Rutgers, 1985, p.9.

⁶ In peacetime the policing units of French *Gendarmerie*, whilst remaining part of the armed forces and under the ultimate control of the Minister of Defence, are placed "at the disposal" of the Minister of the Interior and his local subordinates, the Prefects (who have the thankless task of attempting to coordinate the operations of the rival police forces in each *département*).

performance of their duties. Traffic wardens may remove or clamp cars. Customs officers may detain and search members of the public and their belongings at a country's borders or airports. Prison wardens, as agents of the courts of law, are empowered to use force to hold prisoners in custody. Whilst the police service is not the only public agency with the legal right to use coercive force, it is nonetheless the principal and most extensive. It is also called upon to assist or support the others⁷.

This responsibility for law and order does not imply that a police force should be directly responsible for the application of all laws within its territorial area of competence; indeed, there are many specialist public services responsible for the execution of government policies in different sectors. Nonetheless, police officers are expected to play an emergency and residuary role when other public services fail. For Roger Vertheimer this role is an important characteristic of police forces: "What distinguishes the police is that they are a utility service doing whatever is left undone by other specialised institutions"⁸. Thus policing involves police officers in dealing with major crises, operating as emergency services, and intervening when "something-ought-not-to-be-happening and about which something-ought-to-be-done-now", as Bittner succinctly defines it⁹. Whilst the core functions of the police are to deal with crime and disorder, the peripheral or residuary tasks of policemen are many and varied, and inevitably overlap with the responsibilities of others.

⁷ C. Shearing and J.S. Leon, "Reconsidering the police role: A Challenge to a Popular Misconception", *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Corrections*, 1976, pp.348-364.

⁸ Quoted in: D.Bradley, N. Walker and R. Wilkie, *Managing the Police*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986, p.25.

⁹ E. Bittner, "Florence Nightingale in Pursuit of Willie Sutton: A Theory of Police", in H.Jacob (ed.), *The Potential for Reform of Criminal Justice*, Beverley Hills, Sage, 1974, pp.17-44.

Within the services of the State responsible for law and order, the most complex relationship is that between the police and the judicial authorities. The courts are concerned with the interpretation of the law and the administration of justice. Judges have a duty to protect the innocent as well as to punish the guilty. A criminal investigation by the police may result in an accusation, but a trial is needed before the accused is judged guilty and punishment decided and executed. The courts have a special responsibility for ensuring that the police do not exceed their powers. Certain police actions, such as home searches, can be executed only when specifically authorised by a magistrate. The courts have an important role of supervising many aspects of the work of the police. Although, in practice, the boundaries between police and judicial powers may be drawn very differently in very different states, one of the essential roles of the judicial power is to ensure that the police system operates within the law.

Ultimately, all public services of the State are under the responsibility of political authority. It makes the law which the police officers must apply, and the rules by which they may operate. The political authority, by taxation and budgeting, provides the resources - men and equipment - for the police forces. The nature of the political authority may vary considerably from place to place; it may be unitary, or decentralised, or federal; it may be authoritarian and undemocratic or liberal and democratic. Here, however, we examine only the political problems of police in modern liberal democracies since they are distinct from those of other systems because the police forces are required to minimise the use of force and to operate with some degree of public acceptability.

Common political problems of policing liberal democracies

Where and how does "the police" fit in modern liberal democratic structures? In theory, the legitimacy of the role of the police is derived from the idea of the "rule of law". The law represents the will of the parliamentary majority (and even, under some electoral systems, a majority of voters) but also respects minority and individual rights. Hence, citizens should obey the law, and the police is the service which should act, if necessary using force, to ensure that the law is obeyed, subject to the control of the courts. In this context, as Wenninger and Clark argue, the police are an *instrumental* agency of social control on behalf of the government, and a *symbolic* agency of social control representing established values¹⁰. It is public acceptance that legitimizes the actions of the police. As Bailey puts it: "The power of the police to act in the name of the community implies approval of its members"¹¹. However this approval does not mean the total acceptance of every police action by all the people at all times.

Liberal democratic theory recognises social diversity and political divisions as normal and healthy¹². Hence, if the law is made by a political authority which represents an electoral majority, neither the law nor the political authority will have unanimous or permanent support within the electorate. Some kind of "opposition" is both inevitable and functional. The distinctive feature of liberal democracy is that those in opposition can challenge any law "within the law". They may do that either by convincing

¹⁰ J. Wenninger & C. Clark, "A Theoretical Orientation for Police Studies" in M. W. Klein (ed.), *Juvenile Gangs in Context*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1967, pp.161-72.

¹¹ D. Bailey, *op. cit.*, p.19.

¹² See: G. Marshall, *Police and Government*, London, Methuen, 1965; G. Marshall, *Constitutional Convention: The Rules and Forms of Political Accountability*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1984.

the majority within the established institutional framework - normally parliament - to change its mind, or by campaigning in the country so as to change the political majority at the next election and thereafter to modify the law.

Even in liberal democracy, political representation almost invariably involves some distortion of the views of the majority of voters by their elected rulers. Disciplined two-party systems clarify the choices of personalities and policy packages on offer to the voters, but also narrowly restrict that choice. Hence, the electoral majority may obtain the rulers it wants, but voters cannot pick and choose between the many and varied policy proposals put forward in any electoral programme. Furthermore, the electoral system itself may be distorting: a party may win a majority in parliament in Britain, or the presidency in France, simply by being the least unpopular of those contesting the election. In multi-party systems with unstable coalitions (as in Italy), or undisciplined two party systems (as in the USA), the relationship between electoral majorities and specific policy outputs is often even more tenuous. Most types of liberal democratic institutions produce some laws which are disliked by majorities of voters even at the time of their adoption. Thus, the recognised legitimacy of a government to govern and to make laws does not necessarily imply the recognized legitimacy of all the laws it makes.

Amongst the basic rules of liberal democracy are the limitation of mandates of elected officials, and the freedoms of association and of speech. The first means that every president, prime minister, government and parliamentary majority must be constantly aware that he or she (or it) is going to be held responsible for his policies by the electorate in the very near future, and that the electorate will have the chance to replace him. The second implies that any individual or group can debate issues without constraint, and form organisations, interest groups or associations, to

further common interests, to protect members' rights and to campaign for more general political changes.

Whilst liberal democracy provides such institutional opportunities for political and social opposition, it is possible that aggrieved individuals or groups may still attempt to challenge the law, or the political authority which made it, by illegal means, such as unauthorized public demonstrations, blockades, pickets, and civil disobedience. However well-intentioned the perpetrators of such challenges, these methods are forms of law-breaking and place such opponents outside the law. The police may have to take action against all law-breakers to preserve liberal democracy itself.

The liberal democratic legitimacy of the police is related to its role in serving and protecting the political executive and in maintaining public order and respect for the law, whilst avoiding, as much as possible, any kind of partisan bias. If ideally the police should serve the State and its laws in a politically neutral way, police officers have nonetheless constantly to recognise that the government and majority of the day are members of parties and use State powers and enact laws for partisan ends. Public approval for the work of the police forces will inevitably depend in part on the political acceptability of the laws and policies of the government of the day. In this sense, as Reiner has pointed out, policing is always political and often partisan¹³.

This analysis, however, throws light on only one element of the complex problems faced by police leaders and politicians in creating and maintaining the social legitimacy of the police in modern, rapidly changing democracies. In liberal democratic practice, the legitimacy of the police,

¹³ R. Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1985, pp.1-5.

amongst both elites and masses, depends on its methods and its success. There are no absolute standards for judging either success or the acceptability of particular methods. There is widespread consensus that "the police must be successful", but little agreement about the meaning of success. Low crime rates and the absence of public disorder do not necessarily prove that a police force is successful. They could reflect either the failure of the police to record crimes or the brutality of a fiercely repressive police which terrorises or even liquidates criminals and subversive elements. The judicial system, the nature of punishments and social and economic factors, over which the police has little direct influence, are often of paramount importance in determining crime rates. One simple indicator of success is the "clear-up-rate", that is the proportion of recorded crimes solved by the police, but this "clear-up-rate" too is subject to the same caveats as basic crime rates¹⁴.

Success and acceptability are, therefore, closely linked, and both are largely evaluated according to the moral standards and values of specific societies at particular historic dates. As Bailey underlines: "Judging police performances, is by itself, a controversial multivariate process, elements of which change from place to place and time to time". But, as Bailey also points out: "The plain fact is that relying on what the police are currently doing to protect society is a matter of faith not science". He adds: "Continued use of reported crime figures and clearance rates as indicators of police utility is a fraud on a gullible public". He concludes, "judgements about police effectiveness will continue to be based more on police salesmanship than on demonstrated connections between police activity and public safety"¹⁵.

¹⁴ On the dubious value of clear-up rates in Britain, see: *The Economist*, 10-16 February 1990, p.34.

¹⁵ D. Bailey, *op. cit.*, p.17-20.

There is the problem of inaccurate perceptions by the public. It is conceivable that a police force could be successful by the standards of the time and place but that its success be unrecognized. Hence a police force must not only be successful but be seen to be successful. In modern societies, the media often play a very influential role in forming and modifying public images of the police.

In most places and at most times the acceptability and success of the police depend on pragmatic solutions to five dilemmas, set within the context of prevailing moral values. The first concerns the resources given to policing. The police must be provided with the necessary powers and means which are socially and politically acceptable. Indeed, as the police is the major agency authorized to employ coercive force in a large number of circumstances, some limit must be placed on this power. The role of the political and judicial authorities, as noted above, is to guarantee that sufficient limits are set to ensure that police officers apply and respect laws and rules of police procedures, which protect individuals and groups from abuse and repression. The nature of force employed by policemen must be socially acceptable: the widespread use of guns is one example of a kind of force which is not universally acceptable. Another example is the extent to which physical force may be employed to carry out arrests or to control violent demonstrators. The limits legally imposed on police powers and methods may not be sufficient to meet the expectations of society. Alternatively, these limits may have social legitimacy, but prevent police forces from being effective. Hence acceptability might preclude success or conversely success might be achieved at an unacceptable price.

The second dilemma is that of the adequacy of the resources given to the police forces relative to the demand placed upon them. The government must supply the necessary resources for maintaining the law

and public order, powers, men, money and equipment, all of which must be paid for out of tax revenues which are limited and finance other public services. Policing competes with public services such as education, health, defence and welfare for financial resources which are always limited. Increased spending on the police may have often less immediate electoral appeal than building new hospitals or schools or increasing pensions. It is, however, possible that at times of rising crime rates or falling police recruitment increasing public expenditure on policing will be popular. As society and technology evolve rapidly, there are sometimes delays before police forces receive the resources to meet new challenges or deploy the new equipment. The effectiveness of police forces depends largely on the supply of resources which is decided by the political authorities who face great "opportunity costs", and resources are very often distributed according to their anticipated political impact¹⁶.

The third dilemma concerns the level of efficiency of the police forces. Efficiency involves two aspects of professionalism. One is organisation: whether or not the structures of police forces are appropriate for both the tasks and the technology of the time. To face the challenges of an increasingly complex and technological society, more sophisticated and specialized police services are constantly needed. A second aspect of professionalism, closely linked to the first, is personnel, expertise and management. Success depends on police forces recruiting, training, re-training and managing the careers of the right kinds of men and women for the tasks of modern policing. The increasing diversity of police work leads to demands for many different kinds of specialised police officers, from computer programmers to patrol officers, and the consequent diversity within the police forces engenders demands for more specialised managers.

¹⁶ A.E. Bent, *The Politics of Law Enforcement*, London, Lexington Books, 1974, pp. 1-14, 76, 87.

A fourth dilemma, related to police professionalism, is the extent to which police officers have a corporate identity, and the nature of that identity. The growing specialisation of police work may weaken the idea of many officers in all ranks that they belong to a single body. Professional organisations of police officers may promote higher professional standards or they may simply defend their members' interests, like trade unions in other jobs. The difficulty of establishing the social and partisan neutrality of policing is found in all liberal democracies. The solutions may vary considerably from country to country and are closely dependent on the nature of police professional organisations. Neutrality, however, is always an ideal condition for widespread acceptance of policemen and their work within the community. A danger facing all police forces is to be seen as instruments of a "ruling class" and not as organisations at the service of the whole community, without any bias. The existence of widely respected institutions to "police the police" will contribute to the legitimisation of policing in all liberal democracies¹⁷. The problems of police professionalism are thus twofold. On the one hand it is difficult for police forces to be efficient or effective without suitable organisation and personnel. On the other hand public acceptability is endangered if policemen are seen to be too remote from ordinary people or too effective in defending their own collective professional interests¹⁸.

The fifth dilemma of police acceptability and success concerns adaptation to local circumstances. Laws are made at national level, but their application takes place in local communities which may vary enormously within the same state. Large cities with mobile and racially-mixed

¹⁷ P. Hain (ed.), *Policing the Police*, London, John Calder, 1979, p.2-3.

¹⁸ A.E. Bent, *op.cit.*, p.2-3; E. Bittner, *The Functions of the Police in Modern Society*, New York, Aronson, 1975, p.8.

populations are much more difficult to police than stable rural areas. Capital cities may have even greater problems than non-capital cities of a similar size, because of the presence of governmental institutions and foreign embassies. The extent to which most people, in any local community, accept not only the general idea of the necessity of policing but also the work of their local police officers largely depends on how policemen can and do adapt to local circumstances. The success of the police in solving crimes or preventing disorders may well depend on their detailed knowledge of the local society and community with which they are involved¹⁹. At the same time, however, local citizens also receive information and ideas about police work from the national media, the press, radio and television. Very often this information is critical of the police.

The solutions of these five dilemmas may considerably influence either to endanger or improve, the effectiveness and acceptability of policing. None of the solutions adopted is immutable. Every liberal democratic state is constantly re-adapting and reforming its laws according to social, economic, technological and ideological changes. Police structures, methods, functions and powers at central and local levels are regularly subject to redefinition as a consequence of changes external to the police. The rapidity of these changes means that a major danger in all liberal democracies is that delays in making policies to reform police organisations and methods may open a gap between perceived police performance and community expectation.

Hence, in all democratic societies the constant need to reform and adapt aspects of police work in response to changing social and technological forces often results in frequent criticism and questioning of

¹⁹ J. Shapland and J. Vagg, *Policing by the Public*, London, Routledge, 1988, p.136, p.141, pp. 147-49.

the legitimacy of the police forces. Furthermore, members of the police forces are not merely passive subjects facing insuperable external forces. Their organisation and corporate identities may vary considerably between liberal democracies, but in all cases the police themselves have a considerable influence on the reforms which emerge from such questioning. By providing information and advice to political authorities, they participate in the elaboration of such reforms and once these political authorities have determined the general nature of such reforms, police officers have the primary responsibility for their application.

These five dilemmas, all directly related to the problems of acceptability and success, are common to police forces in all liberal democratic states. The theoretical response that police legitimacy arises from the rule of law, and from the liberal democratic structures of the state, is too abstract and static to explain the complex, dynamic relationship between police, society and politics. The five dilemmas identified above represent the main problems faced in all liberal democracies. There are also distinctive problems facing the police forces in Britain today.

Britain: the distinctive political problems of "policing by consent".

In Britain today the word "police" is generally used as a noun meaning the non-military professional organisations responsible for the maintenance of order, for the prevention and detection of crime and for the enforcement of the law. Confusingly, whilst the entire system of these professional organisations is called "the police" (in the singular), the members of these organisations are themselves often referred to, in the plural, as "the police". For the sake of clarity, we shall employ "the police" in the singular, and denote its members as "police officers" throughout this study. In normal English usage the word "police" is often employed as a verb, meaning to maintain law and order. In current debates in Great

Britain, much discussion is focussed on the ways and means of police action, which are generally referred to as "policing", and to the merits or problems of the territorial policing organisations, which are called "police forces" or constabularies.

What distinguishes policing debates in Britain is the widespread acceptance of the idea that the police should be not only accepted and respected but also liked and supported. Liking those who have the legal right to employ coercive force and use this right seems paradoxical. The English would appear to be more masochistic than their continental neighbours, who accept the existence of police forces but do not have affection for them. In current British debates there are very many references to the idea of "policing by consent", and not least from police officers themselves. Ian Oliver underlines this police view: "... police officers have described the British system of policing as being one that exists by virtue of the consent of the community rather than by coercion. This statement has been expanded to show that without the cooperation, sympathy and support of the public, policing as it operates in Britain would not be possible"²⁰.

"Policing by consent" implies notions of public cooperation with, and affection for, the police. In this sense "consent" is much more than mere acceptance: it implies positive approval of the main features of the organisation and role of the British police by most groups in society, at both elite and mass levels, in most circumstances and at most times. However, criticism of police actions on occasions by certain groups is normal and indeed healthy. Such criticism does not necessarily imply a significant absence of consent. Rather, it may reflect specific condemnations of particular features of police activity which might arise in a number of

²⁰ I. Oliver, *Police, Government and Accountability*, London, Macmillan, 1987, p.3.

circumstances. One such case is when policemen make mistakes. Another is when different police forces and individual policemen, in different parts of the country, at different times, by reacting to similar circumstances in different ways create an appearance of unfairness. The result is that different types of complaints against the police may be made in different areas.

Criticisms arise because different groups and the inhabitants of different localities often have different expectations about what the police should do and how they should do it. Perceptions of police actions and methods, of their priorities and of their efficiency, vary considerably between different social groups in Britain. In addition, the police inevitably suffer from the general tendency of the media to emphasize problems and failures in news broadcasts and reports. The thousands of daily positive achievements by police officers are rarely mentioned, but an isolated case of corruption or brutality makes national headlines²¹.

In Britain, as elsewhere, the police are inevitably criticised for the faults of others. They are often blamed for both laws and court decisions, even though the former are the responsibility of the government and its parliamentary majority, and the latter of the judicial system. When crime rates rise, the police are often attacked as ineffective even though, as noted above, such statistics may be misleading or unrelated to police actions. Thus, consent for policing can imply only a general and widespread support from most of the public and from the main elites.

The positive idea of "policing by consent" is seen not only as something which should exist in Britain, but also as something which existed in the past and must be re-created today. This nostalgia for a "golden

²¹ See: K. Oxford, "Policing by Consent" in J. Benyon (ed.), *Scarman and After*, Oxford, Pergamon, 1984.

age" of the police is widespread not only among police officers themselves, but also among politicians, academics and, according to opinion polls, a large part of the general public. The recognition of a need to restore "policing by consent" implies three things. The first is that in the past the police had this "consent"; the second, that this consent has seriously declined or disappeared, and the third is that its re-establishment is a top priority for all involved in police policy making.

In the present context it matters little to know the extent of police popularity or consent in the past. There is, as we examine in the third chapter of this thesis, a widespread - but not universal - assumption that this consent once existed amongst most sections of the population most of the time, and that the success of the police in performing their tasks was intrinsically dependent on this consent. Many, but not all, researchers of the history of the British police agree with Critchley and Reith that the police was widely appreciated for several long periods and notably during the 1950s²². There is much less agreement, however, about the sources or causes of that popularity. For some it was the result of the work, methods and organisation of the police. For others it was a consequence of the broad social, economic and political consensus symbolized by the notion of "Butskellism". This consent might have arisen from a combination of both these factors, a happy historic coincidence. Alternatively, it may have reflected the consensual attitude of the observers themselves, who viewed an evolving conflictual society through the rose-tinted spectacles of a self-confident elite with a strong belief in the inherent superiority of British social engineering techniques.

²² See: J.A. Lee, *A History of Police in England*, London, Methuen, 1901; T.A. Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, London, Constable, 1978; C. Reith, *British Police and the Democratic Ideal*, London, Oxford University Press, 1943.

Whether or not "policing by consent" is an interesting historical myth or an accurate perception of at least some periods of British police history, it has been important in the 1980s as a standard for judging the present and designing reforms for the future. Unfortunately, recent debates have been confused rather than clarified by references to this standard, since there is no agreement about what "policing by consent" means, how it was achieved and how it can be revived. Ian Oliver stresses this point: "...policing - undefined like so much of the British constitution - is so complex that it is too simplistic to attach single epithets and labels to it ..." ²³. Hence, "policing by consent" is more of a myth than a measuring stick, and as such evokes widespread popular approval. The very unanimity of that approval is indicative of the variety of different possible interpretations.

Some scholars of British police history, including Reith, Ascoli and Critchley, have emphasised the importance of four distinct elements of the work, methods and organisation of the police as central in the British concept of policing by consent. These are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The first is that the police should be a public service like all other public services for the equal benefit of all citizens. As Spike underlines: "The emphasis was on a "police service" rather than a "force" and there was clear intention at the outset to win public approval" ²⁴.

The second element is that the police should operate as a preventive service rather than a reactive and repressive agency: the presence and effectiveness of the police should discourage crime and disorder. Furthermore, the police should act to encourage respect for the law and citizens' cooperation with their police forces. The third element is that a large degree of professional autonomy must be given to the police forces: no

²³ I. Oliver, *op.cit.*, p.4; see also: R. Reiner, *op.cit.*, p.48.

²⁴ M. Pike, *The Principles of Policing*, London, Macmillan, 1985, p.10.

political authorities should intervene in their "operational decisions". Equally, judicial control should be external to police operations: the idea of an "examining magistrate" is alien to police traditions in England and Wales²⁵.

The fourth element is that police forces should be locally organized and maintain close links to local communities. The traditional image of the British policeman was the local "bobby on the beat", well known and respected in his community. This idea of police-public closeness was based on the "public service" and "preventive policing" ideas discussed above.

Whilst many writers maintain that these four elements are involved in establishing and maintaining public consent, they rarely agree as to which is the most important. Nor is there consensus about the relative weight of these organisational factors compared with that of the traditions, attitudes, and behaviour of all concerned with policing outside the police forces: the government, courts, interest groups, political parties and the media.

For some observers, the fourth element, the decline of the locally organised policing, explains the disappearance of "policing by consent". This view identifies the major political change in recent years as centralisation. It concludes that support for police work must be built up in local

²⁵ In England and Wales, the police is in charge of conducting the investigation of crime and until the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service in 1986, the police was also in charge of deciding whether or not to prosecute. In many other European countries it is an examining magistrate who conducts the investigation and decide on prosecutions.

communities where police and public meet. In short "policing by consent" is the fruit of "community policing"²⁶.

Traditionally the British political system relied on ministers and the civil servants working closely with different kinds of local institutions - which Dunleavy and Rhodes describe as the "sub-central government of Britain" - including local governments²⁷. The importance of these arises because the central government ministries depend on them for producing the services needed by the citizens and for the expertise of the professional service producers: "the key to understanding Whitehall ministries is that they directly administer very little"²⁸. Within this politico-administrative system, local government is traditionally responsible for implementing many of the policies of central government.

The rise of the interventionist state in Britain has taken the form of highly developed local government services. For more than two centuries the almost automatic response of Governments which decided to intervene in new areas of social or economic life was to confer the responsibility for applying new public policy on local authorities. These bodies, directed by elected local councillors since the mid-nineteenth century, gradually acquired vast responsibilities. They had to recruit, organize and manage technical and administrative employees who, even today, with 2.4 million employees provide the largest part of public services in Britain. Nor were they purely administrative agents for central government; they had real scope for local policy-making, as within their designated areas of

²⁶ See: J. Alderson, *Policing Freedom*, Plymouth Macdonald and Evans, 1979; see also: *The Economist*, *op.cit.*, pp.28-31.

²⁷ H. Drucker, P. Dunleavy, A. Gamble, G. Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics*(2), London, Macmillan, p.116.

²⁸ *ibidem*, p.108.

competence they chose their own policies and raised their own taxes. This constitutional tradition explains the constant but tense collaboration between the administrative, political and technical elites at the centre and at the periphery.

A non-written rule of the British system was that central government should not make decisions affecting local authorities without consulting them and that local government would more or less collaborate with Whitehall in the execution of its public policy choices. In a society where no "*cumul des mandats*" linked local and central elites and no prefects existed to control the periphery for the centre, such constant contact and compromising was of paramount importance to the smooth functioning of government.

To enhance their influence by acting together, local authorities formed associations to negotiate collectively with the centre. These associations represented their members in almost all consultations not only with central government but also with trades unions and professional organisations of local government employees. Such associations and collective negotiations led to an ever increasing standardisation of norms and policies amongst local authorities.

Thus recent debates over police legitimacy can be seen as reflecting the decline of traditional local-central relationships. The problems of policing, like those of local government, appear to be a consequence of the increasing standardisation and centralisation of the British political system. The police as will be shown in chapter three of this thesis, was one of the first of these services to be locally organised. The reduction in the number of police forces, the standardisation of structures and the re-definitions of power brought about by the 1964 Police Act closely parallel the changes in local government brought about by the 1972 local government reform. Since the

late 1960s criticisms of the police have been most frequent in London, where institutional links with local communities have been weakest. Recently, however, such criticisms have become more numerous in the rest of the country. The forty three police forces, the product of a century of mergers, are no longer local, and the balance of power is increasingly shifting from police authorities to the Home Secretary. Centralisation puts at risk three of the major elements on which is built the idea of "policing by consent". It loosens links between police forces and local communities; it increases the potential for political intervention from central government; and it erodes the operational autonomy of the police forces. "Policing by consent", appears as a problem of centre-periphery relations, and as a victim of centralisation.

This structural interpretation, however, oversimplifies a complex problem. It confuses standardisation with centralisation and reinforces the simplistic notion that "the government is responsible". It is highly implausible that decentralisation, whether to the existing police authorities or to smaller local units, would recreate "policing by consent". The political legitimacy of local elected councillors in Britain has often been challenged. Hence, to give local councils more power to supervise local police forces might have very little effect on the perception and evaluation by local communities of the work of police forces. Indeed, such local government control might even endanger the political neutrality of the police in some areas and thus further reduce their legitimacy. This argument does not imply that local structures are unimportant, but that they constitute only one element in the equation and that "local links" do not necessarily involve local government.

An alternative approach blames governments for the decline of public consent for policing but reaches this conclusion by different reasoning. Here the focus is placed on the increased use of coercive policing techniques. This

in turn is seen as the consequence of the willingness of the Conservative Governments to impose some radical reforms especially overtrade union rights in the face of massive social protest. This argument, whilst drawing attention to the numerous picket-line confrontations of the 1980s, the use of riot shields, CS gas and rubber bullets and the determination of the Government to "break" the miners' strike in 1984-85, nonetheless presents a distorted picture since it neglects many violent confrontations between the police and some sections of the public, which cannot be seen as the direct consequences of radical government policies. The frequent clashes with football hooligans is only one instance of this kind of conflict. Another is the control of the riots in 1981 and in 1985, as we shall discuss in greater detail in chapter four. These riots had many complex causes, only some of which were related to reductions in public expenditure. Similarly, the 1990 "poll-tax riots" which were triggered by the introduction of the new local tax reflected a much wider social malaise²⁹. In many of these cases, however, the rioting had a distinctly anti-police character (as shown in the fourth chapter) which demonstrates that in some areas public consent had evaporated.

Whilst neither of these theories of radical political change is a sufficient explanation for the unpopularity of the police in the 1980s, both draw attention to the practice in Britain of highly controversial law-making. Major sections of society have felt that not only did they dislike the Government's policies but they also considered them immoral and an infringement of their own recognised rights. Hence there existed an absence of basic legitimacy for laws which the police forces were expected to impose.

If in theory the lack of legitimacy of certain major laws leads directly to a reduction of legitimacy of those ultimately responsible for law enforcement, the reactions of the public can be improved or made worse by

²⁹ *The Independent*, 2nd April 1990.

the style, tactics and manners of the law enforcers. As we shall discuss in chapter four, the problem of police-public relations in Britain has in fact been aggravated by rapid changes of police methods and greater use of sophisticated technology. The image of the friendly and familiar bobby on the beat has been replaced by that of the panda car, riot shields and armoured vans. The traditional belief that the police service of Britain operates in a different and distinctly less aggressive and repressive way than its continental counterparts seems ever more difficult to sustain.

Conclusion

The distinctive and complicating element in the British debate about "policing by consent" is the active or positive idea of consent. This idea may be contrasted with the notion of passive acceptance which seems to prevail in many other countries. Indeed, positive or active consent, as viewed in Britain, implies a supportive and cooperative two-way relationship between the public and their police and between the police and the public they serve. Hence consent is a dynamic process depending on the maintenance of congruence of the ideas and behaviour of these groups.

The ways by which this congruence may be achieved are very complex. It would be nonsensical to think of either the public or the police as a single homogeneous force. The variety of social cleavages - race, religion, sex, class, age and environment - within both the police and the public, makes the relation between the two complex. Furthermore, "policing by consent" does not rely simply on the direct relationship between the public and the police. Very often this relationship is indirect, as many members of the public have most of the time no experience or direct contacts with the police. There are important intermediaries, notably elected politicians of different political parties at both local and national levels, the media, and associations or interest groups which may considerably influence the nature

of the relationship according to their approach to the police. This public support depends on the police itself respecting the law and its own internal regulations. The public wants to know that the police is not above the law, that politicians, judges, and police chiefs will not protect policemen who break the rules. Procedures for dealing with complaints about the police must be open and respected, which implies that those investigating such complaints must include persons from outside the police, the judiciary and government. The British police forces face the same basic dilemmas of all police forces in liberal democratic states, but the problems of reform are more acute because of the high expectation of positive public approval for policing.

Chapter 3:

Public consent and the evolution of policing.

It is often said that the British political system evolved slowly, peacefully and legitimately, unlike certain continental countries whose patterns of institutional development have been marked by violent revolutions, or periods of great political instability, or both. Those who expound this view often articulate a similar version of the history of British policing: that from early times there has been a peaceful evolution of "policing by consent"¹. There is, however, an alternative view, that the methods and powers of the police forces in England and Wales have been disliked and opposed by large sections of society at all times. Marxists in particular have argued that, because the political rulers inevitably served the interests of the dominant economic class, most crime were offenses against property, and many disorders represented challenges to the established capitalist order. In short, police forces existed to protect the property and power of the rich and if the police employed gentle methods rather than brutal force most of the time, they did so simply because such methods were more effective and efficient. British police system was therefore presented as a particularly cunning and pernicious tool of

¹ D. Ascoli, *The Queen's Peace*, London, Hamilton, 1979, p.18-20.

capitalist repression which effectively kept the people down by pretending to be its friends².

The aim of this chapter is to show that, whilst both these views are in some ways accurate, the development of the policing system before 1979 was more complex than either would suggest. On the one hand there have been periods of relatively smooth development with incremental reforms bringing merely small modifications of existing structures. One such period was in the 1950s when policing was relatively unconflictual, at least for public order problems, and the idea of policing by consent seemed pertinent and plausible. On the other hand, there have also been periods of rapid and wide-ranging changes and of widespread criticisms of police methods and powers. One period of change was the Second World War, whereas the 1960s and 1970s exemplified times of strong public antagonism against the police.

What emerges from this examination of the development of professional policing in Britain from 1829 to 1979 is the parallel between the creation and modification of police structures and the establishment and development of the concept of police legitimacy - "policing by consent" - which was discussed in the last chapter. The police structures of the late 1970s were not the result of an attempt to impose a single rational model of policing; rather they were the outcome of an incrementalist period of institutionalisation, between 1829 and 1856, an equally *ad hoc* developmental process involving many measures of reforms, and an attempt to simplify and modernise structures in the 1964 Police Act and its complement, the 1972 Local Government Act.

² See: M. Brogden, *The Police: Autonomy and Consent*, London, Academic, 1982.

The first section of this chapter shows how the first truly professional police forces were created and structured between 1829 and 1856 in a series of incremental reforms. The core elements in the idea of policing by consent - the police as a public service for the equal benefit of all citizens, policing as a preventive rather than reactive or repressive process, the local identity of police forces, the operational autonomy of chief police officers and the political neutrality of police forces - emerged during this formative period. There is little evidence, however, that the first professional police forces and their operations were very popular amongst the population as a whole. There was a need for new policing organisations, as the existing ones were inadequate to meet the growing crime rates and disorder problems of the industrial revolution. The "new police" served the interests of the "possessing classes" by protecting their property and power. Nonetheless, how and when the new police forces were set up are explained as much by reference to particular political compromises at specific moments as by long-term needs or interests.

The improvement of police effectiveness was the objective of many reforms after 1856, and the second section of this chapter demonstrates how there were almost always modifications of the established pattern of police structures. Once again, incrementalist administrative rationalisation achieved was by political compromises. What also emerges is the inconsistency between the idea of policing by consent and the growing professionalisation of policing. First, preventive methods, local identities and friendly relations with the public may have facilitated the growth of mass acceptability of police work in relation to crime, but the role of the police as the controllers of public order inevitably brought groups of the population, pursuing goals by strikes or demonstrations, into conflict with them. Finally, police officers have organized themselves in professional organisations, but not as part of the main trade union organisations of the

Trades Union Congress. Hence the existence of a distinct corporate interest of the police has gradually emerged.

The third section of this chapter argues that the 1964 Police Act which laid down the basic organisational pattern of policing for the next twenty five years marked a break with previous traditions. Whilst the appearance of local police forces and local supervision was retained, the organisation was regionalized and the possibilities for central control increased. Nonetheless, these institutional changes cannot be identified as the sole or even the major cause of the decline in public confidence in the police. The 1960s witnessed a number of important social, economic and technological changes which complicated policing and modified the public image of the police. Police officers made increasing use of new technologies and their frequent and friendly contacts with the population thus declined. The familiar bobby on the beat was replaced by the anonymous "panda car" officer. Furthermore, mass car ownership led to new and tense relations between police officers and members of the property-owning middle classes. At the same time industrial relations became increasingly conflictual which brought about numerous confrontations between police and workers. Finally, the resurgence of violence in Northern Ireland, especially after 1969, and the attempts to spread the conflict to the British mainland created many new difficulties for the police.

I. The creation of a national network of local professional police forces, 1829 to 1856.

A. The first professional police forces.

Three major stages can be identified in the process of creating the professional police structures of England and Wales. The first, in 1829, was

the establishment of a professional police force to serve the London agglomeration, the Metropolitan Police. The second stage was the passage of two laws, in 1835 and 1839, which allowed the elected councils of municipal boroughs and the magistrates of counties to set up their own local professional police forces. Finally, in 1856 the County and Borough Police Act made it obligatory for all municipal boroughs and counties which had not already done so to establish such police forces and authorized the Home Office to appoint three inspectors to ensure that subsidies from central government to police forces were spent effectively. Thus, if the Metropolitan Police Force provided an organisational model, there were very real differences between it and the provincial urban and county police forces notably in size and political accountability. Since 1856 British police structures have retained this dual structure with the massive police force of the capital answerable only to the Home Secretary whereas the much smaller provincial police forces were accountable to both local and national authorities.

Before 1829 there existed no professional police service in Britain. Indeed, it is difficult to argue that a police system as such existed. Responsibility for maintaining law and order was dispersed amongst many local bodies. In theory, some elements of Saxon structures still survived. Local justices of the peace were empowered to call on any citizens to act as constables for a period of a year. By the eighteenth century it had become customary for those who could afford it to buy their way out of this tedious task by paying a replacement. Hence many constables were recruited amongst the poor, the old and the disabled. The results were at best amateurish and often fairly ineffective according to contemporary accounts³. In towns the "watches" appear to have been no more successful at stopping crimes or catching criminals. Hence, in a number of towns

³ T.A. Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales 900-1966*, London, Constable, 1967, p.18.

attempts had been made to improve the mechanism for maintaining law and order. In London two new bodies had been created in the late eighteenth century: the River Thames Police, by City merchants, and the Bow Street Runners, by magistrates. Nonetheless, in London as in the provinces, these initiatives were too limited to have any great effect.

The big change came in 1829 with an apparently modest bill of 44 articles, which was entitled simply "an act for improving the police in and near the Metropolis"⁴. Although aspiring merely to improve the police, the law of 19th June 1829 created the Metropolitan Police and brought about several radical changes. The first was the transfer to the Home Secretary of responsibility for maintaining law and order in the capital. The second was the creation of a body of professional policemen under the operational command of "two magistrates" (who at once became known as the Commissioners) appointed by the Crown at the suggestion of the Home Secretary. The third element of change was the territorial delimitation of a district: everything within a radius of 6 miles from Charing Cross was to be controlled by the Metropolitan Police. The "square mile" of the medieval City of London was however excluded from the Metropolitan Police district and allowed to preserve its own watches. Finally, a new financial structure was established to pay for the police. A local tax was created and a Crown Office, the Receiver, given financial responsibility for the Metropolitan Police outside the authority of the Commissioners. What the law did not stipulate, however, was how the new body of professional police was to be organized, its structures, powers, methods, or recruitment.

It was largely left to the first two Commissioners to decide the organization and rules of the professional police force. These two men, Charles Rowan, a former army colonel, and Richard Mayne, an Irish

⁴ The 1829 Police Act, c. 44.

barrister, were chosen and actively supported by Robert Peel, the then Home Secretary, although they were not traditional "magistrates". The Commissioners decided that the new police force should recruit physically fit, intelligent men willing to accept strict discipline. They also determined that no special officer class, distinct from the ordinary men (as in the army), should be created. Since its origins the organisational model of professional police was thus different from that of the army and distinct from the former system of the parish constables and watches⁵.

The norms for recruitment established by the Commissioners represented a small revolution since the traditional principles of nepotism and patronage (for officers) and clientelism and corruption (for constables and watchmen) were rejected. The Commissioners, respecting the goals of the Home Secretary, made it clear that the new police was to be a service for all and thus outside traditional party and personal patronage. The result was that the great majority of former parish watchmen who applied for jobs in the Metropolitan Police did not meet the required standards⁶.

One of the other principal preoccupations of the two Commissioners was to create an effective and impressive police force, not different or cut off from the population. In their exchanges of correspondence Peel and the two Commissioners acknowledged that to be respected the new police officers must not only be honest, disciplined and competent but also have good contacts with "the ordinary man in the street"⁷. Policing was to be

⁵ J.M. Hart, *The British Police*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1951, p.28.

⁶ T.A. Critchley, *op. cit.* , p.52.

⁷ *Ibidem.*, p.32; J.J. Tobias, *Crime and Police in England 1700-1900*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1979, pp.74-92.

preventive to discourage - with the help of the public - criminals from committing crimes rather than merely to catch those who did so.

The Commissioners decided that police officers should be visible on the street throughout the Metropolitan Police District with a distinct and easily recognizable uniform. The territory of the district was divided into 17 divisions, each under the command of a superintendent and with a staff of 165 constables. A system of shifts was created and within each division and shift each constable was given a precise territorial sector to patrol, "his beat". The police officers were distinguished from soldiers, not only by the cut and colour of their uniforms but also by the fact that they carried neither sword or firearm⁸. This low-key approach of the founders of the Metropolitan Police reflected their desire for acceptance of their controversial creation. Reiner underlines this point: "The architects of the benign and dignified English police image, Peel, Rowan and Mayne, adopted the policies they did because of the strength of opposition to the very existence of the police. They encouraged a low-profile, legalistic stance precisely in the teeth of the bitter political conflict and acute social divisions of English society in the first half of the nineteenth century, not as an expression of underlying harmony"⁹.

Hostile reactions towards the Metropolitan Police during the first years of its existence are a clear indication that some sections of society recognized that an important change was taking place. The hostility of criminals in London was not surprising since it became much more difficult for them to operate with impunity. Nor was it astonishing that bitter criticisms were

⁸ See: C. Reith, *British Police and the Democratic Idea*, London, Oxford University Press, 1943.

⁹ R. Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1985, p.51.

voiced by some parish councillors and watchmen who lost some of their powers or even their jobs. The hostile attitude of many Whig leaders towards this "new police" created by the Tory reform can be explained in part by their preference for recruiting public servants by patronage rather than by testing their competence but also by their suspicion that this new tool of state power would reduce individual liberties¹⁰.

Many historians cite examples of hostile reactions to the new police from ordinary citizens during the first years of the existence of the Metropolitan Police. Numerous complaints were made about the acts of individual police officers to the headquarters in Scotland Yard. In August 1830 the first policeman was killed, stabbed as he was walking his beat in Gray's Inn Road¹¹. How widespread this hostility extended and how long it lasted are impossible to assess on the basis of the limited information available.

Nonetheless, the appearance of 3000 constables in the streets of London day and night did not go unnoticed. Whilst this change was great and initially widely criticized, it became permanent. The survival and growth of the Metropolitan Police were all the more surprising because its Tory creators lost power in 1830 and were replaced by the Whigs who had publicly proclaimed that one of the first measures they would take would be to abolish the new police. Not surprisingly relations between Melbourne, the new Home Secretary, and the two Commissioners were very strained especially as the new government continued to voice criticisms of the police. Nevertheless it neither abolished the Metropolitan Police nor reduced its powers.

¹⁰ T.A. Critchley, *op. cit.* , pp.37, 46.

¹¹ T.A. Critchley, *op cit.*, p.54.

The Whigs changed even their attitudes as the "new police" proved its worth. If for Peel the main objective had been to reduce crime rate in the capital, the Whigs used the new body for a very different end, that of controlling and dispersing crowds during public demonstrations. The first example of this new use of the Metropolitan Police came in 1833 at Cold Bath Fields when police officers controlled the crowds at a meeting of the National Political Union¹².

The respect of most political leaders, Whig and Tory, was soon won. A parliamentary enquiry of 1833-34 praised the work of the "new police" and underlined the lack of substance of most of the complaints made against it. In 1839 the territory of the police district was even extended to a radius of 15 miles.

A further implicit recognition of the success of the Metropolitan Police was that Lord John Russell, the Whig Home Secretary in 1839, proposed the inclusion of the City of London within the police district. The "City Fathers", however, suggested a compromise by which they created their own professional police force modelled on the Metropolitan Police.

A further sign of the confidence in the Metropolitan Police of those in power was the authorization it received to create specialised services to deal with particular problems. Thus in 1832 the detective department (which later developed into the Criminal Investigation Department (or "CID") was set up in Scotland Yard. In 1836 a squad of mounted police was created. In 1839 the competence of the Metropolitan Police for all types of policing was recognized by the integration of the River Thames Police into its organization. Thus within ten years the structures and organization of the

¹² D. Ascoli, *op. citt* ,p.104.

Metropolitan Police had not only been created but also accepted by the main national political leaders.

A further 17 years, however, were to pass before a full network of provincial police forces was in operation. This delay was not the result of a lack of reforms. There were many different reforms, and their very diversity was indicative of the divergences of opinion about what should be done. There were three different approaches to improving provincial policing. One method chosen was to improve the old semi-amateur parish constable and watch systems, as in the 1829 Cheshire Police Bill, the 1831 Special Police Constable Act, the 1833 Lighting and Watching Act and later the 1842 Parish Constable Act¹³.

A second approach was that of encouraging local authorities to establish and run their own professional police forces. This approach characterized the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act which empowered the new elected councils of municipal boroughs to establish their own watch committees responsible for appointing and managing professional police officers (who retained - as in the Metropolitan Police - the traditional title of constable). The more dynamic municipalities, authorized to create their own police forces, often did so using the Metropolitan Police as a model of

¹³ The Lighting and Watching Act was the first statute to deal with the establishment of paid police forces in the provinces. The 1831 Special Constable Act empowered justices to conscript men as special constables on the occasion of a riot or a threat of riots. The 1829 Cheshire Police Bill created a prototype system of policing which could be extended to the whole country by giving a new and final lease to the ancient office of high constable. The 1842 Parish Constable Act legalised almost every type of system of policing that had been tried before. See: T.A. Critchley, *op.cit.*; J. Hart, *op.cit.*

organization¹⁴. The same approach was taken in the 1839 County Police Act which authorized the magistrates of each county to set up a professional police force for their territory. There were however notable differences between the provisions for provincial urban policing of 1835 and those for rural policing in 1839. Whilst both recognized the idea that there should be a single police force responsible for each area, with local representatives supervising its activities, the county police forces were answerable to local magistrates rather than councillors. In fact, there were no elected county councils until 1888. The powers of the Home Secretary over the "County Constabularies" were much greater than those over borough police forces. Notably the appointments of chief police officers, the structures and internal regulations and the salaries of policemen in the counties were all subject to his control.

There was nonetheless a third approach: that of creating local units of a national police force under the control of the Home Secretary. This idea was put forward in the first report of the Constabulary Commissioners in 1839 (the Home Secretary's Inspectors of County Constabularies). They suggested the creation of a national police force for the counties under the authority of the Home Secretary. A variant of this idea was that a police force like the Metropolitan Police should be created in every large city which had not created its own professional police. Hence in 1839 the Birmingham Police Bill, the Manchester Police Bill and the Bolton Police Bill, all empowered the Home Secretary to establish and direct police forces modelled on the Metropolitan Police in those towns¹⁵.

¹⁴ T.A. Critchley, *op.cit.*, p.10-20; J.M. Hart, *op.cit.*, p.29; J.J. Tobias, *op.cit.*, pp.93-116.

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*, pp.80-87.

The result of pursuing different approaches at different times and different places was a very heterogeneous police system. By 1853 the heterogeneity of organisation and very big differences of effectiveness between different police forces were so great that a parliamentary inquiry was set up to examine the police system of England and Wales. The report of the Commission underlined the variations in the structures and effectiveness of police forces. In the municipalities 13 boroughs still had no professional police. Some, like Liverpool, were reported to be very effective whilst many others were judged incompetent. The magistrates in a third of the counties had not yet bothered to set up professional police forces and in many places where they had the results were far from satisfactory¹⁶.

Drawing on these findings the committee made a number of proposals for improvement. The first was that the creation of a professional police force be made obligatory in every county and borough. The second was that central government should contribute to paying for police forces but without interfering in their management or local supervision. The third recommendation was that the smaller borough police forces should merge with those of their counties. Lord Palmerston made two abortive attempts to persuade parliament to pass bills including these provisions and further powers for the Home Secretary, but his successor Lord Grey at last persuaded parliament to accept the 1856 County and Borough Police Act.

This law systematized British police structures until 1964. It obliged all counties and boroughs to establish professional police forces. All police forces were made responsible for drafting statistical reports to the government on the crime rates of their areas. A central government grant equal to 25% of the cost of salaries and police uniforms was made available to police forces serving a population of over 5000 and meeting the standards

¹⁶ *Ibidem.*, p. 105.

of effectiveness set down by the Home Secretary and checked by his inspectors. The law therefore created three posts of inspectors of constabulary to carry out an annual evaluation of every police force except the Metropolitan Police¹⁷.

The law of 1856 thus concretized the dual police structures of England and Wales: a large professional police force answerable directly to the Home Secretary in the capital and much smaller police forces supervised by local authorities in the provinces and subject only to inspection and indirect pressures from the Home Office. By creating central government grants and a system of annual inspection, the law increased the power of central government over police forces. Nonetheless the highly fragmented and diverse pattern of provincial police forces was preserved. Indeed in 1857 there were 226 police forces in England and Wales. In addition to differences in structures of control between police forces in counties and boroughs, there were also important differences in size, organisation and effectiveness.

B. The political, economic and social context.

If the different laws which led to the creation of a professional system of policing in Britain provoked many controversies, the different attempts of historians to explain these reforms are also controversial. The differences of interpretation mainly concern the identity of the interests served by the police and the degree of acceptability of the police by different groups in society. Many Marxists explain the creation of the first professional police forces as a necessary adoption of the superstructure of the state in response to the fundamental change of the system of production then taking place.

¹⁷ J.M. Hart, *op.cit.*, p.33.

According to the Marxists, the police was created to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie, the new ruling class of the industrial revolution¹⁸.

Many non-Marxists, however, (the "orthodox" historians according to Reiner)¹⁹, explain the creation of a new system of policing merely as a solution to the problems arising from the ineffectiveness of old structures for maintaining law and order. It was a more effective mechanism to protect the security of the whole community. Whilst Marxists present the police as the repressive tool of the State, serving one class, more "orthodox" historians underline that the originality of the new system of policing in Britain lays its objective of serving the whole of society. The dramatic gap between these two approaches can be largely explained by a lack of ideological compromise: each of these approaches, by stressing only one dominant factor, tends to undermine the importance of other elements. The establishment of the police should be placed in its context of economic and social revolution but it is nevertheless essential not to neglect the political and administrative evolution of that period. The creation of professional police forces in Britain was the result of various attempts of administrative rationalisation and of political compromise which were an integral part of the process of establishing a modern state and reflected the evolution of political ideas during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The two major contributions of Marxist analysis are to underline the economic and social transformations of British society since the end of the eighteenth century and to show how the existing economic and political order was challenged by different groups in society. Hence the increase of criminality is identified as a direct consequence of urbanisation and

¹⁸ M. Brogden, *op.cit.*, p.55.

¹⁹ R. Reiner, *op.cit.*, p.10, 20.

industrialisation during the first stage of modern capitalism, along with the establishment of trade unions²⁰.

Four major events characterize the end of the eighteenth century: demographic growth, the Agricultural Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and urbanisation. At the end of the seventeenth century the population of England and Wales was 5.5 million. It had doubled during the eighteenth century to 11 million in 1801 (date of the first census) but it then increased to 16.5 million in 1831²¹. This spectacular increase of population by over 50% in thirty years can be explained partly by the considerable fall in death rates as a result of major improvements in medicine and standards of hygiene. It was also influenced by the Agricultural Revolution. As shown by Trevelyan²², one of the effects of the Agricultural Revolution was improvement in productivity and in the quantity and variety of food. The transformation of agriculture led to greater poverty and misery, largely because an important proportion of agricultural labour was no longer wanted when enclosures put an end to the system of subsistence farming. Finally, the beginning of the Industrial Revolution amplified this problem by destroying cottage craft industries²³.

New industrialists employed much of this excess rural population in mines or factories. A migration from the countryside and a massive, unplanned process of urbanisation thus began. Small villages such as

²⁰ A. Silver, 'The Demand for Order in Civil Society', in D. Bordua (ed.), *The Police*, New York, Wiley, 1967, p.3.

²¹ G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1942, pp.483.

²² *Ibidem*, p.356.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 340-59.

Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham became important urban centres. These massive changes in social structures made the existing amateurish system for the maintenance of law and order completely inadequate. They led to a rapid increase in crimes and to the appearance of new forms of social and political protest. As described by many historians and novelists, conditions of living were hard and salaries low. There thus appeared a new working class. Its members soon began organising themselves to press for better working and living conditions²⁴.

Marxist analysts present the establishment of the new police as a consequence of the need to protect the interests of the new ruling class, the bourgeoisie, which took economic and political power. Unfortunately this view does not always match well with the phasing of the different stages of establishing a professional police force. Why particular changes took place at specific moments is better explained by looking at the *ad hoc* way in which political rulers found acceptable compromise solutions to the practical law-and-order problems of a changing society.

In practice not one but several systems of policing were set up in Great Britain. Some historians explain this diversity as a stage of necessary administrative rationalisation²⁵ and present the creation of local police forces in the provinces as an attempt to imitate the Metropolitan Police model. An explanation solely in terms of administrative rationalisation, however, is as incomplete as the Marxist analysis. The different laws which led to the creation of the various provincial police forces were voted by different majorities, at different times and as a result of different political

²⁴ T. Bunyan, *The Political Police in Britain*, London, Quartet Books, 1977, p.61.

²⁵ S. Spitzers and A. Scull, "Privatisation and Social Control", *Social Problems*, 25, 1977, pp.118-23.

deals. Hence, whilst there existed a general trend towards administrative rationalisation, specific institutional features reflected particular political compromises.

These two tendencies are clear in the decision-making process which led to the creation of the Metropolitan Police. Indeed, the arguments put forward by the 1828 parliamentary committee and by Robert Peel, the author of the 1829 bill, were based upon the need to create more effective and rational police structures. Nevertheless the project would have failed without an important political compromise: the exclusion of "the City" from the Metropolitan Police District. Previous attempts of 1785, 1812, 1816, 1818 and 1822 to create a professional police force in the capital had been rejected after overwhelming pressure from the merchants of the City who wished to protect their own power. In terms of administrative rationality the exemption of the City was ridiculous, as was demonstrated during the Cold Bath Field riots of 1833, when the ban on Metropolitan Police officers from entering the City prevented them from arresting many of the demonstrators who fled there, "over the border"²⁶.

In 1839 a second political compromise was made between the City merchants and the Home Secretary, who again wanted to integrate the City into the Metropolitan Police District. The City, however, succeeded in maintaining its independence but was obliged to create its own professional police force and to cooperate with the Metropolitan Police. The City was to remain a special case and even in 1990 it retains its own police force. Hence, even in the capital, considerations of rationality were not of paramount importance.

²⁶ D. Ascoli, *op.cit.*, p.103.

The existence of the Metropolitan Police changed the nature of the debate on improving law and order in the provinces. Whilst many local leaders soon saw the advantages of having professional police forces, there was widespread concern about not losing their powers to the Home Office. The Municipal Corporations Act did not meet much opposition in Parliament because the responsibility of local councillors to establish and manage their own forces remained. This provision maintained - and reinforced - the British tradition of letting local authorities deal with the running of most public services. Nevertheless, these structures soon appeared inadequate since some towns had not been given the "town charter" necessary for a professional police force to be set up. Among those towns were some important centres of Chartist activities. Like the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act, the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act was the fruit of a political compromise and did not produce a uniform system for the whole country.

The Constabulary Commissioners, however, in their 1839 report proposed a solution of apparently much greater administrative rationalisation: the creation of a national police force. The central government did not take up this proposal, as it remained politically unacceptable to most Members of Parliament. Although in 1832 the Home Secretary took powers to create and control police forces in big cities as, for example, in Birmingham, he transferred the control of those police forces to new local police authorities three years later.

The 1856 Borough and County Police Act, also represented a new stage of political compromise²⁷. Several proposals for improving the administrative rationality of police organisation had been made in the report of the 1853 Parliamentary Commission. However, the attempts of

²⁷ T.A. Critchley, *op.cit.*, p.105.

Palmerston, then Home Secretary, to suppress the smallest police forces in 1854 all failed. Two years later a political deal was worked out which allowed the passage of the 1856 Bill. A reduction in the number of police forces by amalgamating very small forces was accepted but this law did not remove the powers of control of local authorities over their police forces. Furthermore, the principle of some governmental intervention in police matters was made acceptable by central government committing itself to share the cost of local police forces.

The development in several stages of professional police forces in England and Wales did occur only as a response to rapid increases in crime but also as a consequence of the evolution of political conflicts. The characteristics of modern police structures were established more than 30 years after the creation of the Metropolitan Police. The "Met" (as it soon became known) was used as a model for many provincial police forces in structure, discipline, effectiveness and operational autonomy, but outside the capital the idea that central government alone should run the police was not accepted.

II. The evolution of the British police system 1856-1964

By the end of the 1850s the basic features of the British police system were established, but organisational structures remained varied, and even in many areas inadequate²⁸. The lack of coordination and cooperation between different police forces was already a source of many problems. During the next century many reformers tried both to solve these problems and to adapt the structures and methods of policing to the new challenges arising from the evolution of society. One of the major developments was

²⁸ *Ibidem.*, p.176.

the organisational standardization of the police, involving both the unionisation and professionalism of the police staff and the simplification of police organisation.

A. The harmonization, professionalisation and unionization of the police in England and Wales.

Within the British police organisation of the late nineteenth century, the harmonization of structures implied the acceptance of common norms by all police forces as well as forms of cooperation and coordination between forces to enable the maintenance of law and order to be effective both at national and local levels. Nevertheless the fragmentation and the compartmentalization of local authorities was so great that a diminution of the initial number of police forces and growing intervention by central government were almost inevitable for greater harmonization. This growth of central government intervention was a long and difficult process since several governments, which tried to ignore the traditional principle of local authority autonomy in police matters, had to back-track in the face of vociferous opposition.

Among the measures taken, the amalgamation of small local police forces was the most important. There were two steps in the process of reducing the number of police forces. The first took place in 1888, when the Local Government Act abolished all independent police forces in towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants. This measure reduced the number of police forces from 233 in 1888 to 183 a year later. It was almost 60 years before the second step, the 1946 Police Act, imposed a new amalgamation of small town forces, which reduced the total number from 183 to 125²⁹.

²⁹ *Ibidem.*, p.243.

A second aspect of the process of harmonization was the improvement of mechanisms for cooperation between different police forces. Initially joint operations between the officers of neighbouring police forces depended on informal local agreements. Only in 1890 were formal agreements for cooperation between neighbouring police forces both authorized and encouraged. Nevertheless by 1908 fewer than 60 forces had established such agreements³⁰.

With national mobilization during the First World War more rational structures of coordination were created by central government. One of the first measures was the organisation by the Home Secretary of regular meetings for coordination between the different chief constables³¹. These meetings became a permanent feature of police organisation at the end of the war.

The Second World War once again stimulated intervention by central government. The powers of the Home Secretary were substantially increased from those of coordination and supervision to those of control. Defence Regulation 39 authorized the Home Secretary to direct provincial police forces during the war period. To assist the Home secretary eleven regional police commissioners were appointed by the Home Secretary. Thus, the Second World War was of great importance in the evolution of the police as it marked the beginning of centralisation on a scale never seen before³².

³⁰ *Ibidem.*, p.179.

³¹ Their first meeting took place in 1908.

³² T.A. Critchley, *op.cit.*, p.239.

Another important step in the evolution of a more harmonized and professional police service was the creation in 1948 of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Legally ACPO did not inherit all the responsibilities and powers of control that the Home Secretary had wielded during the war. Its existence, its regular meetings and the proximity of its headquarters to Scotland Yard and the Home Office showed the continued concern for coordination.

This gradual intensification of supervision of the work of local police forces was closely linked with the growing professionalisation of policing. The first section of this chapter noted that the officers of the "new police" of 1829 were distinguished from their amateurish predecessors by their professional status: they were selected, trained and disciplined, full-time, tenured and paid. Since 1829 there has been a continuing process of professionalisation involving the creation of increasingly specialized services, the use of even more sophisticated technology and the consequent improvements of selection, training, management and research. Nonetheless, the police remained distinct from many other professions by the maintenance within a single professional organisation of a great variety of levels of skills, functions and responsibilities.

The creation of specialized services within police forces was a very early development. As shown above, the creation of a Detective Department and a Mounted Police came within a few years of the creation of the Metropolitan Police. Following recommendations of the Constabulary Inspectors, provincial police forces set up similar specialized services. In 1867 Scotland Yard's Detective Department was expanded and reorganized to become the Criminal Investigation Department³³. Within

³³ S. Manwaring White, *The Policing Revolution*, Brighton, The Harvest Press, 1983, p.179.

seven years the number of its staff had more than tripled from 250 to 800. Two sectors of its work, forensic science and criminal records, were particularly developed during the late nineteenth century.

In 1883 another specialised service was created within the Metropolitan Police, the Special Irish Branch³⁴. This organization had the task of surveyance of all Irish nationalist activities and the prevention of terrorist acts. In 1887 its remit was broadened to include everything which might endanger State security and it became known simply as Special Branch. Subsequently Special Branch officers were appointed within each provincial police force. The organisation and strength of the Special Branch have however remained well guarded secrets since its creation. There are almost no reports available and few statistics are published on its number of staff and activities.

During the twentieth century the ever-growing specialisation of professional police work has almost always been imposed by need. One example is the invention of the motor car. The presence on the roads of more and faster motor vehicles obliged the police to respond. Hence in 1934 the first cars and motorbikes were purchased by police forces and a police driving centre was created at Hendon to train officers. Similarly in communications the rapid development of radio and the telephone required police adaptation, particularly after the Second World War.

Another important consequence of the rapid evolution of technology was the establishment of research units and training centres for longer, more specialized and sophisticated training. After the Second World War eight regional training centres opened and in 1948 a training centre for senior police officers was created at Bramshill. The growing

³⁴ *Ibidem.*, p.129.

professionalisation of police work led to another two major changes: first in recruitment qualifications. The basic principle of Peel of recruiting the 'man in the street' to police his neighbours was no longer relevant. In the 1932 Commission Trenchard criticised the inadequate educational levels of police officers and urged the need to recruit more men with higher educational qualifications. The second was the beginning of trade union activity amongst police officers to claim better working conditions and improvement of their social status. This movement reflected a growing awareness by police officers of the importance both of their profession and of their mutual interests.

The early steps of trade union organisation in the police forces were difficult and painful³⁵. The first attempt to organise a strike in 1872 ended in the imprisonment of its leaders, and the second in 1890 led to the dismissal of 39 police officers. After the First World War several serious strikes in various police forces (notably in Liverpool and London) led to a commission of enquiry (the Desborough Commission) being appointed to examine the status and rights of police officers in England and Wales. Following its recommendations in 1919 two "professional" organisations were created: the Police Federation and the Chief Superintendents' Association. The first was composed of all police officers from the rank of constable to chief inspector, and the second of superintendents and more senior ranks up to assistant chief constables. This distinction between ranks showed the differences of interests within a service which was often presented as a single profession.

The 1919 Police Act, banned the right to strike and to join any other trade union organisation which was part of the TUC. However, salaries were increased and working conditions greatly improved. This increase put

³⁵ See: A. Judge, *The First Fifty Years*, London, Police Federation, 1968.

the incomes of police officers above the average of the working class for the first time since its creation³⁶. The gradual standardization of these new conditions of service to all police forces reinforced the feelings among police officers of belonging to the same profession if not to a national police force.

This public recognition of police work as a profession and the statutory authorisation to set up a professional association did not guarantee that high salaries would be maintained. Indeed, between 1940 and 1964 the purchasing power of police officers fell despite frequent claims from the Police Federation and the appointment of the Oaksey Committee in 1948. It further increased the gap between the status of individual police officers and that of ordinary citizens and therefore seemed to contradict the assertion of the 1929 Royal Commission that the police officer was just "an ordinary citizen in uniform".

Another consequence of this process of trade unionisation and of professional specialisation was to extend the intervention of central government. The Home Secretary's intervention was often a response to demands from police officers themselves for the setting of common standards especially in salaries, recruitment and working conditions. Thus, the process of national harmonization cannot be seen only as one of centralization but was also a response to the demands of police officers themselves for national standards. For many officers central government intervention was a means to defend their interests against the more interfering or miserly local authorities. The direct results were the end of serious differences between the status of police officers in different police forces, and the creation of a national system for negotiations. Even if each

³⁶ J.M. Hart, *op.cit.*, p.48.

police force retained its own local identity, police officers belonged to a national organisation.

B. The socio-political context.

In a constantly changing society the factors which have contributed to the development of police methods have been numerous. Five are important: the impact of wars; the evolution of political protests; the development of trade unions; the appearance of post-war social tensions; and the consequences of changes in technology especially in transport and communications.

The powers of control of central government over local police forces were largely increased during the two world wars. These measures of centralisation, presented as indispensable for the war effort by central government, were temporarily accepted by local elites, but were never completely disbanded at the end of the wars. Indeed, not only were "total mobilisation" and national consensus essential during the conflicts, they remained necessary for reconstruction during the post-war years. A return to the *status quo ante bellum* never happened, especially after the Second World War when tendencies of centralisation became greater. Indeed, as noted above, not only did the smallest police forces fail to regain their autonomy, many of the powers given to the Home Secretary during the war were maintained in peace time³⁷.

There were two other major consequences of the wars for the police service. The first was the recruiting of women into many police forces. An

³⁷ *Ibidem.*, p.60-64.

experiment with women police auxiliaries took place during the First World War. As the experience of replacing male police officers by women during that period had been successful, demands for women police officers to form a normal part of the police service increased during the 1920s. However, it was only in 1939 that such demands were satisfied, but Women Police Constables (or "WPCs") became a permanent part of the police service only after the Second War as a consequence of the success of first real policewomen between 1939 and 1940³⁸. The relative number of women in the police service, however, remained low.

The second result was the growth of the prestige of the police during those periods of national consensus. Relations between the police and the public were good, especially during the decade which followed the Second World War, which is often referred to as the "golden age" of the police³⁹. Although there are no opinion polls to illustrate the high level of popularity of the police during the late 1940s and 1950s, there is a striking absence of public criticisms of the police. Such harmonious relations between the police and the public, however, seem to have been more of an exception than a general rule in the historical development of British policing.

Outside this "golden age", criticisms of the police from many sources have been frequent. Those involved in demonstrations and strikes have often been critical of police behaviour. It was noted above how demonstrations in favour of electoral reform (or in support of the Chartist movement) produced some of the earliest violent confrontations between police and sections of the public. The 1867 electoral reform, by which almost

³⁸ J. Carrier, *The Campaign for the Employment of Women as Police Officers*, Vermont, Gower, 1988, p.251.

³⁹ R. Reiner, *op cit.*, p.48.

all men acquired the right to vote, did not bring an end to mass political protest. Women still did not have the right to vote and the Suffragette movement during the early twentieth century led to numerous confrontations with the police. Suffragette leaders voiced severe criticisms of police brutality⁴⁰.

A second and different form of political protest which created serious problems for the police was that of Irish Nationalists. As noted above, problems with the Irish Nationalist movement led to the creation of the Special Branch in 1884. The partitioning of Ireland and the creation in 1922 of what subsequently became the Irish Republic brought about a huge reduction but not a complete end to the activities of the Irish Republican Army in England and Wales.

During the troubled inter-war period, the attitude and behaviour of many policemen, when dealing with demonstrators, was often publicly criticized. Such massive demonstrations as the General Strike of 1926 and the "Jarrow Hunger March"⁴¹ caused fewer problems than the first street rallies of two new political forces, the fascist and communist parties. Indeed, whilst some police officers often seemed openly hostile towards the communists, others provoked widespread criticisms by their sympathetic behaviour towards fascists demonstrating in Jewish and immigrant areas of London⁴². On several occasions the political neutrality of the police was publicly called into question. With the national mobilization and crusade

⁴⁰ See: S. Jones, *Policewomen and Equality*, London, Macmillan, 1987.

⁴¹ T. Pickard, *The Jarrow March*, London, Alison & Busby, 1982.

⁴² G.D.H. & M.I. Cole, *The Conditions of Britain*, London, Gollanz, 1937, p.434; also P. Scraton, *The State of the Police*, London, Pluto Press, 1985, p.28.

against fascism during World War II this problem ceased, as any indication of public sympathy towards fascism became treasonable.

During the post-war period police-public relations were complicated by the appearance of new protest movements involving middle-class supporters and especially that of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)⁴³. The first wave of CND public activities began in the 1950s with protest meetings in Trafalgar Square and annual marches to Aldermarston. At the same time CND started a campaign within the Labour Party to impose unilateral nuclear disarmament as part of the party's electoral programme. Nevertheless the police work of controlling these peace movement protests led to relatively few major criticisms during the 1950s.

Yet another source of confrontation between the police and the public in the post-war period was the revival of trade-union militancy. In the late nineteenth century the establishment of the trade union movement and the organisation of strikes had caused many confrontations. Until trade union rights were recognized by law, the police were expected to enforce existing statutes and hence were seen by many union members or strikers as defending the rights of the "bosses". The attitudes of many police officers were ambiguous. On the one hand their duty was to enforce the law; but on the other hand they saw the advantages of trade union organisations for themselves. Ironically the idea of a police trade union was emphatically rejected both by successive governments (Conservative, Liberal and Labour) and by the TUC. The refusal of the TUC even to consider the possibility of a police union becoming part of its organisation demonstrated the hostile attitude of many union leaders towards the police.

⁴³ R. Reiner, *The Blue Coated Worker*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978. R. Reiner, 'Police Unionism', in S. Holdaway (ed.), *The British Police*, London, Edward Arnold, 1979.

In spite of such confrontations, the ideas of Reith and Hart that the police officers of Britain generally worked with widespread public support appeared plausible during the 1950s. The ideas of public service and preventive policing were respected by most political leaders and police chief officers. With 125 local police forces (after 1946) policing remained essentially locally organised and most forces had close local ties. The professional autonomy of chief officers in operational matters was rarely called into question, at least before the last years of the decade. With the growth of a mass television audience, especially after the Coronation in 1953 and the creation of the independent television network in 1956, the most familiar symbol of the British police service was *Dixon of Dock Green*. In this television drama series Jack Warner, as PC and later Sergeant, Dixon characterized the caring honest community policeman. In 1959 an opinion poll found that 83% of those questioned had a great deal of respect for the police and a further 16% had mixed feelings. Virtually nobody admitted to having little or no respect for the police⁴⁴.

III. The 1964 Police Act and modern policing problems, 1964 to 1979.

In its origins and outward appearance the 1964 Police Act seemed very much in tune with British traditions. In practice, however, the results of the Act were radical and wide-ranging, especially in the transformation of the local identities of police forces and the increase in powers of the Home Secretary. During the late 1960s and 1970s the newly re-organised provincial police forces and Metropolitan Police alike were subjected to ever increasing public criticism. Whilst the re-organisation itself created some problems, it was not the major source of public anxieties and attacks. On the one hand,

⁴⁴ Poll for the Royal Commission on the Police quoted in *The Economist*, 10th February, 1990, p.27.

the British police had to face an increase in the crime rate and massive social and political tensions. On the other hand, increasing reliance on modern technology by the police led to a reduction in traditional police-public contacts. The process by which the reform of 1964 came about was similar to that of earlier police reforms: after a number of minor problems in the late 1950s (notably over the powers of chief constables and public complaints about police behaviour), a Royal Commission was appointed in January 1960.

The final report of the Royal Commission, published in 1962, bore resemblances to its predecessors. The Commissioners recognised the importance of the local identities and linkages of the police forces and the contributions which local citizens could make to effective policing in their areas. They also acknowledged the traditional responsibility of central government for the efficiency of the police service and that the powers of the Home Secretary had proved insufficient in the past. As Ian Oliver concluded: "(the members of the Commission) realized that they were dealing with a delicate and sometimes not very rational arrangement that had worked reasonably well and which, with a little fine tuning, for all its illogicalities, should continue to work satisfactorily"⁴⁵.

Nonetheless the 1964 Police Act resulted in changes which were much greater than "fine tuning". The increased powers of the Home Secretary included those of compelling the amalgamation of existing police forces, irrespective of the populations of the areas served, of ensuring the suitability of those appointed above the rank of chief superintendent and that all police authorities exercised their powers to maintain an adequate and efficient police force. A further provision of the Act was that outside

⁴⁵ I. Oliver, *Police, Government and Accountability*, London, Macmillan, 1987, p.12.

London all police authorities should have a similar composition, with two-thirds of the members elected councillors and one third, magistrates.

These changes meant an end to the traditional pattern of police organisation. The Home Secretary rapidly used his new powers to reduce the number of existing police forces from 125 to 49 by enforced amalgamation. The number of separate police forces was further reduced to 43 after the 1972 Local Government Act which created the six Metropolitan Counties. In 1974 there remained only 31 county police forces and 10 combined area police forces in addition to the Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police. The net effect was that police forces became regional rather than local in organisation and some of the regional identities were very weak (of which South Yorkshire and Northumbria police forces are good examples). The distinction between county and borough police forces finally disappeared. Despite the rhetoric of maintaining tradition, the organisational pattern of British policing was radically transformed after 1964.

The new police forces had to deal with a fast changing society. Not only did crime rates grow markedly, but public disorders of many different kinds became increasingly frequent. Police work was complicated by these developments and the public image of the police began to change, for the worse.

The adaptation of police techniques to the advent of motor cars was important and essential change. During the 1960s all police forces became motorized, and chief police officers and politicians announced that the massive expenditure on cars and motor-bikes would lead to more effective policing. The immediate effect was the disappearance of the "bobby on the beat", the familiar and reassuring point of contact for many citizens with

the police⁴⁶. Had this change been accompanied by a reduction in crime rates or an improvement in clear-up statistics, it might have been more widely accepted, but that was not the case. In a similar way the introduction of computer technology during the 1970s did not restore public confidence in the police by reducing crime but rather proved very costly and created new anxieties about the protection of individual rights⁴⁷.

The police forces, however, were not alone in acquiring cars; mass car ownership, especially in the middle classes became common in the 1960s. The consequences of this change for policing were considerable. Traffic problems and driving offences became major consumers of police resources. At the same time many car owners, who were hitherto and in all other respects law-abiding citizens, resented such restrictions as speed limits and parking regulations. Their hostility towards such restrictions was frequently expressed directly towards the police officers responsible for imposing them. Tense relations between car owners and police officers were a major addition to the police problems of the the 1960s and early 1970s.

The increasing number of major public order problems was an equally important complication for those responsible for policing. There was a considerable revival of trade union militancy during the 1960s, which led to new confrontations between police and strikers at picket-lines. The 1973 Miners' Strike and the 1976 Grunwick dispute both produced violent

⁴⁶ M. Weatheritt, *Innovation in Policing*, Kent, Police Foundation, 1984, p.3; W.A. Belson, *The Public and the Police*, London, Harper and Row, 1975, p.7: 59% of those interviewed in London agreed with the statement "The police have lost touch with people now that the police drives around in cars".

⁴⁷ See: S. Manwaring-White, *The Policing Revolution*, Brighton, Harvester Press, 1983.

conflicts as police officers attempted to control the increasingly imaginative and effective picketing tactics of the strikers. In each case there was a chorus of criticism alleging police partiality and brutality.

Strikes and union disputes have not been the only source of criticism of the police by sections of the public during the post-war period. Hooliganism and gang warfare by football supporters has been a growing problem, particularly in certain towns since the 1960s. During the 1960s police forces first experienced public disorders created by such groups as the "mods" and "rockers" who organized seaside battles on Bank Holidays and the "hippies" with their massive pop music festivals. In the 1970s "animal rights" groups created new problems by such activities as attacks on laboratories. By their actions to control or restrain public violence the police forces generally provoked criticism from those directly concerned, but many other sections of society supported them for their essential yet thankless task.

Such public support, however, was much less in evidence when the police were dealing with racial violence. One of the consequences of the number and ethnic diversity of immigrants and the permanent nature of immigration before the restrictions imposed by successive laws of the 1960s and 70s was the strong concentration of particular ethnic groups in declining inner-city areas. Before the riots of 1981 and 1985, there had been many instances of public violence against immigrants. In 1958, for example, the police were criticized for their failure to prevent or control the Notting Hill race riots.

Three types of public order problems have arisen from this ethnic diversification of the population. The first has been that of racist attacks by small groups of whites on blacks (the phenomenon of "Paki-bashing"). The second has been the resurgence of racist organisations such as the National

Front which has organised marches in immigrant areas and provoked a defensive reaction in the setting up of an Anti Nazi League. There have been sporadic protests by groups of blacks against particular aspects of their deprivation. The overall consequence has been a loss of confidence by immigrants, and above all by immigrants' children, in the impartiality of the police. In spite of the efforts of Labour governments to outlaw racial discrimination, few police officers were recruited amongst ethnic minorities. At the same time, statistics showed that young blacks were far more likely to be stopped and questioned by police officers than young whites. The growing middle-class movement to promote civil liberties soon echoed these criticisms of police racism voiced by ethnic-minority leaders. Disquiet about police behaviour was not limited solely to members of immigrant minorities.

Although the public order problems of Northern Ireland fall outside the scope of this thesis, the police in England and Wales have had to deal with the "spill-over" effects and, notably, the attempts of the IRA to attack targets in England and Wales. During the 1970s the police were often criticised for failing to stop bomb attacks on the mainland. However, they were also accused of having scant respects for suspects' rights when carrying out investigations of these bomb attacks.

If the 1950s had been a decade of mainly consensual policing, the 1970s were increasingly characterised by controversial confrontations between police and certain sections of the public. Opinion polls showed that there was still widespread general faith in the police forces, but many were starting to worry that some police officers did not always respect the rules and that the growing expenditure on policing was not leading to significant reductions in crime rates or improvements of clear-up rates. On television, the idealism of *Dixon of Dock Green* was replaced by the harsher realism

of *Z Cars* and later by the violence of *The Sweeney*. Policing by consent seemed increasingly to be passing into history.

Conclusion

The first conclusion which emerges from this chapter is that policing by consent was not a coherent model on which the first professional police forces in Britain were created. Rather, those forces were set up by a series of *ad hoc* reforms which resulted from particular political deals. Hence, "policing by consent" is in many ways a retrospective rationalisation of what should have been, rather than what was.

The second conclusion of this chapter is that if the four elements of policing by consent identified in the second chapter form a plausible theory of police legitimacy, the reality of policing during most of the period of development of modern police forces has been one of political controversy. The structures, methods and results of the police have frequently been the subject of wide-ranging criticisms from many different groups in society.

One central problem is that a main element in policing by consent, the operational autonomy and political neutrality of police structures and actions, has proved impossible to attain. Clearly there has not been a total failure, as chief constables and other senior police officers have not depended on explicit partisan affiliation for appointment and politicians, and Home Secretaries and Police Authority leaders have issued direct instructions to police chiefs about particular operations only in very rare and extreme circumstances. But some politicization of police work occurred and has taken a variety of forms. One was simply the imposition of existing statutes which were bitterly opposed by major sections of society. In this respect legislation restricting trade union rights has been a major factor in the delegitimation of police work amongst many sections of the working

classes. A second feature has been the growth of autonomous police organisations defending the corporate and individual interests of police officers.

A second major element in policing by consent, the local identity of police forces and involvement of local political elites in the supervision of police work, has been of ever diminishing importance. The aim of improving effectiveness, efficiency and inter-police force coordination led to the creation of bigger and fewer police forces. By the mid 1970s only 43 police forces remained. All, except that of the City of London, served big areas with big populations and operated in highly standardized ways.

A third main element of policing by consent, preventive policing by close and friendly contacts between police and public to ensure maximum police cooperation and minimum use of coercive force, has become increasingly difficult to maintain. The growing use of technology, especially during the post-war period has drastically reduced opportunities for contacts. With growing crime rates, the ideal of preventive rather than reactive policing has been difficult to attain. Crime rates have grown, and police forces have been pushed into an increasingly unsuccessful fire-fighting role. The idea that the police would win widespread public support by its success in reducing crime has not stood the test of time.

In the 1970s, as at many times since the creation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829, political and police leaders have had a discourse centred on tradition, local communities and consent. The nature of the discourse has evolved, but it has generally been backward-looking, or, more accurately, nostalgic. The practical work of policing has frequently been less consensual and more coercive than "orthodox" historians admit. Policing by consent may be seen as a myth of legitimacy, and its normative impact on policy-makers has often resulted in piecemeal, nostalgic reforms.

Chapter 4:

The reforms of the 1980s: the nostalgia for policing by consent.

The organisation and methods of policing in Britain have been affected in a large number of ways by the policy decisions of successive Thatcher Governments since 1979. The most important of those governmental decisions were articulated in statute voted by parliament, while others were imposed by Home Office circulars. All were the fruits of wide-ranging debates. At first sight it might appear that the Conservative ideology has been the real winner of the debates in the last decade. Public expenditure on policing has risen markedly, as the Conservatives promised in their 1979 electoral manifesto. The Financial Management Initiative, one of the central Conservative strategies for introducing private-sector rational methods and efficiency into public services, has been applied to the police. Police powers have been increased and there has been a steady trend towards greater centralisation and national standardization in policing. This chapter, however, through an analysis of the main reforms adopted and an examination of the preceding policy debates, shows that the political dynamics of policy-making in policing have been far more complex.

The traditional idea of policing by consent far from being totally forgotten, has been a constant point of reference for political leaders from all parties. Whilst some Conservative leaders had strong preferences for increasing police powers and resources, they proved incapable of controlling the political agenda in this policy area and, as we shall see, these ideas did not go unchallenged from the start. In the late 1970s the Conservatives appeared to move ideologically to the right, while the Labour Party, especially in the many local councils where it held majorities, shifted to the left, and proposed reforms very different from those of its opponents. Nor did police leaders speak with one consistent and pro-governmental voice.

Civil liberties' organisations and investigative journalists from the press, television and radio increasingly contributed to the debates. They often illustrated some of the inadequacies and the failures of both police operations and governmental reforms to improve law and order. They kept police reform on the political agenda. Last, but not least, sections of the general public, by their protests, riots, pickets and strikes, on the one hand, and by their enthusiastic enrolment in such crime prevention schemes as neighbourhood watch, have repeatedly reminded policy-makers that public consent for police action cannot be taken for granted. Successive governments may have wished to transform the police into an effective force respected for its results. However, many outside government and not least some police leaders themselves have continued to demand the improvement of the police in its traditional role as a service, more professional and efficient, but not cut off from, or in confrontation with, society at large.

The first section of this chapter focusses on the emergence of policing onto the political agenda during the 1970s and shows how a bandwagon for

policing reforms was already rolling before the Conservatives leapt aboard and attempted to seize the reins. It demonstrates that whilst there was considerable concern amongst elites about the inadequacies of policing, a conflict over priorities was arising between those who wanted more effectiveness and those who wanted more public accountability.

In the second section, the polarisation of the political debate between the Labour and Conservative parties is examined. As the political gulf between the two widened, both sides attempted to define policing problems and prescribe solutions in line with those elements of the idea of policing by consent closest to their own ideological priorities. Neither party was totally united or fully consistent on policing issues. Furthermore, by the late 1980s an area of common ground was re-appearing.

The third section considers the contributions of those outside the parties and the police to the debates. It focusses on the findings of academic researchers and on the work of the media, in both publicizing research findings and investigating scandals about the police and the impact of the 1981 and 1985 riots, the miners' strike. It examines the evolution of public opinion as shown by opinion polls about the police.

The final section of this chapter analyses the nature of the reforms themselves. First, it examines the less publicly known changes, including the development of managerial policy making and the growing role of such bodies as the Common Police Service Committee and the Police Requirements Support Unit. It emphasizes the importance of tri-partite cooperation for national standard setting between the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Second, it assesses the major nationally-adopted policies by the standards of the traditional idea of

policing by consent. What emerges is that whilst important changes in the parameters of policing have been made during the last decade, there are not as consistent, as Conservative nor as controversial as first appeared likely when policing moved to the centre of the political arena in the 1970s.

Putting police problems on the political agenda

The last chapter showed that periodically throughout the history of the British police different problems of law and order have emerged onto the political agenda, and periods of intense debates occurred. The organisation, methods, resources and powers of Britain's police forces have been called into question both locally and nationally in response to long-term social changes (of values and of the nature and level of crime) and short-term events (such as the handling of a particular strike or a series of brutal murders). By the time that the Conservative Party won the 1979 general election, the present debates about Britain's police forces were already under way and wide-ranging. The first measures of the new Conservative Government were the consequences of these on-going debates which Conservative politicians themselves had done little to initiate¹.

One issue widely discussed by politicians, amongst legal elites and in the media was the adequacy of existing police powers and resources in the face of an alarming and continuous rise in crime rates. These issues were brought to prominence by the eleventh report of the Criminal Law Revision Committee, published in 1972, which suggested a limitation on the traditional right of silence of accused citizens during police

¹ R. Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1985, p.167.

interrogation. Its argument was that existing rules of evidence about this right of silence allowed professional criminals to escape conviction². Civil liberties organisations, journalists and some politicians greeted this idea with great hostility.

A similar line of argument was developed by Sir Robert Mark, then Metropolitan Commissioner, in his Dimbleby Memorial Lecture on BBC television in 1972. He argued that juries were acquitting too many people because rules of evidence favoured the accused. There was therefore a need to change the rules and increase police powers; otherwise police officers, under pressure to reduce crime rates, might be tempted to employ unorthodox or arbitrary methods³. This argument again provoked many critical comments in law journals and newspapers from judges, civil liberties groups, journalists and academics.

A different aspect of the adequacy of policing arrangements was raised by problems which police forces encountered in controlling the miners' strike of 1972. The National Union of Mineworkers initially demonstrated a far greater capacity for national organisation than the police, notably in deploying rapidly and effectively large numbers of 'flying pickets'. These pickets managed to close down the Saltey Coke Depot after a six-day long

² I. McKenzie and B. Irving, "The Right to Silence", *Policing*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 1988, p. 88.

³ Sir Robert Mark, Dimbleby Memorial Lecture, on BBC television, 1972.

struggle with the police⁴. Two questions were raised in the press and in Parliament: the necessity of improving police methods and training for dealing with strikes and picket-lines and the desirability of some form of national coordinating machinery to handle such problems. The immediate governmental response was the creation of the National Reporting Centre as an inter-force coordinating agency under the direction of the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers in New Scotland Yard.

The large-scale industrial unrest of the 1970s, culminating in the waves of strikes during the "winter of discontent" of 1978-79, meant that these issues of police training-methods and national deployment for public-order problems remained firmly on the political agenda⁵.

A third aspect of the debate about increasing police resources was the campaign by the Police Federation for a great increase in public spending on law and order services including increases in manpower and in the wages of police officers. The Police Federation had hitherto kept a relatively low public profile except in its campaign against the abolition of the death penalty⁶. In 1975 its leaders decided to launch a massive public campaign in favour both of increasing the number of policemen and of strengthening their powers. In 1976, however, when official statistics showed that once again the police forces were unable to fill the existing number of jobs

⁴ K. Jeffery and P. Hennessy, *States of Emergency: British Governments and Strike Breaking since 1919*, London, Routledge, 1983, pp.235-236, also see: P. Scraton, *The State of the Police*, London, Pluto Press, 1985, p. 142;

⁵ A. Sked and C. Cook, *Post War Britain*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984, pp. 321-322.

⁶ R. Reiner, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

because of the shortage of suitable applicants, the Police Federation focussed its campaign on police salaries. By 1978, with the real prospect of large pay increases as a result of the public enquiry then under way, the Police Federation returned to the broader theme of reducing crime by employing more policemen and increasing their powers. The implicit criticism in this campaign of existing Labour Government policies made it especially controversial, as the minority Labour Government was lurching towards a general election⁷.

These demands for more officers and for greater resources and powers for the police were only one reason for the public debates in the 1970s. Different sources of public controversy about policing were the media and civil liberties' organisations. Newspapers and television gave prominence to police scandals, paying considerable attention to scandals in the Metropolitan Police. In November 1969, *The Times* published evidence of a wide network of corruption within the Metropolitan Police, and the failure of an internal enquiry led to the appointment in 1970 of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Williamson to conduct a full investigation of the problem. In the face of considerable obstruction from police officers, Williamson resigned⁸. Other allegations included the fabrication and manipulation of evidence by the drug squad and corruption and blue movie parties in the pornography squad; these scandals provided pages of copy for the popular press⁹.

⁷ *Ibidem.*, pp. 73-75.

⁸ *Ibidem.*, p. 65.

⁹ R. Mark, *In the Office of Constable*, London, Collins, 1978, Chs.7-10.

Civil-rights' organisations, whilst concerned with these scandals, paid special attention to racist behaviour by police officers, the abuse of police powers and the inadequacy of mechanisms for investigating complaints against the police. The Confait case of 1972 and the subsequent Fisher enquiry provided evidence to those who argued that not only was there no need to increase police powers but also that there were strong grounds for believing that tighter controls on the police were essential. A survey of public and police attitudes in London, published in 1975, showed that 25% of the adult public sample believed: "The police don't investigate properly complaints made against them" and 26% of the police sample acknowledged: "Police officers are too ready to cover up for the colleagues they know have done something wrong"¹⁰.

Another source of concern to the civil liberties' organisations was the increased use of physical force in police operations. On the one hand, the techniques employed by the 'Special Patrol Groups' in the Metropolitan Police (since their creation in 1965), and later by Police Support Units in many police forces (after their setting up in 1974), caused concern that unnecessary confrontations involving the use of force were becoming commonplace. On the other hand there was considerable alarm at the huge increase in the number of deaths in police custody which rose from 8 in 1970 to 48 in 1978. The most notorious death in police custody was that of

¹⁰ On the Confait case and Fisher Enquiry see: I. Oliver, *Police, Government and Accountability*, London, Macmillan, 1987; on police racism see: P. Gordon, *White Law*, London, Pluto Press, 1983, W.A. Belson, *The Police and the Public*, London, Harper and Row, 1975, p. 42: 32% of the sample of 1000 Metropolitan police officers agreed with the statement: "coloured people are less intelligent than whites".

Blair Peach in April 1979, just 10 days before the general election¹¹.

The debates and campaigns of the 1970s were not without result. One consequence of civil liberties' lobbying about the inadequacy of existing means for investigating complaints made against police officers was the passing of the 1976 Police Act which established the Police Complaints Board (and precipitated the resignation of Sir Robert Mark in protest). The provisions of this Act were modified by the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act as discussed below¹².

If the Police Federation and many senior police officers disliked this decision of the Labour Government, they were much less critical of its two other major initiatives, the appointment of the Edmund Davies enquiry into police pay and conditions and the establishment in June 1977 of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Philips. The findings of these two official studies became the basis for the first major reforms of the post-1979 Conservative Government. Indeed the Edmund Davis report was already published and its recommendations accepted in full by the Callaghan Government for a phased implementation starting in 1979¹³.

¹¹ P. Scraton and K. Chadwick (eds.), *In the arms of the law*, London, Pluto Press, 1987, p.75; see also: M. Ben and K. Worple in *Death in the City*, London, Canary Press, 1986, who allege that between 1970 and 1975, over 300 people died either in police stations or after incidents involving the police.

¹² On the 1976 Police Act and the Police Complaints Board see:

¹³ *Committee of Enquiry on the police*, Reports I and II (Chairman Lord Edmund Davies), Cmnd, 7283 and 7633, HMSO, 1979.

Paradoxically these measures had done little to restore police confidence in the Labour Party. The partisan politicization of the police in the 1979 general election campaign was greater than ever before. Two weeks before the poll, Sir Robert Mark, by then as famous for his television promotion of tyres as his past eminence as Metropolitan Police Commissioner, made a public comparison of the relationship between the Labour Party and trade unions and the methods employed by the Nazis to achieve total control of Germany in the 1930s. The next day large advertisements in the newspapers, placed by the Police Federation at a cost of £21,000, called for a law and order campaign in terms which bore a remarkable resemblance to passages in the Conservative Party manifesto¹⁴.

In May 1979 the Conservative Government took power at a time when a wide-ranging debate about the police was in full swing, when a major increase of police salaries had already been decided but not fully implemented, and when a full-blown Royal Commission was investigating changes in police powers and methods. It inherited a police service many of whose leaders were more openly and explicitly pro-Conservative than ever before. Neither the debates nor many of the main lines of the new Government's early reforms were initiated by the Conservatives, nor were the measures themselves explicitly Conservative. Nonetheless the Conservatives began their period in government with the advantage of a wide-spread sentiment of good-will on the part of the men and women of the police service.

¹⁴ R. Reiner, *op.cit*, p. 74.

The partisan politicization of policing issues.

Debates about policing between the two main political parties from 1979-89 are in many ways typical of the general phenomenon of increasing polarization which continued at least until 1984. Ironically, at their most extreme, the parties both continued to refer to the idea of policing by consent. Each acknowledged that there was a need to restore policing by consent but disputes arose over which elements of the traditional model needed reinforcement. Initially Conservatives stressed the importance of reinforcing the operational autonomy of the police and increasing resources: more power, more officers and more money. Labour spokesmen argued the case for restoring public confidence by community policing methods and increased local accountability.

Nonetheless, differences between the parties were not as great as appeared in the leaders' public discourse. Labour did not deny the need for increased spending on policing. Indeed in 1979 inter-party disputes did not concern the extent of the increases in salaries but only the timing¹⁵. Furthermore, the Labour argument for phasing the implementation of the Edmund Davies Report was that of controlling the growth of public spending, an argument which the Conservative themselves were later to employ in justifying the introduction of the Financial Management Initiative.

The debates were further complicated by two factors. The first was that both major parties were internally divided, not only between right and left wings, or "wets" and "dries", but also between national and local party organisations. The Victorian values of the true Thatcherite believers were

¹⁵ *Hansard*, 17 July 1978, Vol. 954, p.31.

rejected by both "wet" ministers and local council leaders alike. Similarly, the more extreme "people's policing" proposals of some far-left Labour councils were rejected even in other parts of the left as well as by most national leaders. The second factor was that the position of both parties evolved over time. The Conservatives realized that "throwing money" at policing did not produce a marked reduction in crime figures or a great increase in clear-up rates¹⁶. The Conservative Government, especially after 1981, became increasingly aware of real problems of police insensitivity to local communities and racist attitudes, whilst during the late 1980s some local left-wing Labour leaders followed the example of the Islington's Margaret Hodge in exploiting all the legal possibilities for working in cooperation with the police¹⁷.

In 1979 the new Conservative Government made deliberate efforts to follow up its campaign pledges of restoring law and order and massively increased police resources. On the first day after the formation of the Government the Prime Minister with great publicity invited Police Federation leaders to 10 Downing Street to learn that the Edmund Davies Report's recommendations were to be implemented in full and with immediate effect. The fact that it was not possible to pay the police officers their promised pay rises until the end of June (for purely practical reasons) became public knowledge only later as a result of a parliamentary question¹⁸. In subsequent months both the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, and the Prime Minister continued to extol the merits of the

¹⁶ C. Horton and D. Smith, *Evaluating Police Work*, London, Policy Studies Institute, 1988, p.6.

¹⁷ *Interview*, Margaret Hodge, Leader of Islington Council, February 1989.

¹⁸ *Hansard*, 9 July 1979, Vol. 970, p.31.

police and to refute virtually all criticisms, especially those from local Labour leaders.

The publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure in January 1981 was welcomed by Conservative Party leaders. They promised to implement its proposals of increasing police powers. The first reactions of the Prime Minister and Home Secretary to the riots in Brixton in April 1981 and the more widespread riots of the summer of the same year were to pay tribute to the policemen for their efforts to re-establish order and to admit the need for increased resources for public order equipment and training for the police. The reactions to the 1985 riots were very similar. In July 1981 Whitelaw authorized the Merseyside Police Force to use tear gas grenades against the Toxteth rioters, the first time their use had been allowed in mainland Britain¹⁹.

In 1982 the Government introduced into Parliament its version of what became the first Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. This proposal included almost all the Philips Commission's recommendations for increasing police powers but few of its suggestions for improving accountability. It was greeted with strong hostility from the Labour Party and from all civil-liberties' organisations. Even some Conservatives openly expressed reservations that the Royal Commission's suggested safeguards had been ignored. This bill had not been enacted before the dissolution of Parliament in 1983, so that a new bill had to be presented to the new

¹⁹ I. Oliver, *op.cit.*, p.75.

Parliament. That second bill, finally passed in 1984, was much more moderate than the first version²⁰.

Conservative support for proposals of increasing police powers was again demonstrated during the miners' strike of 1984-85. Criticisms that the police over-reached their powers and employed excessive use of force were consistently rejected by ministers and back-benchers alike. They gave firm support for the operational decisions of police chiefs when attacked by Labour-controlled police authorities. The attempts of the South Yorkshire Police Authority, dominated by Labour councillors, to oblige the Chief Constable to sell off police horses after the effective deployment of mounted police officers against miners' pickets, notably at Orgreave, were frustrated by the Home Secretary²¹. In 1986 the Public Order Act was passed with the avowed objective of giving the police more power effectively to control public gatherings and demonstrations²².

These public declarations and actions in favour of a more powerful police service were only part of the Conservative Government's approach to policing. Its other policies were much more moderate and less

²⁰ The difference between the two versions is discussed in: P. Scraton, *The State of the Police*, London, Pluto Press, 1985, p.117.

²¹ The problem in South Yorkshire was not just that Labour leaders of the Police Authority disliked the way in which the horses and dogs had been used, but that they strongly objected to having to pass on to local rate-payers a bill for £2.8 million for the additional costs of policing incurred by the strike (up to mid-September 1984). See: B.Fine and R. Millar (eds), *Policing the Miners' Strike*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1985, p. 40; see also: *Policing London - Collected Reports of the GLC Police Committee*, London, GLC, 1986; pp.112, 117; *Morning Telegraph*, 18 September 1984; *Yorkshire Post*, 19 September 1984.

²² Public Order Act 1986, c 64, London, HMSO, 1984..

controversial. The same Conservative Government appointed Lord Scarman to carry out a public enquiry into the circumstances of the Brixton riots. Furthermore, after the 1983 general election the second modified Police and Criminal Evidence Bill was introduced and it incorporated not only more of the safeguards proposed in the Philips Report but also the obligation for all police forces to create community liaison committees, taking up Lord Scarman's recommendation²³. The moderate aspect of Conservative policing policies was demonstrated by the 1983 Home Office Circular 114 on effectiveness and efficiency which underlined a change of attitude: henceforth funding for policing would be subject to the same considerations as that in other public spending areas. Clearly, the commitment of the 1979 election manifesto constantly to increase spending on the police service was no longer valid.

The Labour Party also appeared schizophrenic in its approach to the police. On the one hand, some demanded much greater local-government control of police forces including the creation of a local police authority for London. On the other hand, many national leaders hailed the heroism of the police against the rioters in 1981 and 1985. Furthermore, by 1987, Hattersley, Kinnock and other Labour Party national leaders were criticizing the failure of Conservative policies to control rising crime and promised to bring about improvements in policing by encouraging closer cooperation between local leaders and local police chiefs²⁴.

In 1979 the Labour Party had appeared much more extreme. Many Labour leaders were worried by the explicitly pro-Conservative positions

²³ *The Police and Criminal Evidence Act*, C 60, HMSO, 1984, sec 106.

²⁴ The 1987 election campaign was marked by a clear change of approach from the Labour leaders.

taken by Police Federation leaders during the general election campaign. They argued that the tradition of political neutrality, a key feature of policing by consent, had been seriously undermined. There was a need to restore the balance. In 1979 Jack Straw, Labour MP, introduced a private member's Bill for reform of the structure of police authorities. This proposal included the abolition of seats for magistrates on police authorities and giving the authorities increased powers over general policies and senior appointments in their local police forces. The following year Jack Straw called for the establishment of an elected Greater London Police Authority as a means of allowing local councillors to take over the responsibility of the Home Office for the supervision of the Metropolitan Police²⁵.

In 1981 Labour Party demands for more effective local controls over police forces were multiplied in response to two related developments. The first was the election of a Labour majority led by the radical Ken Livingstone to the Greater London Council; the second was the series of urban riots in April and July. Livingstone's GLC not only campaigned for an elected London Police Authority but also established a generously funded Police Support Unit to monitor the operations of the Metropolitan Police. The new unit created a specialised free journal, *Policing London*, which devoted considerable space to criticism of the activities of Metropolitan Police officers²⁶.

²⁵ I. Oliver, *op.cit.*, p.68.

²⁶ *Policing London*, Police Monitoring and Research Group of the London Strategic Policy Unit, The group was first created by the Great London Council and after the abolition of the GLC was financed until 1988 by several London labour councils. The group carried out research on different aspect of policing in London and was very active in supporting the creation of a locally elected police authority for the capital.

In response to the riots in Brixton and Toxteth, national and local leaders alike criticized police methods and racist attitudes. Ken Livingstone attacked the "Clint Eastwood techniques" of the Metropolitan Police, whilst in Liverpool, Margaret Simey and Eric Heffer voiced similar scathing criticisms of the Merseyside Police Force²⁷. At the 1981 Labour Party conference resolutions called for the disbanding of the Special Patrol Groups and the establishment for an independent Police Complaints Authority. The same year Labour leaders welcomed many of the recommendations of Lord Scarman's report, but expressed a demand for more radical reforms, especially in the powers and composition of police authorities. In general national party leaders continued to balance their calls for greater public and local accountability by statements of support for and confidence in the police.

The introduction of the first version of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill revealed real differences of priorities of the Labour and Conservative parties. In introducing the second reading of the Bill, the Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, whilst admitting "it is possible to achieve order at too high a price in terms of freedom", insisted that "public confidence in the police derives from their ability to catch criminals and bring them to justice. If their powers are too circumscribed to allow them to do that, the public will not see the police as succeeding"²⁸. For the Labour Party Roy Hattersley replied "the bill contains proposals concerning arrest, detention and interrogation that are, or ought to be, unacceptable in a free society . . . proposes extension of police powers that will alienate the police

²⁷ Margaret Simey, *Democracy rediscovered: A Study in Police Accountability*, London, Pluto Press, 1988.

²⁸ *Hansard*, 30 November 1982, vol.33, p.150.

from the public whom they serve, thus making the prevention of crime and the apprehension of criminals more rather than less difficult"²⁹.

The Labour Party campaigned consistently and firmly against the first version of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. Its 1983 General Election manifesto included, once again, the promise to make major reforms to increase the local accountability of police forces. The miners' strike of 1984-85 led to a number of large-scale confrontations between police and pickets. There was a major effort of coordination by the National Reporting Centre to move police officers where they were most needed, which largely frustrated the efforts of the National Union of Mineworkers to move its "flying pickets" across the country. Local Labour councillors were critical of violent police techniques³⁰. National leaders saw the "coordination" operation as the evidence that a national police force under the direct control of the Home Secretary had been brought into existence without statutory authority. Conflict arose between the Labour-controlled South Yorkshire Police Authority and the Home Secretary over sharing the costs incurred by this centrally "coordinated" policing of the strike.

Finally, in 1985, several local Labour councillors severely criticized the handling by the police of the Tottenham and Handsworth riots. In

²⁹ *Ibidem.*, p.157.

³⁰ See: B. Fine and R. Millar (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.71; see also *Policing London*, *op.cit.*, pp.99-122. This GLC report stressed the role of the National Reporting Centre as the operational centre for the policing of the strike and underlined its constant contacts with Cabinet Committee MISC 101 which met every Monday and Wednesday morning during the strike to coordinate government action. The report concluded "this national police operation to try and break the miners'strike is unprecedented. The only previous such operation in peacetime was against the Chartists, in the last century; that was conducted by the army" (p.107).

Tottenham, Bernie Grant, one of Britain's rare black local council leaders, commented that in the riots, the police had received a "good hiding" which was "well deserved". Given the fact that a constable had been brutally murdered during the Tottenham riot, this comment provoked widespread criticism and embarrassed Labour's national leaders³¹.

The critics of Grant's outspoken comments included Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley, the Shadow Home Secretary. The Labour leaders' moderation in 1985 seemed to demonstrate a return to traditional sensitivity towards policing problems which had generally characterised the approach of the Labour Party when in government. Indeed, as already noted, a Labour Government had established the Edmund Davies enquiry and accepted its findings in full. That same Government had appointed the Philips Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure. Even in 1982 the former Home Secretary Merlyn Rees had used a speech by William Whitelaw as indicative of the Labour position on policing³².

There was little clarity or consistency in the positions adopted by the two major parties. The only element of continuity in these polarised debates was the desire of each party to brand its opponents as extremists and to gain the maximum electoral advantage. The Conservative Government was not nearly as unrestrained in its enthusiasm for increasing police powers and resources as the Labour Party pretended. Nor was Labour, at

³¹ A short but highly critical account (which avoids quoting Bernie Grant) of police conduct in Brixton and Tottenham is given in *Policing London*, op.cit., pp.123-136. A fuller study of the Tottenham riot and murder of PC Keith Blakelock is provided by *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry*, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Disturbances of October 1985 at the Broadwater Farm Estate, Tottenham, chaired by Lord Gifford, QC, London, Karia Press, 1986.

³² Noted by R. Reiner, op.cit., p75.

least at the national level, nearly as anti-police as the Conservatives claimed. The fundamental difference between the two parties might be summed up in the 1982 Whitelaw/Hattersley exchange: for the Conservatives the police had to be effective to win public consent whereas for Labour public consent was an essential pre-condition for effective police operations.

Public contributions to the policing debates

Policing problems and reforms returned constantly to the front line of political debate not primarily at the initiative of the political parties. On the contrary the parties were constantly forced to react to events, especially public disorders and other developments, notably crime trends, which were outside their control. Indeed the impact of such happenings was frequently amplified by the press, television and academic research projects. In many respects partisan pronouncement and government policy making were responsive or "fire fighting" rather than taking the lead.

This was especially so over public disorders and strained relations between the police and ethnic minorities. In April 1980 a riot in the St Paul district of Bristol followed a police search of a cafe frequented by blacks. When the police arrested the cafe owner and began to transfer illegally stocked alcohol to a police van, a crowd quickly formed encircling the police who responded to their entrapment by calling up massive reinforcements. Only after 9 hours of sporadic street conflicts between the police and the largely black crowd was order re-established. The damage to property in the area was valued at £500,000, but the harm to the image of the police was incalculable. All the national newspapers and television

reported the events as evidence of a real lack of confidence in the police amongst immigrant communities³³.

In 1981 the riots were much more widespread and costly. They demonstrated that hostility towards the police was not limited to members of immigrant communities. The riots in Brixton between the 11th and 13th April 1981 showed this point clearly. Brixton had been chosen by the Metropolitan Police leaders for an intensive anti-crime operation, code-named Swamp 81, which involved a heavy police presence on the street and extensive use of "Sus law" powers³⁴. This operation, decided without any local consultation, led initially to a number of street scuffles between local black youths and police officers. On 11th April, however, street fighting broke out between policeman and crowds of young people at the local street market and the conflicts lasted over 8 hours. 165 police officers were wounded and over 100 buildings were damaged, of which 26 were burnt down including a church, 3 pubs and a branch of Woolworths. One estimate set the cost of the damage at nearly £10 million³⁵. The images of Brixton in flames and mobs of youths looting shops, and hurling bricks and Molotov cocktails, appeared on every television news broadcast and on the front pages of every newspaper. The immediate reaction of the Government was to appoint Lord Scarman to make an official report on the violence³⁶.

³³ *The Guardian*, 13th April 1981.

³⁴ Lord Scarman, *The Scarman Report: The Brixton Disorders*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1982, p. 79.

³⁵ M. Kettle and L. Hodges, *Uprising!, The police, the People and the Riots in Britain's cities*, London, Pan, 1982, p. 29.

³⁶ Lord Scarman, *op. cit.*, p.13.

If ministers hoped that the public hearings of a widely-respected independent-minded judge would provide a breathing space for tempers to cool and new policies to be thought out, they were quickly disabused. A new wave of urban riots began on 3rd July and continued sporadically in different towns until the end of that month. The first violence took place in Southall when the police tried to separate fighting racist skinheads and Asian youths. The next day in Toxteth the rioting was far worse: a mob of young blacks, Asians and whites, forced the police temporarily to withdraw from the area. Looting and arson continued there for three days. Only after massive reinforcements of police had been brought in, 255 police officers had been injured and CS gas grenades had been used for the first time in Britain, did the police regain control of Toxteth. The media once again covered the events in great detail and underlined the strong anti-police feeling which seemed common to black and white youths alike³⁷.

Over the next two weeks such press and television reports became increasingly common as the rioting spread. Indeed on 7th July, the number of youths participating in the Wood Green rioting in North London rose considerably after the events in progress were reported live on the *News at Ten*. On 8th July it was the turn of Moss Side, in Manchester, to experience major disorders and for Woolwich, Tooting, Fulham, and Dalston, in Greater London, to have street scuffles. The 10th July saw new riots in Brixton and Southall and disorders in many other districts of London. During the next weekend both London and many provincial cities were again the scene of street confrontations between mobs of stone throwing and pillaging youths and the police. Even normally sleepy country towns such as Cirencester and Knaresborough staged their own local riots. The

³⁷ *The Guardian*, 6th July 1981; *The Sun*, 6th July 1981.

wave of disorder came to an end after another outburst of street violence in Toxteth between the 26th and 28th July. The official estimate of the damage exceeded £40 million, with £11 million of damage done in Liverpool alone. Seventeen towns had been affected and over 3000 people arrested³⁸.

The impact of these events on political debate was considerable. The Government felt obliged to react, so Lord Scarman was asked to widen the scope of his Brixton enquiry. At the same time, Michael Heseltine, then Secretary of State for the Environment, personally directed a task force to study the problems of Liverpool with the assistance of Timothy Raison, Minister of State at the Home Office. One local council, that of Greater Manchester, appointed its own official enquiry into the local disorders, under Mr. Benet Hytner, Q.C.. As the reports produced by these official enquiries were published at different times, the press and television returned to the subject of the riots and their causes several times³⁹.

The media not only reported the events and the official enquiry's findings about the events, both at some length, but also carried out their own investigative journalism and commissioned opinion polls. Articles and television documentaries about inner-city decline, problems of ethnic communities, and police-public relations became commonplace. Some of the opinion polls showed that distrust of the police was much higher amongst blacks than amongst whites. Amongst all young people surveyed the level of distrust of the police was exceptionally high.

³⁸ "From Deptford to Notting hill: Summer 1981", *New Community*, 9/2, 1981-82, pp. 205-6

³⁹ *The Sun*, 9th and 10th July 1981; *The Daily Telegraph*, 9th July 1981; *The Guardian*, 7th and 8th July 1981.

Nonetheless, unemployment was the single most identified cause of the 1981 riots. A poll published on 11th May of a representative sample of the population of Greater London, indicated that 40% of the population cited unemployment as a major cause of the riots whereas the behaviour of the police (cited by 33% of the black and Asian respondents) was identified by only 13% of the whole sample. In contrast the behaviour of the blacks was a major cause for 22% of the whole sample but was cited by only 11% of the blacks and Asians polled⁴⁰. Another opinion poll, carried out in the Brixton area only ten days after the April riots, showed that the attitude of the police was seen as the main cause of the riots by 37% of all black respondents and by 52% of young blacks (between the ages of 13 and 24). Unemployment remained the most frequently identified cause of the riots for white respondents (29%). However, to the question "what measures should be taken to prevent new problems in Brixton?", the most popular response was: "improve relations between the police and the community".

Table 141

"Which amongst the following measures should be taken to prevent new disorders in Brixton?"

	All Blacks	All Whites	Blacks 13-24	Whites 13-24
Improve relations between the police and the community	87	78	90	92
Increase public expenditure on housing and jobs	86	68	89	91
Severely punish those arrested	28	58	17	42
Abolish the Special Patrol Group	48	29	46	37
Increase the number of car patrols	16	25	14	20
Arm the police	5	14	8	9

⁴⁰ *New Standard*, Mori Poll, 11th May 1981.

⁴¹ *The Times*, 14th May 1981

These results may be contrasted with those of a poll carried out amongst a sample representative of all the British population after the July riots. In reply to the open question: What were the major causes of the recent riots?, the results were: unemployment 62%, racial tension 26%, police behaviour 17%, political trouble makers 12%, poor housing 8%, government policies 7%, lack of parental authority 5%, the media 4%, other reasons 14%, and don't know 9%⁴².

By commissioning and publishing such polls, academics and journalists contributed to keeping policing problems firmly on the political agenda by showing the continuing decline of public confidence. In 1987 a survey of social attitudes showed that only 66% of those questioned thought that the police service was 'well-run' and noted that this figure had fallen from 77% in 1983, when the same question had been put to a comparable sample. In early 1989 a MORI poll revealed that only 58% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of policing in their home area, whereas 75% had replied positively to the same question in 1981. MORI also asked their respondents whether they had respect for the police, and found that 41% had "mixed feelings", 16% had 'little or no respect'. These results, as *The Economist* underlined in early 1990, provided a sharp contrast with the findings of the Royal Commission in 1959, when only 16% had expressed 'mixed feelings' and nobody 'little or no respect'. In May 1990, the same trends were shown by the survey of the Consumers' Association for *Which?*⁴³.

⁴² *The Times*, 8th October 1981.

⁴³ R. Jowell *et al.*, *British Social Attitudes*, Aldershot, Gower, 1988, p.118; *Police Review*, 14 April 1989, p.745; *The Economist*, 10 February 1990, p.27; *Which?*, May 1990, pp.258-261.

The 1981 riots encouraged and inspired a large number of non-official research projects about police behaviour. Many academics began research on this topic. The Metropolitan Police Force commissioned a major study of police-public relations in London from the Policy Studies Institute⁴⁴. The findings of these projects were in turn reported in the media and thus repeatedly focussed public opinion on public issues.

In the early 1980s much of the research examined alleged racist attitudes and behaviour by policemen, the lack of good police-community relations, especially in urban areas, the abuse of police powers and complaints-investigation procedures⁴⁵. As reforms were implemented to deal with these problems, new research was undertaken to assess the effects of the reforms. However, as the focus of reforms changed to that of improving efficiency the field of research was modified. Financial accountability replaced public accountability as the main topic of research.

Nonetheless, police-community relations, public-order methods and police powers were kept on the political agenda by a series of events. The first was the 1984-85 miners' strike in which there were numerous confrontations between mass pickets and the police, which resulted in many arrests, injuries and allegations of excessive use of physical force. A few months after the end of miners' strike, in September-October 1985, there were major disorders or riots in Brixton, Handsworth and Tottenham. The brutal stabbing of PC Blakelock and the subsequent controversy over relations between the black community and the police

⁴⁴ D. Smith, J. Gray, S. Small, *Police and People in London*, 4 vols, London, Policy Studies Institute, 1983.

⁴⁵ For a brief survey see: R. Graef, "What's gone wrong with policing?", *The Independent on Sunday*, 18 March 1990.

meant that policing methods and powers were again a focus of attention for the media⁴⁶.

Other developments focussed critical attention on the police. One was the behaviour of the police towards strikers during the long dispute at the News International Plant at Wapping. There were a number of violent clashes between police officers, pickets and demonstrators, culminating in a street battle on 24 January 1987 when 1,400 officers charged a huge crowd and over 300 people were injured. There were some 500 protests about police brutality and wrongful arrests from 185 trade unionists and journalists. The Police Complaints Authority called in Chief Superintendent Wyrko from Northamptonshire to carry out an investigation. The lack of cooperation from both the Metropolitan Police officers in the division concerned and from the newspapers which had extensive photographic documents of the events meant that this inquiry lasted almost three years. Finally in 1989 the first court proceedings against police officers for conspiracy failed, provoking a new storm of critical comment in the media. The behaviour of the officers involved was twice more to be a subject of public controversy, first in early January 1990 when the report of David Wyrko was leaked to the BBC, and again in mid-February 1990 when the annual report of the Police Complaints Authority including a summary of the Wyrko Report was published. With several more CPS prosecutions and civil proceedings against the police for assault still awaiting trial yet more waves of media criticism of police conduct at Wapping were inevitable⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ See J. Benyon, "Turmoil in the Cities", *Social Studies Review*, 1/3, January 1986, pp.3-8.

⁴⁷ See: *Policing London*, 4/26, March/April 1987, pp.85-86; "One law for the boys in blue?", *The Independent*, 21 December 1989; see also: *The Independent*, 16 February 1990; *The Independent*, 27 March 1990.

Another public image problem was the long and difficult investigation to discover the identity of the officers responsible for beating up five youths in Holloway, London in August 1983. Whilst there was no dispute that a blatant assault had been carried out by police officers and the boys each received £400 in compensation from the Metropolitan Police, the Police Complaints Authority concluded that no action could be taken because it could not identify those concerned, the consequence of a conspiracy of silence by the 30 officers in the area at the time of the assault. Finally, in early 1986 Sir Kenneth Newman, the Commissioner, threatened to discipline all 30 possible suspects and promised immunity from prosecution to any officer not involved in the assault who would give evidence. One constable at last broke ranks and in late February five officers were suspended from duties and charged. Even the trial of the culprits did not end the hostile media coverage, as the officer who had given the information was completely ostracised by other officers, suffered a nervous breakdown and resigned from the police service⁴⁸.

A third was the allegation made by an officer of the Kent constabulary about the unorthodox methods used by this colleagues to improve clear-up rates. Another widely publicized scandal arose from the suspicions of police officers themselves about the role played by freemasonry in police promotions⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ See: *Police Review*, 7 February 1986; *The Guardian*, 20 February 1986; *Evening Standard*, 21 February 1986; *The Guardian*, 25 February 1986; *Policing London*, 2, July-August 1986, p.11.

⁴⁹ *The Economist*, 10 February 1990; *The Independent*, 12 May 1988 (on the allegations by Chief Inspector B. Woollard on the influence of the Lodge of St. James within the Metropolitan Police).

Yet another scandal was the long drawn out "Stalker affair", which involved the suspension from duty of the Deputy Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, and thus his removal from the task of leading an investigation into the use of shoot-to-kill tactics in the Royal Ulster Constabulary. He was suspended on the basis of allegations of corruption which later proved totally unfounded. Although he was restored to his position (but not to the enquiry on Northern Ireland), John Stalker soon left on early retirement and subsequently published his own account of the scandal in a book which became a best seller⁵⁰.

Police competence in dealing with public-order problems was called into question by the tragic deaths of football supporters at the Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield in April 1989. In the subsequent judicial enquiry senior officers of the South Yorkshire Police proved "defensive and evasive witnesses", and the interim report stressed the failure of key police leaders to prevent the stampede which killed 95 people. The Chief Constable accepted overall responsibility and offered his resignation, but the Police Authority refused to accept it⁵¹.

Last but not least, there was the contribution made by members of the Serious Crime Squad of the West Midlands to the declining public image of the police in 1989. After a series of court cases in which it emerged that officers of the Squad had fabricated evidence the Chief Constable disbanded the entire Squad. The Police Complaints Authority soon found itself launching an enquiry into 200 allegations of misconduct of this kind. By the end of the year 53 former officers of the Squad under suspicion were transferred from policing to administrative duties and the enquiry was far from completed. It soon emerged that not only had several innocent people

⁵⁰ J. Stalker, *Stalker*, London, Harrap, 1988.

⁵¹ *Taylor Interim Report on the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster*, 1989.

spent long periods in prison for offences which they had not committed, but that those responsible for a number of brutal crimes remained unidentified and unpunished⁵².

Finally, the Police Complaints Authority itself also contributed to keeping police problems in the public eye. At the publication of every annual report by the Complaints Authority the press debated its accounts of police malpractice. If the statistics showed an increase in the number of complaints over the previous year's total the media concluded that the police service was getting worse; if complaints were less numerous it meant either that public had lost confidence in the Complaints Authority, or that individuals were preferring to sue the police for compensation in the civil courts. The Complaints Authority itself was attacked by journalists for being too sympathetic to the police, whilst Police Federation leaders alleged it was "hell-bent on depriving police officers of their civil rights". Even the costs of investigating complaints against the police made headlines, since in 1989 they were estimated at £52 million and the enquiries occupied the time of over 1000 officers. At the same ^{time} the growing amounts paid in damages after civil actions also merited media coverage; the Metropolitan Police, for example, saw its compensation bill rise from £11,000 on six cases in 1987 to £252,000 on 25 cases in 1989. The award of £100,000 damages to a London man on whom cannabis had been planted by police officers not only set a record but also attracted considerable unwelcome publicity⁵³.

⁵² *The Independent*, 23 June 1989, 17 August 1989, 23 December 1989, 29 December 1989, 13 February 1990.

⁵³ *The Independent*, 12 May 1988 (on the publication of the annual report: "Police accused of shielding violent officers by silence"); 18 May 1989 (on the attack on the Complaints Authority by Mike Bennett, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation); 21 December 1989; 12 January 1990, 16 February 1990. See also: *The Independent on Sunday*, 18 March 1990; *The Sunday Times*, 26 November 1989.

In the decade that followed the Conservative victory of 1979, the work and powers of the police were constantly subjected to very considerable public scrutiny. The frequent attention of the media to problems and scandals of policing, and the carrying out and publication of opinion polls about the police, meant that police chiefs and Home Office ministers were regularly called on for public accounts of their actions and policies. The second major feature of this period was the take-off of research into police accountability, methods and training and into the effects of each new reform adopted, whether as a consequence of legislation or of Home Office circulars. The publication of numerous reports about many aspects of police work from very varied academic and political approaches not only sustained media debates but also provided a growing body of knowledge for policy-makers.

The development of managerial policy making

The contributions of the three official public reports, Edmund Davies, Philips and Scarman, and the partisan and public debates about policing, were not the only elements in the policy making process which produced the reforms of the 1980s. There was an increasingly influential national policy network concerned with managerial questions. This network involved professional police and local authority representatives but was dominated by the Home Office Police Department. Whilst the formal responsibilities of individual chief constables and police authorities remained largely untouched by this development, more and more details of policing policies were determined at the national level. This did not imply any of the confrontations which characterized relations between central government and local authorities (or central government and the professional employees of local governments such as teachers) during the

early 1980s. On the contrary, central-local-professional joint policy bodies developed and prospered in the policing policy-sector. The consequence of this silent revolution has been the gradual standardization, nationalisation and centralisation of police policy-making processes. If a national police force was not created, a national police management structure came into being.

One element in this evolution was the growth of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) as a structured and respected professional organisation available as an intermediary for all British police forces. This development partly reflects the efforts of ACPO itself to promote police professionalism. ACPO has organized specialist committees to formulate advice on desirable standards in many aspects of police work and, most notoriously in the eyes of the popular press, in the techniques of public-order policing. ACPO organizes seminars and regional meetings. This autonomous development of ACPO from a relatively loose association into a structured professional organisation was symbolized by the replacement of the old method of choosing the annual chairman (by cooption) to the holding of a formal election⁵⁴.

The development of ACPO reflects increasing recognition by the Home Office and indeed the initiatives of the Home Office to enhance ACPO initial role. ACPO was represented on the Home Office "tri-partite working party" after the 1964 Police Act. In 1972, when the National Reporting Centre was created, it was placed under the responsibility of the president of ACPO (rather than that of the Metropolitan Commissioner or of an official within the Home Office Police Department). Paradoxically, although ACPO officers are housed within the New Scotland Yard building, the growing role of ACPO has been seen as an institutional challenge to the

⁵⁴ Interview with General Secretary, ACPO, September 1988.

traditional supremacy of the Metropolitan Police. This attachment to ACPO, rather than to the Metropolitan Police, had the distinct political advantages that the Home Secretary could escape parliamentary scrutiny in dealings with ACPO and that the image of the Metropolitan Police as an embryonic national police force was weakened. Furthermore, by leaving national coordination in the hands of the chief constables, the Home Office appeared to respect the traditional operational autonomy of chief police officers inherent in the idea of policing by consent⁵⁵.

Local elected officials, traditionally responsible for the supervision of police forces by their role in the police authorities (and on the watch and police committees before 1964), have participated in the development of joint national standard-setting. Since the 1964 Police Act representatives of organisations covering all local authorities have participated in national consultative bodies. Thus, negotiations for the police authorities with the Home Office and ACPO have been carried out within such bodies as the "tri-partite working party" and more recently the "common police service committee" and the "police advisory board on pay and conditions", by the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. The "common police service committee" has become a key institution in managing the allocation of resources⁵⁶.

The key actor throughout this development of national managerial policy making has been the Home Office. This department was responsible for building up the joint national consultative bodies, but also for developing managerial expertise. It is directly responsible for Scientific and Development Branch and its sub-unit, the Police Requirements Support Unit (PRSU), for the Police National Computer (PNC) and for the National

⁵⁵ *Ibidem.*; also *The Economist*, 10 February 1990, pp.28-37.

⁵⁶ *Interview*, General Secretary of ACPO, September 1988.

Police College at Bramshill. The department has been responsible for giving an increased role to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and for focussing the talents of the Audit Commission for Local Authorities on provincial police forces⁵⁷.

The result of all these developments is that there now exists a central policy-making network grouped around the Home Office. This network has come into being with very little publicity and with almost no partisan controversy. The balance between local and national policy-making has been in favour of the centre. The basic calculations for the police grants from central government to all police authorities are made in the new policy network. Whilst chief constables may still with the approval of their police authorities propose increases in their establishments, new building programmes or the purchase or equipment of new vehicles, the Home Office disposes of the key decision-making powers. Furthermore, the Home Office determines the criteria on which demands can be formulated.

The major policy reforms adopted by Parliament

In the decade after 1979 three major reforms of the police have been adopted by parliament. The first was the adoption of the Edmund Davies Report; the second, the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act; and the third, the 1986 Public Order Act.

The immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Edmund Davies Report in full was one of the first decisions of the

⁵⁷ M. Weatheritt, *Innovations in Policing*, London, Croom Helm, 1986, pp.10-12; see also *Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary 1988*, London, HMSO, 1989, ch.6.

incoming Conservative Government in 1979. This choice of implementing the recommendations of Edmund Davies did not mark a shift of policy from the preceding Labour Government, except in one respect: whereas the Callaghan Government had planned to phase in the increase over a number of months, the Thatcher Government gave the full increase from 1st May 1979. There were four main aspects of this reform. The first was that its adoption corresponded to a traditional pattern of policy making: the raising of a problem inside and outside parliament, the establishment of an official enquiry, the enactment of the proposed solution with slight modifications, reflecting the government's considerations of ideology and electoral gain. The second feature of the reform was that it significantly changed the position of police officers in the national salary hierarchy; if, henceforth, there were to be shortages of policemen, the inadequacy of remuneration would not be the major cause. The third feature was that the new position of police salaries was to be protected by indexation to the rate of inflation. Thus, whilst any particular group of workers might improve its position in salary-ranking relative to the police, policemen as a whole would never fall behind the average for all groups of workers. The final implication of this measure was that the cost of policing for both central and local governments would rise appreciably. At a time of economic crisis and with a government ideologically committed to reducing public expenditure, Home Office and Treasury demands for increasing police productivity, for better value for money were the inevitable consequences. Home Office circular 114, in 1983, which spelled out to chief constables and police authorities the importance of improving efficiency in the police service, was a logical consequence⁵⁸.

The 1983 Home Office circular, its 1988 sequel and the 1989 circular (number 81) on police manpower all reflected a rather different approach by

⁵⁸ Home Office, Circular 114, 1983: *Manpower, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Police Service*.

the Government from that taken in 1979. They implied that recruiting both more and higher calibre officers was not the indispensable condition for improving police performance. Hence, the Home Office constantly pressed police forces to make more efficient use of their existing resources.

The implications of the implementation of the Edmund Davies Report for policing by consent were threefold. The first concerned the political neutrality of police officers: since many police officers might have become biased in favour of the Conservatives in gratitude for their gains. The second involved public attitudes towards the political neutrality of the police: since some sections of the public might believe the police to be politically pro-conservative, public confidence in the police might diminish. Finally, there was the possibility that during the period of policies to reduce both wage increases and the powers of trade unions, the police would be viewed as not sharing at all the experiences of working people. Only with the introduction of the poll tax were rank-and-file police officers for the first time seriously obliged to face the consequences of a government policy which would hit them financially in the same way as it would hit many ordinary members of the public⁵⁹.

The second major statutory reform, the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, was a very different measure because its 120 clauses imposed

⁵⁹ Before the introduction of the Poll Tax, police officers benefited from a Housing Allowance which was calculated on the basis of the rateable value of their property. In 1990 the Home Secretary agreed to pay a £300 annual allowance "intended to cover water rates" to all officers in police housing for a "transitional period" of three years. There was speculation that either the Minister was "being economical" with his explanation of what the grant was intended to cover, or "that the Home Secretary knows something about the privatisation of the water industry he is unwilling to share" or that the goal was "to distract police attention from the Government's main business of abolishing the rent allowance and dismantling the present pay structure"; see: *Police review*, 2 March 1990, p.420.

changes on many aspects of police powers and organisation. It increased some police powers, and introduced some new checks and constraints on how police officers used these powers. Judged by traditional standards of policing by consent, it brought important changes.

Perhaps the biggest change was that it provided a full general statutory definition of the powers of police officers with this "further provision in relation to the powers and duties of the police"⁶⁰. The process of replacing by statute law provisions, powers and responsibilities which had originally derived from common law was virtually completed. At the same time the 1984 Act increased the powers of police officers. Hence, the traditional idea, so appreciated by the 1929 Royal Commission, was out-of-date. The seven articles of part I of the Act define in detail the power of the constable to stop persons and vehicles. The 15 articles of part II of the Act lay down powers of entry, search of premises and seizure of materials, including computer data with (or in certain circumstances without) a warrant from a Justice of the Peace. The third part of the Act (articles 24 to 33) laid down the powers and conditions of arrest. In all these respects the Act determines the basic rules and provides that details of their use will be set out in codes of practice available to anyone in any police station⁶¹.

Subsequent sections of the Act lay down similar rules over detention, interrogation and interviews in police stations. It provided that the norm of not keeping a person in police detention for more than 24 hours without being charged could be modified by a police officer of the rank of superintendent for a suspect to be kept in custody for another 12 hours. Further provision empowered magistrate courts to authorize further detention in certain specific circumstances for up to 96 hours. Another

⁶⁰ *Police and Criminal Evidence Act, op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibidem.*, pp. 21-29.

innovation of the act was the appointment of custody officers in all police stations designated for detention.

Furthermore, the Act provided that all interviews and interrogation in police stations had to respect a code of practice and should be tape recorded. The statutory definitions and codes of practice which arose from the law meant that clearer definitions of police powers and citizens' rights were laid down and made uniform for the whole of England and Wales. The law represented a nationalisation, since it replaced a series of Acts which had given specific powers to individual police forces⁶².

Another section of the Act dealt with complaints and disciplinary procedures. It provided for the creation of a Police Complaints Authority to deal with complaints and disciplinary procedures and to replace the Police Complaints Board. The investigation of any allegation that police conduct had resulted in death or serious injury was to be referred to this new Authority. The Act provided for a standard procedure for investigating complaints. The establishment of the new Authority and the statutory definition of its role represented an attempt to improve on the achievement of the 1976 Police Act by creating a body which, by its greater independence, might win greater public confidence. At the same time, by allowing legal representation for police officers in disciplinary proceedings, it provided a modification likely to render the system more acceptable to most police officers and to the Police Federation.

Section 106 of the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act which placed a statutory obligation on police authorities to adopt arrangements for local consultation between the police and the public was concerned with three elements of policing by consent, public confidence, cooperation and

⁶² See M. Zander, *The Police and Criminal Evidence Act*, London, Sweet and Maxwell, 1985.

adaptation to local needs. Whilst this section of the Act replaced a Home Office Circular which took up one of the recommendations of Lord Scarman's proposals, by a statutory obligation on all police authorities (including those of the Metropolitan and City of London Police), it was no more specific than the circular it replaced. This provision for new local consultation was an implicit admission that the existing mechanisms of local accountability were inadequate. Ironically, these "inadequate" bodies, the police authorities, were given the responsibility for creating the new local consultative bodies. The Act, however, gave very little guidance to the meaning of "local" nor to the form the consultative institutions should take⁶³.

The third major reform, the Public Order Act of 1986, was different from the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, since it decreased public supervision of policing. The Act redefined and extended police powers for dealing with public disorders. In particular, it gave discretionary power to chief constables to prohibit public demonstrations likely to lead to disorders, and to re-route protest marches to help to maintain public order. For policing by consent, this act represented an increase in the "operational autonomy" of chief constables in a politically sensitive area. It provided for a limitation on the freedom of assembly and demonstration. It could inspire little confidence amongst those already anxious about the alleged politicization of the police and the continuing move towards policing by control rather than policing by consent⁶⁴.

⁶³ R. Morgan and C. Maggs, "Called to Account?: The implications of Consultative Groups for Police Accountability", *Policing*, Vol 1, No 2, p. 87, Spring 1985.

⁶⁴ S. Spencer, *Called to Account*, London, National Council for Civil Liberties, 1985.

Conclusions

The first three sections of this chapter showed that the Conservative Government did not control the policy-making agenda on policing. Indeed, if policing policy was sometimes criticized as being too "reactive", the same criticism could be made of governmental policy-making. The political dynamics of making the major reforms have been complex, involving Royal Commissions, public enquiries, investigative journalism, academic research and the lobbying by such bodies as the Police Federation and the National Council for Civil Liberties. Wide ranging public debates have taken place and the reforms enacted have not closed these debates.

Ten years after the election of the Thatcher Government, the police forces of England and Wales have become much more expensive to operate, have been given increased powers, and have been subjected to greater national standardisation and central control. It therefore seems paradoxical that successive Home Secretaries have reiterated the discourse of policing by consent for the need to rebuild or reinforce public confidence in the police.

The mechanisms created for allowing the public to have more influence over local police services have been modest. The provision (under section 106 of the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act) for establishing consultative groups creates new local bodies but does not give them real powers. It implicitly admits the existence of widespread public concern about local accountability, especially in London, but there is no obligation on police officers to respect the views expressed in the consultative groups. The effectiveness of these local groups depends on the persuasiveness of their members with the police and the police authority.

The new system for dealing with complaints against the police from the public represents a marginal change of the existing system. It still leaves the investigation of many complaints to be investigated by officers belonging to the same forces as those complained against. Whilst the Police Complaints Authority has greater autonomy than its predecessor, much still depends on the exercise of discretionary powers by chief constables.

The overall effects of these reforms is that whilst public support for their police has been reaffirmed as an essential characteristic of the British system, responsibility for rebuilding that confidence has largely been placed on the shoulders of senior police officers. Nonetheless, the provisions on arrest, interrogation and custody of the 1984 Act represented an attempt to set clear limits on the powers of front-line police officers, the people in direct contact with the public. The effectiveness of this attempt depended on the extent to which individual police forces respected the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

SECTION 2

**From National Policy to Local Practices:
A Case Study of Policing in Sussex.**

Chapter 5

Adapting old structures to new Objectives: the implementation of the 1980's reforms by the Sussex Police Force.

In the traditional model of policing by consent the setting of new tasks and fixing of new standards was the accepted role of central government, by law or ministerial circular, whereas the implementation of such reforms was left to the initiative of each chief constable for operational matters, and to the police authority for local funding. The last chapter showed that the reforms of the Thatcher Governments appeared to vary considerably in the degree of discretion left to local police forces. The adoption of the Edmund Davies Report and the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act are examples of two policies which imposed uniformity across all police forces. In contrast Home Office circular 114 of 1983 encouraged experimentation and diversity to improve managerial effectiveness. This chapter, by an

examination of the implementation of these reforms, shows that their net effects were centralisation and standardisation of policing policy both by the imposition of tighter central controls and by the development of joint local-national mechanisms for the setting of standards of performance. It reveals two other related developments. The first is the changing structure of police professionalism, with the establishment of professional sub-groups within the senior ranks. The second is that the national setting of detailed policies sometimes leads to conflicts of priorities between centre and periphery, and to inefficiency because of the irrelevance of some aspects of national policies to local circumstances.

The major reforms were decided at the national level in line with governmental preoccupations which changed over time. Furthermore, at some moments the government attempted to pursue conflicting goals simultaneously. Hence local police forces were instructed to add new functions to their long lists of existing duties, to perform all their tasks in different ways and with greater output than in the past and to carry out all these changes by improving efficiency rather than by unlimited increases in public spending. The conflicts inherent in those national policy goals had to be resolved at the local level to ensure coherence in police organisation. In this sense the formal distinction between policy decisions and the implementation process was often meaningless: effective policy making involved local professionals (and, to a very limited extent, members of police authorities) almost as much as national politicians. Whilst the overall goals of all police forces in England and Wales remained the maintenance of order in society and the fight against crime by both prevention and detection, the improvement of management became the most important short-term objective, with the adoption of new technology and the improvement of police public relations as subordinate ends.

The policy package was made coherent at the local level primarily by the local police professionals. The consequences, however, were often perverse in that certain policy goals were not achieved. The practical result was that, far from improving the public's appreciation of police work, expectations were raised but often not fulfilled. Subsequent chapters will show that neither police officers nor members of the public were satisfied with these outcomes.

This chapter focusses on organisational reforms, the changes in the structures and tasks decided for the whole of Sussex Police Force. The first section examines the practical effects in Sussex of the policy of increasing and improving manpower resources, the avowed aim of the Edmund Davies Report. The second section considers the attempts to improve public accountability and good community relations as prescribed by the post-Scarman circulars and several parts of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. The third section discusses the attempts to improve financial accountability in response to circular 114 of 1983, the Home Office instructions on applying the Financial Management Initiative to the police. The final section studies the introduction of new technologies and training. These four sections, by focussing on different aspects of an essentially interrelated group of changes, clarify the contradictions inherent in the national policy goals and the complexity of the task for any local police force in pursuing them in a coherent manner.

Improving manpower resources for policing in Sussex

A study of the implementation of the first of the major reforms, the increase in police salaries and in the numbers of police officers, reveals how little was left to local initiative. This implementation required very little decision-making within the Sussex Police Force. The new pay scales had been fixed at the national level, the police grant from the Home Office was

adjusted accordingly and the finance department of the Sussex Police Force was required simply to calculate the changes to individual salaries, while the Treasurer of the Police Authority had only to inform the two county councils of the increases in their contributions. The introduction of the pay increases was spread over a four-year period, 1979 to 1984. Taking into account inflation, salaries increased by 16% and there was an 11% increase in the number of police posts nationally. The result was a 6% per annum increase in police expenditure (in real terms) at a time when the rise in local government spending in general was being kept down to 2% per annum maximum¹. Table 1 below shows the massive increase in expenditure on the police in Sussex.

Table 1: Patterns of police expenditure².

(shown in thousands)

	Gross Spending (includes sales etc)	Net Spending	Police + Specific Grants	Local Finance (rate est)	Total Personnel Cost	Police	Premises	Transport
1979	29,292	25,526	12,577	12,949	22,307	14,440	1,563	1,086
1981	44,095	38,077	18,502	19,575	33,731	23,202	2,190	2,340
1983	60,369	51,627	25,448	26,179	48,364	33,794	2,464	2,273
1985	67,170	57,081	28,131	28,950	55,216	36,846	2,493	1,964
1987	77,842	65,775	33,097	32,678	64,404	40,243	2,617	2,667
1989	96,893	79,758	40,127	39,631	68,794	51,278		

¹ *Committee of Inquiry on the Police, Report, II*, Cmnd 7283, London, HMSO, 1978, Ch. 10, 11, 12, 13.

² Table drawn from figures provided in *the Sussex Police Annual Reports* of 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1988.

The table shows that the net expenditure on the Sussex police increased by 100% between 1979 and 1983 but the total on police salaries increased by 125%. Furthermore spending continued to rise after 1983, although from 1987 to 1989 the proportion of the total police budget spent on personnel declined, as capital expenditure, notably on building and computers, increased. The impact of the spending increases on manpower resources is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Police Strength in Sussex³.

	1978-79	1980-81	1982-83	1984-85	1986-87	1988-89
Population	1,286,000	1,327,000	1,343,000	1,361,600	1,384,400	1,386,000
Establishment of police officers	2,802	2,823	2,822	2,832	2,832	2,923
Actual Strengths						
Police Officers	2,758	2,820	2,810	2,803	2,830	2,888
Traffic Wardens	125	130	131	117	113	
Cadets	62	38	21	3		
Civilians - full time	635	648	662	651	1,083	
Civilians - part time	179	196	199	179	155	
Total full time equivalents	3,651	3,735	3,714	3,664	4,718	

There is a striking contrast between the big increase in total spending (which more than tripled) and the much smaller rise in manpower resources (which increased by only 26%). Whilst the number of posts available (the "Establishment") increased by 121 between 1979 and 1989, the actual number of police officers increased by 130. However, given the increase in population of the two counties, the actual density of police officers to population rose only from 1 : 467 to 1 : 466. At the same time the

³ Table drawn from the figures provided in *the Sussex Police Annual Reports* from 1979 to 1989

police cadet scheme was completely disbanded and the number of traffic wardens was reduced by 10%.

These statistics, however, do not give a full picture of the personnel resources available in Sussex. Throughout the 1980s the Sussex Police Force pursued a policy - in line with national government strategy - of freeing police officers from clerical, legal and administrative duties to enable them to concentrate on front-line law and order tasks. One element of this strategy was the Prosecution of Offences Act of 1985 which provided for the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service in 1986. The aim of this reform was that local officials of the new service should take over from police forces the time-consuming work of preparing and conducting prosecutions in court. Henceforth Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) staff rather than police officers were to decide whether or not the evidence collected by police investigations was sufficient to justify a prosecution⁴. The overall success of the CPS is difficult to assess when it has been operating for only four years. There have been constant complaints that the new service has been understaffed, and at its inception worries were expressed that the CPS might duplicate - rather than take over - work hitherto carried out by police officers. Nonetheless, in interviews with Sussex police officers, few complaints were voiced about the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service, and the only real anxiety (of a small number of officers) was that sometimes CPS staff decided not to prosecute in cases where police officers would have done so⁵.

⁴ *An Independent Prosecution Service for England and Wales*, White Paper, London, HMSO, Cmnd. 9074, 1985

⁵ *Interviews*: Three Sergeants and several Police Constables in Brighton and Crawley, March, April 1989.

The second increase in resources for police work, which Table 2 shows, was the huge increase in civilian support staff, from 635 full-time civilians in 1979 to 1,083 in 1987, an increase of over 50%. Once again the main objective was to release police officers from routine clerical work and administrative duties so that they could concentrate on more practical law and order matters. Interviews with officers in Sussex revealed general satisfaction with this civilianisation except that it had not gone far enough. A few officers mentioned that the Police and Criminal Evidence Act had created new administrative tasks for police officers which could not be taken over by civilians for legal reasons. Thus whilst the density of all police employees to the number of inhabitants rose from 1 : 352 to 1 : 297, the result was not a massive increase in the number of policemen on the beat⁶.

A priori, we might conclude from this data that the population of Sussex is at least slightly better served in 1989 than it was in 1979 as a consequence of the overall increase in resources, the civilianisation programme and the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service. It is far from clear, however, that the increase in manpower resources has been proportionate to the problems faced in Sussex. Police officers dealt with a total of 5,863 road accidents in 1978, but with 11,503 in 1988. The total of reported crimes for Sussex in 1978 was 44,091, but in 1988 the figure had risen to 66,656, an increase of 50%. Over the same period of time, the number of detected crimes fell from 24,279 in 1978 to 19,885 in 1988⁷. However, as noted above, it has been observed at the national level that increasing the numbers of police officers generally leads to more recording

⁶ Interview: Senior Police Officer, Lewes, Headquarters, March 1989; also see: *Sussex Police Annual Report* 1988.

⁷ Crime statistics from *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1978, Lewes, Sussex Police Force, p.8, 25, and *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1988, p.47, 51.

of crime, so these figures alone do not clearly prove that the increase in the number of police officers was grossly inadequate for the needs of Sussex.

The responsibilities of the police service, however, have also greatly increased. Sussex Police Force has the particular task of policing Gatwick Airport, and during the 1980s this duty became increasingly onerous as the number of passengers using the airport rose greatly, a second terminal building was opened and as airport overcrowding became common because of long delays to flight departures as a result of air traffic control problems in holiday periods. Over three-quarters of the new "establishment" posts created were allocated to Gatwick, so the actual increase in police strength in the rest of Sussex was very slight.

A second complicating factor was the considerable increase in the number of specific functions carried out by police officers and civilians as a consequence of the implementation of the reforms described in later sections of this chapter. The introduction of computing, of community policing, of corporate management and of new public-order maintenance techniques have all resulted in withdrawing officers from their normal duties for special training. The implementation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act also necessitated a vast retraining programme which affected almost everyone in the force. Nor were additional short-term funds made available to finance overtime work by other officers to replace those absent. On the contrary, there was a large reduction in the amount of overtime worked by police officers and notably by CID officers at the forefront of crime detection⁸.

There are further questions about the extent of the increase and improvement in resources. The first concerns the scope for initiatives from

⁸ *Sussex Police Annual report*, 1987.

the Chief Constable to increase recruitment. Already in 1978 the Chief Constable reported an increase in applications to join the police in anticipation of pay increases following the adoption of the Edmund Davies Report. He noted that once again the Home Office had not granted the full increase in the "establishment" which he had requested. In fact the 11% increase in the overall size of the police service nationally was not accurately reflected at the local level in Sussex. The increase in establishment size in the four years of the implementation of the Edmund Davies Report was only 32 posts, or just over 1%⁹.

In his 1987 annual report, the Chief Constable began by underlining that the inadequacy of his police manpower resources, a subject of numerous complaints from elected officials, groups leaders, individual members of the public and police officers alike, was a reflection of the application of inappropriate national norms to the local circumstances in Sussex:

"It is a stark fact that since 1979 the authorised establishment of the Sussex Police will have been increased by a mere 12 officers, if the special needs of Gatwick Airport are set aside. It is true that a major reorganisation, including a comprehensive package of civilianisation, has freed a significant amount of extra police time for operational purposes, but this has been more than off-set by factors such as increased annual leave, the reduced working week, increased training requirements, as well as other statutory demands.....

The most recent bid by the Sussex Police Authority for an additional 13 patrol officers, vigorously supported by members of Parliament for East and West Sussex, has produced Home Office approval for just six officers..... This is sufficient to cover one beat or its equivalent for 24 hours a day.....

If traditional policing methods, based on the bobby on the beat are to be maintained, there will need to be a totally new approach to the way in which police establishments are decided..... The present starting point for any increase is a ceiling on resources imposed by the Treasury, the resultant manpower 'cake' being split up and distributed

⁹ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1983.

by the Home office on the advice of HM Inspectors of Constabulary by a very negative process of comparison which relies largely on general indicators.....Such an exercise cannot really match the establishment of the police to the needs of an area..... Factors such as the geographical spread of isolated communities, the level of VIP visits, the frequent presence of sensitive conferences, the population bulge in the tourist season all influence the required levels of policing"¹⁰.

By 1988 the police manpower problem was even worse, since the overall local level of employment in Sussex had greatly improved. The consequence was that there were 35 unfilled posts in the Sussex Police Force, a total only marginally less than that of 1978 (42 empty posts) before the implementation of the Edmund Davies Report. The Chief Constable again commented in his annual report with some acerbity on difficulties of recruiting and retaining suitable staff caused by "national pay scales" which allow insufficient flexibility to meet the competitive demand of the South East. This problem particularly concerned the civilianisation programme. The Home Office had been much more generous in allowing increases in administrative and back-up positions. One aim of this policy, however, was to reduce costs as the salary rates for civilians were appreciably lower than those of police officers. But the Sussex Police Force still had some difficulty in recruiting and retaining appropriate qualified civilian staff¹¹.

The large increase in spending on the Sussex Police Force over the last 10 years has not reduced the demands from the Chief Constable and Police Authority for increases in the number of police officers. Nor has it led to a significant improvement in the fight against crime. The real problems have not been in Sussex but in Whitehall. The room for local adaptation of the national policies was far too small.

¹⁰ *Sussex Police Annual Report, 1987, p.2.*

¹¹ *Sussex Police Annual Report, 1988, p.2, 40.*

Public Accountability and Community Relations

Improving community relations and public accountability have been central themes of the debate about the reform of British policing in the 1980s. One of the major objectives of governmental reforms was to improve relations between the police and local communities. The measures adopted at the national level sought to improve police accountability and community relations in four ways. The first was by the creation of local consultative groups to bring police officers and local citizens together in towns and villages, much smaller areas than those of the police authorities. The second was the introduction of a variety of community-policing devices, including neighbourhood watch schemes, crime prevention panels, beat patrolling and school liaison programmes. The third was the clarification of police powers (by a Code of Practice) and the implementation of standard interview and custody procedures. Finally, there was the creation of the independent Police Complaints Authority and the introduction of new methods for investigating criticisms by the public of the police.

In Sussex the idea of good police-community relations as essential to the prevention and detection of crime was not introduced by the Scarman Report or laws which followed. Maintaining and improving relations with the public was mentioned as a high priority for the Sussex Police Force by the Chief Constable in his report every year after 1977. Nor was this expression simply pious hope. In 1979 the Chief Constable reported that 227 allegations of misconduct had been made by 296 members of the public involving 548 specific complaints. As a result of subsequent investigations - at a cost of £43,126 - only 22 complaints were substantiated. In the same year 1,470 letters of appreciation were received from members of the public. The annual report outlined a number of precise projects which had been

undertaken to improve police relations with the public. They included an initiative of police officers and social workers working in co-operation, a victim-support scheme, the appointment of a civilian community-relations officer, the organisation of a number of "police days" to introduce Vietnamese "boat people" to British law and policing and the continuing work of school liaison officers¹².

One other important aspect of maintaining good police-public contacts, which the Chief Constable regularly noted in his reports, was that of recruiting members of the public to work as part-time, volunteer police officers - Special Constables. In most years about a hundred members of the Special Constabulary retired or withdrew from their duties, so a constant campaign of recruitment was needed, and regular residential training courses had to be organised at weekends. In 1978 the Sussex Police Force could count on the regular assistance of 482 men and women "Specials". By 1986 this force had grown to 604 (385 men and 219 women), and in December 1988 it totalled 502. In many circumstances these "ordinary citizens in uniform" work alongside and in close cooperation with regular officers. In his 1987 Report the Chief Constable described the Special Constables as "an integral part of the Force", and acknowledged their "invaluable support to regular officers by enhancing patrol strengths at critical periods and assisting with the policing of major events"¹³.

Another continuing community relations scheme well established in Sussex before 1979 was the Volunteer Cadet Corps, a network of clubs run mainly by regular police officers in their spare time. In 1986 the Chief

¹² *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1978, p.46; *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1987, p.36-7.

¹³ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1978, p.46; *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1987, p.36-7.

Constable defined the goal of this Corps as "to stimulate and maintain the interest of young people aged 15 to 18 and a half years who may be considering the Police service as a career" and to provide "in a very positive way, contact between young people and police officers". In 1978 there were 154 members of the seven local units of the Sussex Volunteer Cadet Corps and by 1987 membership had risen to 240, in nine units. The programmes of activities of these units included camping, sailing, athletics, parties, pantomimes, charity fund-raising and local community service. Volunteer Cadets were called upon to help regular officers and Special Constables in marshalling crowds at public events and in searches for missing persons¹⁴. In all these ways the Sussex Police Force was well experienced in community relations projects long before the national reforms of the 1980s made such schemes obligatory.

Unlike the Chief Constable and his officers, the members of the Sussex Police Authority do not appear to have played a dynamic role in the processes of improving public accountability and community relations. In part this reflects the fact that Police Authority members represent two administrative counties and a huge area and population, so that the Authority itself is not suited to be a forum for regular and frequent consultation about local problems. Furthermore, given the political majorities in East and West Sussex County Councils, the Police Authority has had a permanent Conservative majority. Interviews with its leaders revealed that they have seen their role as one of support and supervision rather than as an initiative-taker or critic. In this respect Sussex seems in line with the findings of Brogden rather than with those of Loveday in Merseyside. The two key variables in explaining the relations between chief constables and police authorities appear to be the political complexion of the majority party and the diplomatic skills of the chief constable. Labour-

¹⁴ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1978, p.45; *Sussex Police Annual report*, 1986, p.33; *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1987, p.32.

dominated police authorities have normally been much more critical and inquisitive than those run by the Conservatives, but this has not prevented the establishment of very cooperative relations with chief constables in many places. Indeed, many of the community relations schemes in operation before 1982 had been warmly supported by the Police Authority, but the Chief Constable had taken the initiative to introduce them¹⁵.

The creation of local consultative groups after Home Office circular 54 of 1982 (and an obligation under section 106 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) was not seen as necessary by many senior officers nor by members of the Police Authority. Equally in many district councils there appeared to be little enthusiasm for yet another committee. In Brighton, however, the Labour-controlled Council elected in 1986 was very supportive of this idea and an active consultative group was quickly established. The Labour Council set up its own Police Committee which commissioned a survey of public attitudes towards law and order problems in the city. Brighton was exceptional; in most other areas of Sussex neither the police nor the community leaders were pressing for the creation of such group¹⁶. It appeared that this element of the national reforms was

¹⁵ Interview with Labour member of the Police Authority, May 1989; ss also: M.E. Brogden, "A Police Authority: the Denial of Conflict", *Sociological Review*, 25, 1977, pp.325-349; B. Loveday, *The Role and Effectiveness of the Merseyside Police Committee*, Liverpool, Merseyside County Council, 1985.

¹⁶ Interviews with 4 leading members of the Sussex Police Authority, May-June, 1989; on the operations of consultative groups elsewhere see: R. Morgan & C. Maggs, *Following Scarman?*, Bath, Bath University Social Policy Papers, 1984; and: R. Morgan, "Police consultative groups: the implications for the governance of the police", *Political Quarterly*, 57, 1986; R. Morgan, "'Policing by consent': legitimating the doctrine", in R. Morgan & D.J. Smith (eds.), *Coming to terms with policing*, London, Routledge, 1989.

irrelevant to the circumstances in Sussex, however useful it may have been in Brixton, Hackney or Handsworth.

In Sussex, the enthusiasm of the population and elected councillors alike was much greater for the introduction of more targeted community policing devices. The eight community relations officers rapidly found themselves swamped with requests for information about neighbourhood watch schemes. By 1986, 1900 neighbourhood watch schemes were already operating and in 1987 that number had increased to 3,700 (out of a national total of 64,000 schemes). Whilst the success of these schemes in reducing crime is in doubt, there is no dispute that they were successful in bringing the police into closer links with those members of the community who became involved. Many neighbourhood watch participants encouraged the extension of beat patrolling which, as discussed below, was being re-introduced in all areas¹⁷.

The initiatives taken by crime prevention officers to set up crime prevention panels received wide support. By 1986, 20 crime prevention panels, a majority presided over by civilians after their initial meetings, were operating regularly. In 1986 members of these panels assisted the fifteen crime prevention officers in organizing a campaign against thefts of cars, bicycles, and motorbikes¹⁸. This campaign led to a great increase in public demand for "anti-theft marking by the police". The Chief Constable took further initiatives to encourage cooperation between the police and other public services throughout the county ("multi-agency cooperation").

¹⁷ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1987, p.31; on neighbourhood watch schemes in general see: T. Bennett, "The neighbourhood watch experiment", in R. Morgan & D.J. Smith, *Coming to terms.....op.cit.*; and T. Bennett, *Evaluating neighbourhood watch*, Aldershot, Gower, 1990.

¹⁸ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1986, p.33.

In 1986, a police design advisory service was set up at police headquarters to advise local authority planners and architects about avoiding or removing building features which facilitate crime.

Yet another Sussex police achievement was school liaison. In 1986, another full-time school liaison officers was appointed bringing the number to 21. The Chief Constable calculated that as virtually all schools, public and private, were welcoming these school liaison officers (wherever possible accompanied by local beat officers) 1000 school children per day (an average during school terms) were in contact with these officers. These same officers were concerned with organizing meetings with parents. In the Chichester police division in 1986, 3,600 parents attended the 32 presentations on drug abuse organized by the local officers. In all these meetings the liaison officers were following well-planned programmes which covered both specific problems (from "Don't trust strangers" for five year olds to "How to react if someone gives you drugs" for sixteen-year olds) and information about the police, its organisation, powers and role. Once again it is very difficult to make any assessments of the effect of this work either on crime prevention or on public attitudes to the police. In Sussex considerable resources were allocated by the police to this work. Furthermore the county education authorities, headteachers and parent teacher associations all expressed their support¹⁹.

Following the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the introduction of new standard interview and custody procedures and the Code of Practice, clarifying police powers were studied and prepared for from January 1985 until the statutory date of implementation in January 1986. The Act had implications for the purchase of equipment (for recording interviews), for building works (to soundproof interview rooms and for the deployment

¹⁹ *Sussex Police : School Liaison Programme*, (internal document, September 1986); *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1986, p.32.

and training of manpower to satisfy the new custody requirements. Senior officers consulted neighbouring police forces where experiments were being carried out on the practical effect of the law in police stations and the necessary retraining requirements. Trial reorganisation was begun in two police stations in March 1985 and two other experiments in Brighton and Lewes began in July. Between June and mid-November 1985 almost all police officers were sent on two-week, intensive, retraining courses. From mid-November 1985, six weeks before the official implementation date, the main provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act were being applied and observed throughout the Sussex Police Force. Although individual police officers may have criticized aspects of the 1984 Act, the chief officers ensured that it was fully implemented and that every officer was aware of the new legal limits of his powers. Recent research outside Sussex, however, has suggested that these measures are not very effective safeguards but create much extra paperwork for station sergeants²⁰.

Whilst considerable initiative was shown in preparing for the adoption of the new custody and interview procedures and the new code of practice, there was little room for any local variation in the implementation of part IX of the 1984 Act which dealt with police complaints and discipline. Table 3 below provides details of the complaints made against Sussex police officers and the results of those complaints since 1978. The number of complaints against the police increased very considerably in the early 1980s, but declined again after 1985. In only two years, 1983 and 1985, were a large numbers of cases substantiated.

From 1985 the Sussex Police Force was paying much greater attention to complaints from the public. The informal resolution procedure

²⁰ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1985; see M. Maguire, "Effects of the 'PACE' provisions on detention and questioning", *British Journal of Criminology*, 28, 1988, p.19-43.

prescribed by the 1984 Act was introduced to deal with numerous relatively minor matters, whilst the few most serious complaints were referred to the new Police Complaints Authority. In some cases the investigation of complaints was carried out by officers from other police forces, and in the most serious cases this investigation was directly supervised by the Police Complaints Authority. The pattern of complaints and the methods of dealing with them do not appear to be any different in Sussex from those in other police forces. In short, the Sussex Police Force simply followed centrally-imposed policies²¹.

Table 3: Complaints against officers in the Sussex Police Force²².

	1978	1980	1981	1982	1983	1985	1986	1987	1988
Complaints received	290	340	506	630	806	668	338	377	277
Cases dealt with									
substantiated	9	15	17	57	27	55	9	27	14
non- substantiated	149	170	265	264	336	254	178	148	155
withdrawn	137	209	270	291	434	242	119	120	111
informally resolved		not applicable until 1985				96	141	102	111
number of cases referred to Police Complaints Authority		not applicable until 1985					43 + 3 voluntary	42	46

Any attempt to assess these various measures to increase public accountability and to improve relations between police officers and the

²¹ M. Maguire & C. Corbett, "Patterns and profiles of complaints against the police", in R. Morgan & D.J. Smith (eds.), *Coming to terms with Policing..... op.cit.*, pp. 174-195.

²² Figures from *Sussex Police Annual Reports*, 1978 to 1988

community they serve is difficult. The absence of enthusiasm by the police or the public for consultative groups in Sussex as opposed to the wide support for neighbourhood watch schemes and crime prevention panels indicates a concern with prevention and working with the community on concrete issues. There were, however, some perverse results. One was that the demand for neighbourhood watch schemes was so great and immediate that it almost exceeded the capacity of many police officers responsible for setting up new schemes and for servicing existing ones. Another was the return to beat patrolling which the Chief Constable was pursuing. It evoked considerable enthusiasm from local politicians, the press and different community groups. However, public expectations once again soon exceeded police resources available.

One major dilemma which remains for police leaders in Sussex as elsewhere is that they are required by the Home Office to pursue these schemes for greater public accountability and community relations whilst at the same time they face equal if not stronger Home Office pressures to improve effectiveness by reducing crime and detecting more of it and to cut costs or at least to limit the increase in spending. The major problem with these schemes is that it is very difficult to measure their effects on crime, and hence, the resources for these schemes remain rather limited.

There is a final practical difficulty in Sussex arising from the security operations for the many national and international conferences held in Brighton. Security planning was already secretive before the IRA bomb attack on the Grand Hotel in October 1984 during the Conservative Party Conference. Following that event a working party was set up to reconsider the planning of security arrangements. In October 1988 the Conservative Party returned to Brighton for its Conference, but the preparation of the security arrangements, code-named Operation Radcot, had begun in March 1987. Even though the Police Authority was required to approve the

additional £1.4 million to meet part of the bill it was given very little information about the operation itself - for security reasons. Operation Radcot was by far the biggest security operation ever undertaken by Sussex police officers. It involved not only blocking off public access to a large part of the centre of Brighton but also collecting detailed information on computer about both local residents and even visitors to the town.

Labour councillors in Brighton were very concerned that these computer records were subsequently retained by the Sussex Police Force. One Brighton councillor and Police Authority member noted that Operation Radcot was typical of decision-making in the Sussex Police Force: when a conflict arose between the principle of the public accountability and that of the operational autonomy of the chief constable, the latter prevailed, and almost always with the agreement of most of the Conservative majority of the Police Authority's membership. He stressed that Operation Radcot was decided with virtually no public consultation and with the Police Authority little better informed than the general public about what was going on²³.

Financial Accountability

In Sussex the application of circular 114 of 1983, by which the Home Office demanded all police forces to apply the principles of the Financial Management Initiative, inspired the Chief Constable to set up a study of the structure of the police force. The Research and Development Service in the management section was given the task of reviewing the Sussex organisation. Its defined goals were to improve effectiveness and efficiency by modifications to structures, clear definitions of job definition and goals at

²³ Interview with Labour member of the Police Authority, May, 1989; on *Operation Radcote* see: *Sussex Police Annual Report, 1988*, Lewes, Sussex Police Force, 1989, pp.20 - 21.

all levels and the identification of suitable performance indicators for evaluation purposes. The review began in January 1985, and its remit was broadened to include consideration of the manpower-deployment effects of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service. It had to take into account the consequences of the introduction of new communications and computer technology²⁴.

The methods adopted by the review were revealing about how senior police officers approached the implementation of circular 114. The Chief Constable showed a willingness to take on board some of the ideas of private sector management in the Financial Management Initiative but decided that all the decisions regarding changes of management structures would be made in-house by police professionals. The review was carried out by a team of five senior officers led by the Chief Superintendent at the head of the Research and Development Service. It was soon clear that this team was insufficient and four more officers joined the team including one superintendent. Additional support was obtained from the Computer System Officer of the Sussex Police and the Management Services Officer of East Sussex County Council.

The review was conducted in two phases. The first involved an analysis of the existing headquarters organisation and surveys of expected computer requirements, and study of the organisation and methods of the traffic division. In the second phase the territorial divisional and subdivisional boundaries were reconsidered. So too was the extension of civilian work to release police officers for front-line policing. The team completed its review in March 1986 and in May 1986 the Chief Constable

²⁴ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1985.

presented its recommendations to the Police Authority which duly approved the proposed series of changes²⁵.

Whilst the review process primarily consisted of Sussex police professionals looking at their own force, it was not entirely introspective. Indeed, the team members studied how other police forces and national police leaders were approaching the problems. The two team leaders took part in the three conferences on "supporting strategic management" at the Police College and the team regularly consulted the Organisation and Management Information Group of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and staff of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Fourteen other police forces were visited by team members for consultation on their structures and methods.

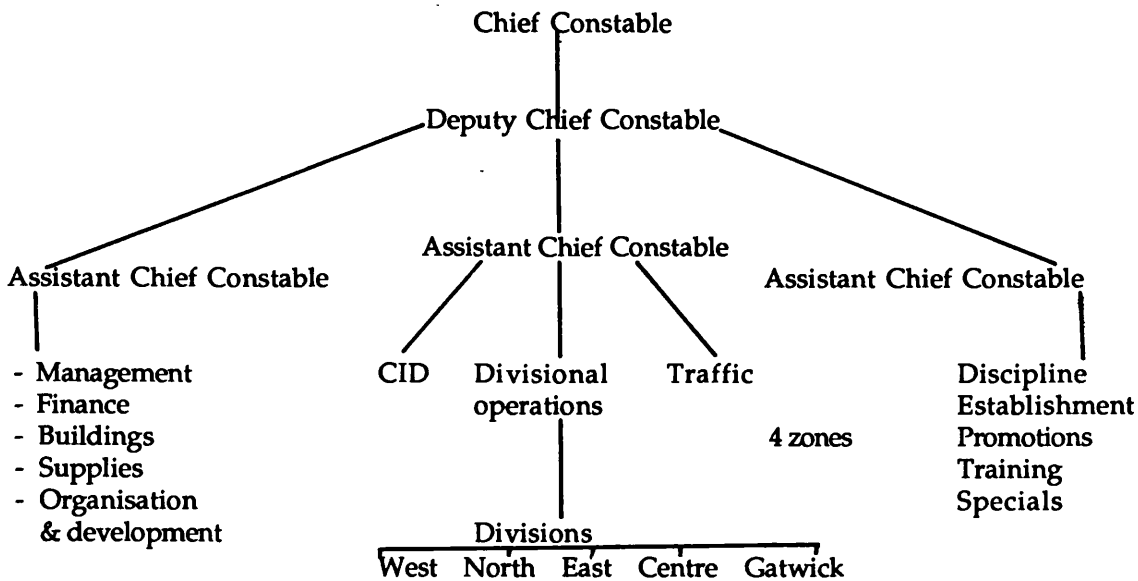
The only non-police inputs, however, were a number of visits to private sector firms, a study of the organisation at the Army headquarters at Aldershot and a visit to the Sussex police force by five British Rail managers who carried out an assessment of some aspects of operational staffing levels as part of their fieldwork at the Manchester Business School. The many Sussex citizens who commute to work in London might have been very surprised to learn of the choice of British Rail as an organisation to provide consultants on efficiency. Thus the review team seriously considered how other police forces were responding to circular 114, but had very little input from outside the police. The main effects of this review on the organisation of the Sussex police are shown on the diagrams below²⁶.

²⁵ Interview with the Chairman of the Police Authority, May, 1989.

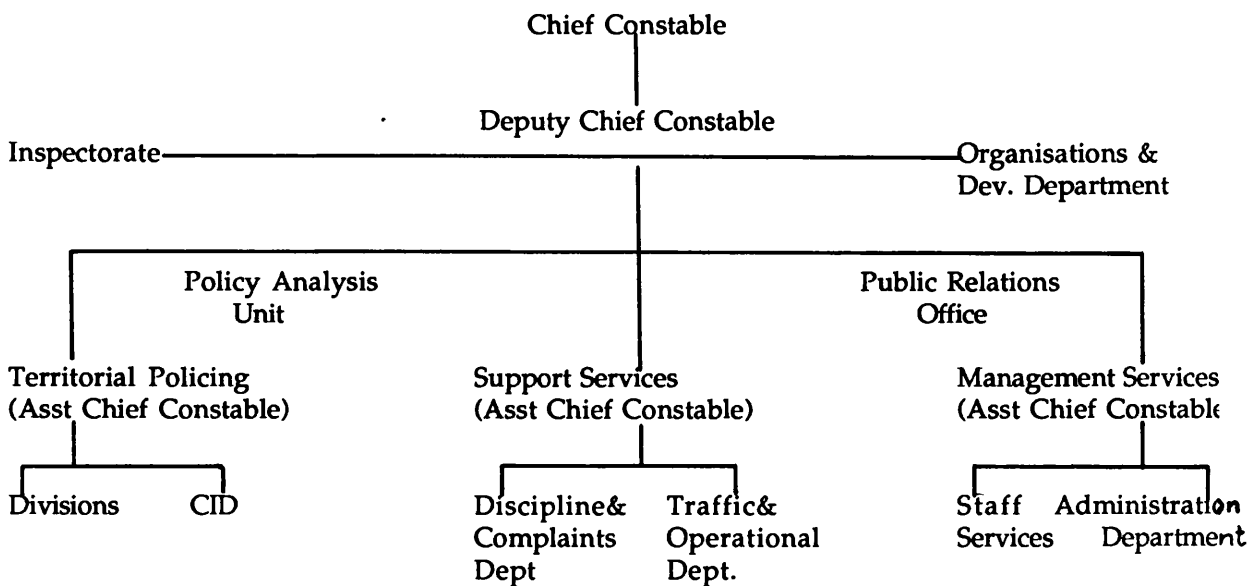
²⁶ The Diagrams have been drawn from the Sussex Police Reports of 1980 and 1986.

Diagram1: The Reorganisation of the Sussex Police Force

a. The organisation of Sussex Police in 1980



b. The organisation of Sussex Police in 1986



There were a number of minor changes, one of which was the reduction in the number of territorial police subdivisions from 19 to 15. More important was the rebalancing of responsibilities between three main sections of the organisation, henceforth entitled Territorial Policing, Support Services and Management Services. This reform involved the incorporation of Traffic and Operational Support Departments to the Support Services Section. The reorganisation gave high priority to managerial functions. The Organisation and Development Department, formerly a sub-unit of Management Services, was given special status, directly accountable to the Deputy Chief Constable. Its responsibilities covered three branches of managerial work: organisation and planning, computer services and "process liaison" (police work in preparation for prosecutions)²⁷.

The second major outcome of the review was the adoption of a corporate management system. The idea of circular 114 was that every member of the force should have a clear definition of his job goals, responsibility and decisional autonomy for the achievement of those goals and a voice in overall policy definition. In Sussex the new management system created to achieve these goals comprised different overlapping teams. At the top, with responsibility for deciding force policy and all top level managerial decisions, was the Force Policy Team (FPT) composed of the Chief Constable, the Deputy Chief Constable and three Assistant Chief Constables. Furthermore it was decided that the Assistant Chief Constables should exchange sections after two years so as to promote greater unity of purpose in the team. The second level was the Force Management Team,

²⁷ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1986; *Interview*: Senior Police Officer, Lewes, Headquarters, March 1989.

comprising all the members of the FPT and all the Chief Superintendents. The goals for this team, at its meeting every six weeks, were to discuss problem issues of the whole Sussex Police Force and the "performance" review system. Whereas the Force Policy Team has a decision-making role, the Force Management Team is essentially consultative.

The third tier consists of a series of divisional and departmental teams, one in each of the five territorial divisions and the six departments at headquarters (see diagram 2 above). Each of these teams meets once a month under the chairmanship of the Chief Superintendent and brings together the Superintendents who run the territorial subdivisions or the branches within each department at headquarters. Finally teams led by the Superintendents meet regularly in each of the subdivisions and branches. These Command Teams include Chief Inspectors and Inspectors and the senior civilians in the branch or subdivision. One idea behind this structure was to create a two-way channel for the exchange of information and views, enabling the Policy Team to ask all subordinate levels to express their views on particular issues²⁸.

In parallel with this management team structure a Force Steering Group was created to allow the Policy Team members and the Organisational and Development Department leaders to keep in close contact with representatives of the staff associations (the Police Federation, NALGO, the Chief Superintendents' Association), and the public relations office. This body was intended to be purely consultative.

²⁸ *Interview*: Senior Police Officers, Lewes, Headquarters, March and May 1989.

Another result of the review was the adoption of two new management techniques: "performance review" and "organisational monitoring". The setting of performance goals for each department, division, branch and sub-division, along with clear descriptions of the responsibilities and the powers of each job, were essential to the introduction of a system of evaluation called "performance review". In practice the task of "inspecting" performance was given to the Chief Superintendents reporting to the Deputy Chief Constable and discussing their findings at meetings of the Force Management Team. In parallel with this assessment of individual performance a unit to survey the functioning of the whole structure was created, the Organisational Monitoring Unit, within the Organisation and Development Department²⁹. This same department assumed responsibility for administrative work for prosecutions and liaison with the new Crown Prosecution Service. Finally, the computer services branch was included within the Organisation and Development Department.

Thus high priority was given to management reform in Sussex. This finding confirms the view of Horton and Smith that "Police forces are increasingly taking the view that the key to improved police effectiveness and efficiency is not through following any specified scheme, but rather through a more dynamic approach to management"³⁰.

It is tempting to conclude that the most significant change in Sussex which resulted from the review conducted by the Organisation and Development Department was a massive increase in the importance of that

²⁹ *Sussex Police Annual Report: 1986.*

³⁰ C. Horton and D.J. Smith, *Evaluating Police Work*, London, Policy Studies Institute, 1988, p.37.

department. It is certainly striking to compare the two annual reports of the Chief Constable of 1978 and 1988. In 1978 the Organisation and Development Department received less than half a page as the last item (p. 61) before "Recreation and Sports". In 1988, however, Organisation and Development took the first four pages of the report³¹. With 25 full-time police officers the Organisation and Development Department became the fourth largest unit within the headquarters staff after Traffic and Operational Support, CID and Staff Services. Only the CID and Traffic and Operational Support had more inspectors at the headquarters level. It would nonetheless be misleading to conclude that Sussex Police Force leaders were obsessed by management. Even in the Organisation and Development Department, the staff of the computer services branch and the process liaison branch outnumbered those in Organisation Planning. The Sussex Police Force had adopted not only a new structure and new managerial methods but also a new vocabulary of management and a new series of priorities, in which managing and planning policy were seen as essential to carrying out effective and efficient policing.

Technology and training

The police service, like other major organisations in Britain, both public and private, has attempted to keep up with the appropriate new technology, adopting computers, radios, computerized telephone, telex machines and fax. The speed at which new technologies have been introduced has varied between police forces. Increasingly the choices of types of equipment have been determined at the national level by the Common Police Service Committee, on the advice of the Police Requirements Support Unit of the Home Office. Whilst this system leaves

³¹ *Sussex Police Annual Report, 1988.*

little freedom of choice to individual police forces it promises the advantages of allowing inter-linking of communications networks and computers between neighbouring police forces as well as with the Police National Computer. At a more basic level, other technologies have been changed: central government has provided for greater use of guns and a range of riot gear especially since the Public Order Act of 1986³².

The organisational effects on the Sussex Police Force have been twofold. One result is that Sussex has had to spend considerable sums of money on equipment of different kinds. The new compatible HOLMES computer cost £320,000 in 1988-89, out of a total of over £1 million spent on computing and communications technology. The second consequence is increased specialisation within the police and civilian-support services, with a consequent increase and modification of training programmes. The overall impact on the organisation of the Sussex Police has been the formation of two influential sub-groups, the computer and communication specialists and the training instructors.

The computerization programme in Sussex coincided with the introduction of the Crown Prosecution Service and the reorganisation of the police preparation for prosecutions. Crime Process Units were set up, largely staffed by civilians and managed as a branch of the Organisation and Development Department. The development of computer system for this end and for the investigation of crime was made the responsibility of a Computer Services Branch, also largely staffed by civilians and part of the Organisation and Development Department. The operation of the new HOLMES computer system after 1987 was the responsibility of this branch. In contrast the new operations room with its wide range of computer and

³² Interview with General Secretary , ACPO, February 1989.

communications equipment (receiving 999 calls for the whole of Sussex) is part of the Support Services Section as is the Operational Planning Unit, responsible for the use of the helicopter which was leased in 1987 for a trial period³³. One common feature of all these changes was the highly specialised nature of the work, using new technologies and the employment of civilian staff in many of the specialised posts. A common consequence of the changes was that training provision had to be enlarged not only to cater for providing the necessary skilled operators of the new technology but also to make everyone, from new recruits to very senior officers, aware of the technology and its potential application in their work.

The training programmes of the Sussex Police Force were already extensive in 1979. At that time the total number joining the force was 176, replacing 181 who resigned or retired. The new men and women had to be fully trained as probationers, and there were training courses for the newly-promoted sergeants and inspectors, and detective investigation courses for those moving to CID work. Another major training function was for driving, and there were specialised courses for weapons and dealing with public disorder. There were week-long courses for constables, sergeants and inspectors to update officers on recent legislation and important new case-law decisions. Already in 1979 refresher courses for sergeants and inspectors included an introduction to management theories³⁴. Since, then, however, there has been a considerable growth of training courses, especially during the last three years, as table 4 below shows.

³³ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1988, p.30-1.

³⁴ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1979.

Table 4: Training in the Sussex Police Force

Numbers attending courses	1986	1987	1988
Probationer training	646	926	965
Post probation training	1570	856	2057
Communication training	336	262	274
Driving	357	401	543
Detective work	186	138	347
Weapons	2140	2281	2156
Regional Inspectors	112	101	88
Non police courses	299	254	271
External courses	458	430	426

The statistics on table 5, below, show that the number of new recruits to be trained has increased slightly during the last decade. The new sensitivity to police-public relations and to managerial needs, the legislative changes, especially the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the Public Order Act and the results of research outside Sussex have led to major alterations to training for new recruits and all serving officers.

Table 5: Recruitment

	Enquiries	Applications	Recruited
1977	1044	606	171
1978	1272	808	216
1979	1100	806	176
1985	1679	845	178
1986	2247	1081	178
1987	2268	914	222
1988	3816	1193	184

The new approach, entitled "training for need", was limited to the management ideal of giving more responsibility and flexibility to the basic unit within the police organisation, especially the territorial subdivision. Ideally the subdivisions play an important role in defining their own training requirements and planning their training programmes. For new recruits, who officially become "probationers" when they enter the police force, the two-year training and probation period has been restructured and the new system was introduced in August 1989. Until 1989 probationers spent fourteen weeks at the District Training Centre in Ashford (Kent) and most of the remaining probation period in a subdivisional police station. The new scheme, however, provided for an alternation between periods of time spent in formal study and periods of guided practical experience under a "tutor constable" in a subdivision. Furthermore the initial course work and the final stages of the training programme are conducted at Lewes, the Sussex Police training centre, although the two study periods, one of ten weeks and the other of five weeks, still take place at the Ashford Training Centre. The aims of the new schemes are to familiarize newcomers with community policing and corporate management in Sussex as well as to make classroom work more relevant to practical experience³⁵.

The increase in the employment of civilians in posts previously occupied by police officers or in new jobs, such as training and the preparation of documentation for prosecution, has increased the need for training courses. In 1988 the Chief Constable reported that the relatively

³⁵ *New Probationer Training System* (Sussex Police Force internal document), 1989.

high turnover of civilians was further increasing the training burden in Sussex³⁶.

The overall consequences of these expansions of training programmes and the introduction of new technologies are the devotion of increasing financial resources and man-hours to these activities and increased sub-group specialisation within the police.

Conclusion

Two elements of the concept of policing by consent, the notions of the operational autonomy of chief constables and the adaptation of national norms to local circumstances, do not appear to have been respected very much when the Edmund Davies Report and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act were adopted. The Police Authority in Sussex had no choice but to implement the pay award in full even though it implied raising local rates during a period in which the Government was attempting to limit local authority spending and hence the rates across the country as a whole. Furthermore the immediate rise in real incomes for police officers and the subsequent indexation of salaries to the cost of living was insufficient to attract the necessary supply of new recruits. At the same time the policy of employing more civilians, usually at salaries below those of police officers, was not easily implemented in Sussex where unemployment was low in the late 1980s. The paradoxical consequence was that in 1989 the Chief Constable was simultaneously reporting that the number of posts in his force was inadequate and that there were not enough people to fill the posts which did exist. For a government which in other public sector

³⁶ *Sussex Police Annual Report*, 1988, p.39.

employment areas was devoted to the destruction of national pay bargaining this outcome was ironical.

In his 1987 report, the Chief Constable re-iterated his own respect for the ideas of policing by consent:

"I believe the foundations for a sound traditional system of policing should be based on agreement between Chief Constables and police Authorities in consultation with local communities as to a minimum level of beat policing considered essential for each period of the day".

He also acknowledged, however, that central government simply had not provided sufficient resources for the achievement of his ideal:

"...I am having to face a growing number of letters and critical public comment from Councils and other groups representing the community, complaining about the lack of police presence on the streets at a time when violence, vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour are increasingly spoiling the quality of life. There is growing frustration within the service as overworked police officers, themselves subjected to more violence and abuse than ever, know that even with the very best management and all the goodwill in the world they cannot provide the reassurance and the protection for which the public is crying out....."

I accept, of course, that in national terms the Police Service has received a considerable injection of resources over the past few years at a time when other public services have been facing severe difficulties over finance. It is disappointing, to say the least, that when local feeling is so supportive and the Police Authority has actually provided a base for growth that the national picture has not been reflected in Sussex"³⁷.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act left to the Chief Constable only the initiative to decide the method and timetable for its implementation and the consequences for training and manpower deployment. It left very little discretion to interpret the standards set by the Act. Home Office circulars fixed national standards in many areas where the Act was

³⁷ *Sussex Police Annual Report, 1987, p.2.*

imprecise. The experience in Sussex indicates that common national standards might have been a more efficient means for determining the methods for implementing the Act, saving every police force the cost and efforts of carrying out its own research and experiments. In contrast, consultative groups under section 106 of the Act did not appear to be wanted or necessary in most parts of Sussex so that some discretion for the Chief Constable here would have saved police time and money.

The other major government initiative of this period, circular 114 (1983), was very different from these measures in its intention and effects. Whereas the Edmund Davies Report had imposed national pay rates the 1983 Home Office circular encouraged local experiments and competition between police forces by promising to reward those police forces which produced the best results in improving efficiency. This approach had three unforeseen consequences. The first was that an attempt had to be made to define national performance indicators by which to evaluate the comparative results of different police forces. The second was that police forces like that of Sussex all carried out their own costly studies of organisation and methods but still attempted to learn from each other and hence to standardise new methods and techniques whilst keeping their own identities. The third was that the logical outcome of this process would have been to allocate additional resources on the basis of efficiency rather than need. Nonetheless this approach was much more consistent with government thinking on the benefits of competition between agencies within the public service under firm central financial regulation.

In 1989 the organisation of the Sussex Police Force was very different from that of 1979 in three respects. The first was the importance of managerial structures and methods, which was to lead to the development

of a new police professional managerial specialisation. The second change was the increased use of computers and new communication technologies. This development, too, required the development of a new expertise. The third change was the allocation of much greater resources to community policing functions. The need for more and better community policemen also had implications for training but of a very different kind from those of the first two changes. Community policing required friendlier police contacts, putting 'bobbies' back on the beat, and keeping them there, and much time spent in discussions with local groups in crime prevention panels or neighbourhood watch schemes. Whereas the first two changes encouraged the development of the 'techno cop', community policing relied on the generalist talents of the ordinary constable and his often-praised 'common sense'.

Chapter 6

Policing by consent as viewed by Sussex police officers

In the last chapter the analysis of how the internal organisation of the Sussex police force was modified in line with the new national policies revealed that those policies were often inappropriate for local conditions. This chapter examines the attitudes of the police officers themselves towards their own work and their reactions to the changes imposed from above during the last ten years.

The starting point is the appreciation by police officers of the model of policing by consent. Whether or not police officers have a positive attitude towards the complex changes of the 1980s reflects to some extent their understanding of the idea of policing by consent as the tradition of their professional service. In the second section of this chapter the views of police

officers about the positive aspects of the reforms are analysed, and the diversity of outlooks according to different professional circumstances is studied. The third section continues this exploration of different police views by considering critical evaluations of police officers from all ranks of their own duties and powers. The conclusion raises questions about the relevance of the reforms to the experience and values of Sussex police officers. It calls into question the popular notion of a unified professional police culture, a question which will be pursued further in the next chapter.

Police views of policing by consent

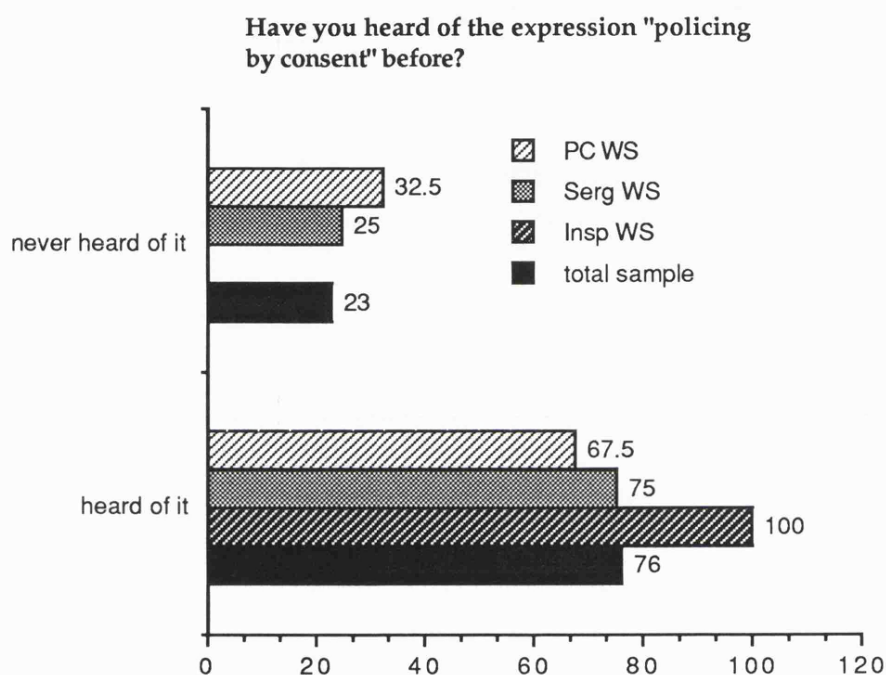
The idea of policing by consent is, as noted in the first three chapters, familiar to most political leaders, home office officials, members of the Association of Chief Police Officers and academic researchers. A "return to policing by consent" was widely advocated as necessary during the public debates of the 1980s. The proposers of the reforms often presented policing by consent as their goal. Even within the Police Federation, policing by consent was frequently discussed as a specifically British approach and given as the reason why Britain has "the best police force in the world"¹. What does policing by consent mean to ordinary police officers in Sussex? Indeed, does it mean anything?

Table 1 shows the responses of police officers between the ranks of inspector to constable in Sussex to the question "Have you heard of the idea of policing by consent before?". What this table demonstrates is that whilst the vast majority of officers of these ranks are familiar with the notion of policing by consent, over one-fifth of those interviewed had never heard of

¹ Interviews with several members of the Police Federation, March, April, May 1989.

it. All of those in our other sample of "senior officers" (chief inspector and above) had heard of policing by consent.

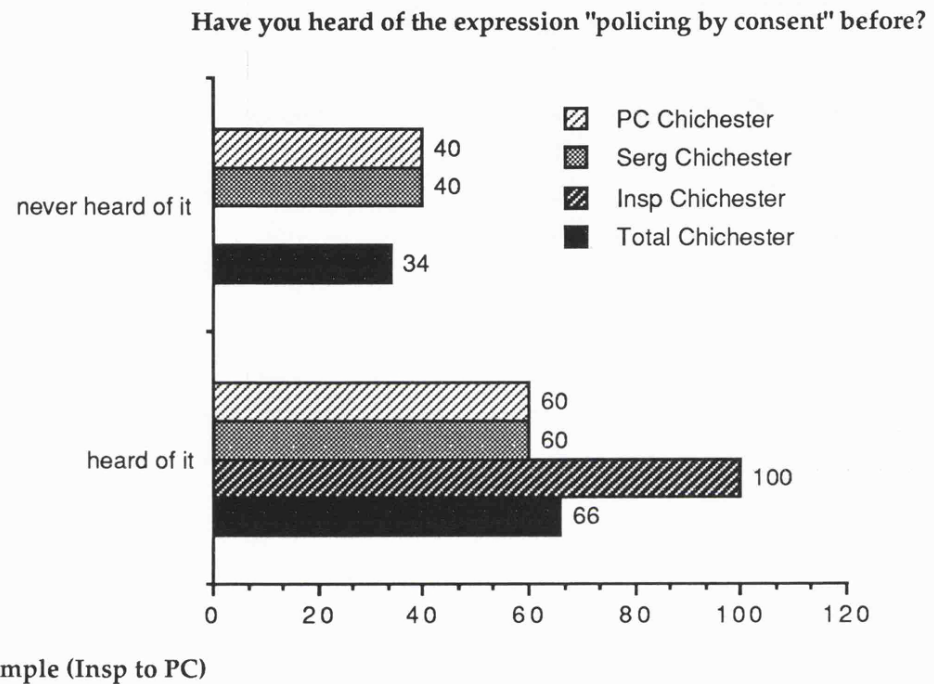
Table 1



Familiarity with the idea of policing by consent appears to increase with rank rather than with number of years in the police service. Indeed, all officers above the rank of inspector knew of this idea. In contrast, almost a third of all PCs and a quarter of all sergeants interviewed had never heard of policing by consent. Thus, paradoxically, amongst those who are more likely to deal with the public, at the front line of the police service, is the idea of policing by consent the least well known. "I've never heard of it. Am I supposed to know about it?" was the response of one constable, typical

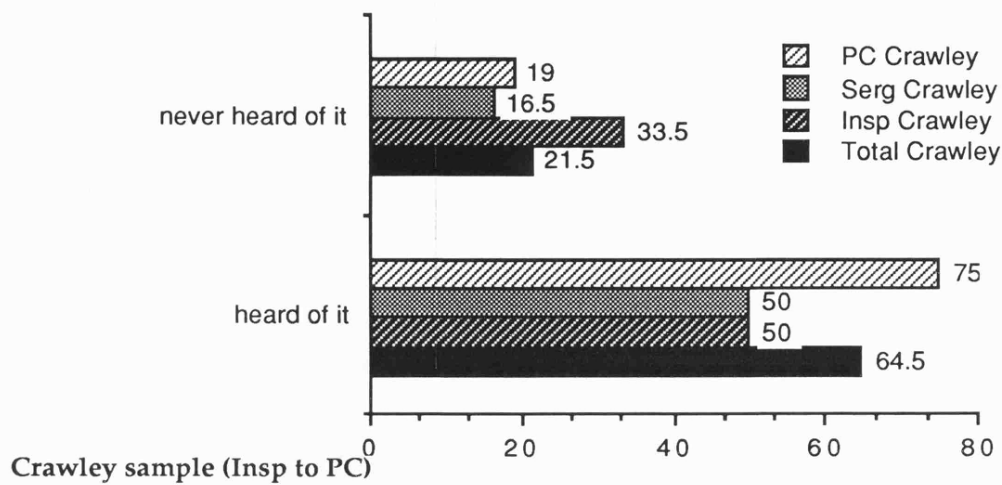
of this sizeable minority². As table 2 also shows, the idea of policing by consent is the least familiar to officers serving in the small town and rural area of Chichester.

Table 2

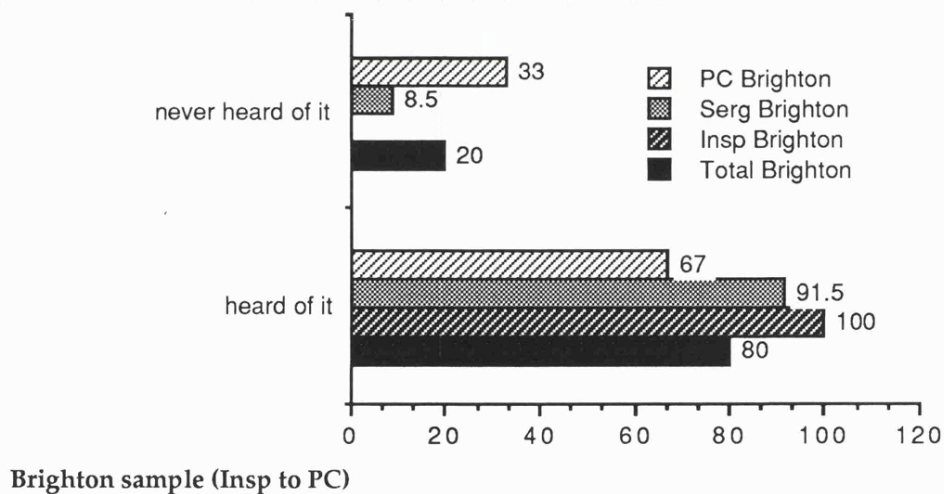


² Interview: Constable, Brighton, April, 1989.

Have you heard of the expression "policing by consent" before?



Have you heard of the expression "policing by consent" before?

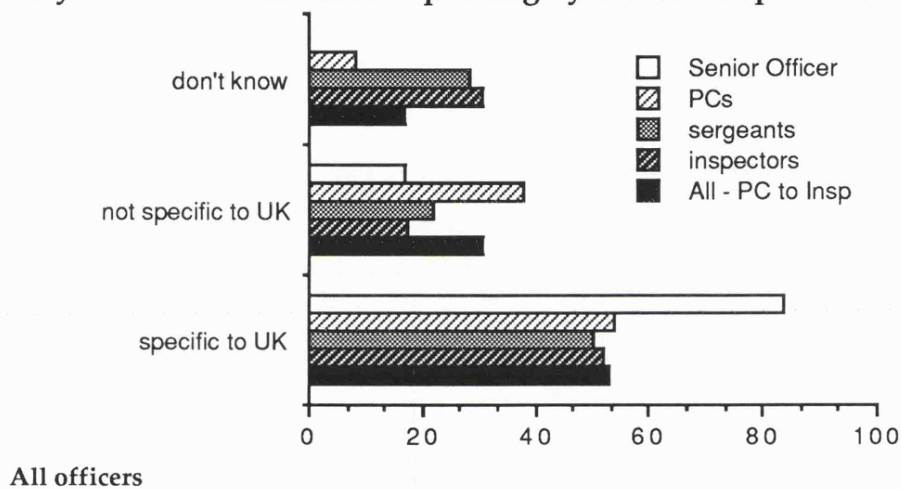


Tables 3 to 8 show the diversity of views about the meaning and importance of policing by consent. The first series of tables present the views of police officers as to whether or not policing by consent is a specifically British tradition. Most senior police officers shared the conviction of their national leaders and politicians that policing by consent

is a singularly British tradition. Amongst the ranks of constables, sergeants and inspectors, however, 17% did not know and 30% did not see anything specifically British about policing by consent. A sergeant representative of the last category asserted: " Surely any democratic society must have policing by consent"³.

Table 3

Do you think that the idea of policing by consent is specific to Britain?



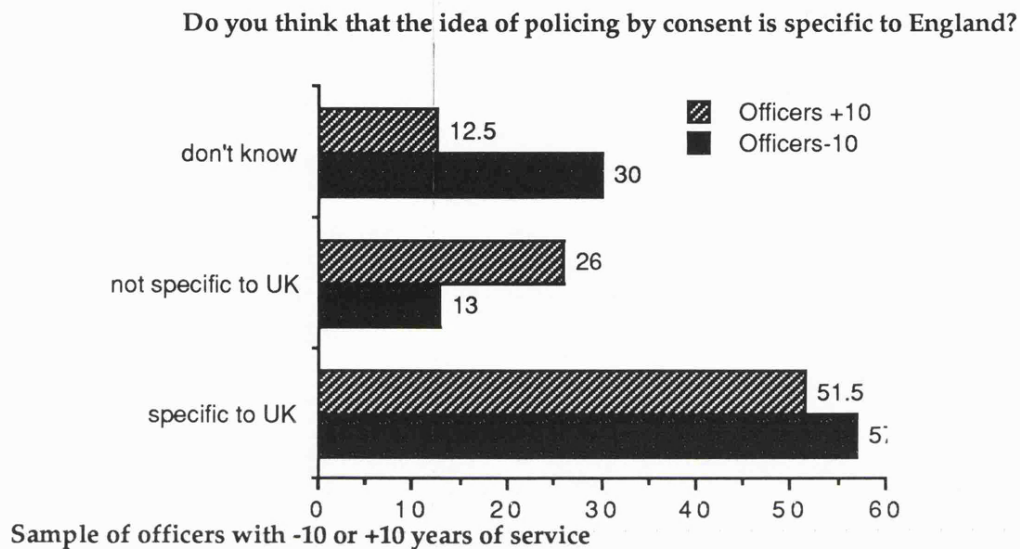
In all, therefore, only 53% of those interviewed between the ranks of PC and inspector believed that the British police system was distinct from other police systems by its tradition of policing by consent. Typical of such views were the comparative comment of a woman constable: "When I go on holiday abroad, policemen do not seem to talk to members of the public and I am shocked by the toughness of the police there. It may have to do with them having fire arms"⁴, and the more moderate observation of a sergeant: "There seems to be a belief here that it is British. In the rest of

³ Interview: Sergeant, Crawley, April, 1989.

⁴ Interview: Woman Police Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

Europe there is more alienation of the public from the police. The fact that we are unarmed helps, but I would say that policing by consent must exist in any democracy"⁵.

Table 4



The most striking feature of the results shown in tables 5 to 8 is that, whilst almost everyone had some idea about what constitutes policing by consent, there was no consensus of these ideas amongst police officers in Sussex. Only 10% of those interviewed were unable to identify any important feature of policing by consent. No single "main feature" of policing by consent was cited by over 50% of the respondents. Even when analysed into subgroups by rank, by area and by period of service, the responses remained very diversified. This finding seems to confirm the view of one inspector in Brighton: "Policing by consent has always been there but never seems to have been clearly defined"⁶.

The active cooperation and support of the public was identified by 48%

⁵ Interview: Sergeant, Brighton, March, 1989.

⁶ Interview: Inspector, Brighton, March, 1989.

of inspectors but only 28% of senior police officers, of sergeants and of constables cited it. A less active public approach, of "trust and respect" was seen as a key feature by many senior police officers (39%) but was cited by only 13.5% of those interviewed from other ranks.

Table 5

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of police officers*	(125)	(23)	(28)	(74)
(open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)	Total %	Insp %	Serg %	PC %
Don't know	10.5	9	3.5	13.5
Not armed	17	9	21.5	17.5
Tradition	5.5	4.5	18	1.5
Local identity	4	4.5	3.5	4
Police are citizens in uniform	9	22	3.5	7
We are not political	6.5	9	3.5	7
Trust, respect and confidence of the public	13.5	13	25	9.5
Support and cooperation of the public	28	48	28.5	21.5
We enforce the law voted democratically	5	9	7	3
We do what people want us to do	8	----	7	11
We give the public a service	5	----	3.5	7
Most people accept us	1.5	----	3.5	1.5
We are not aggressive	2.5	----	7	1.5
We are not military	4	4.5	3.5	4
We treat every one equally and with care	5	4.5	----	7
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered	3	13	3.5	----
We portray a good image	2.5	4.5	3.5	1.5

Responses given by only one person:

The public pays us

We are accountable to the public

Multi-agency approach

Jack of all trades

Prevention

The support of the judiciary

We should not hide behind democracy

The idea of the bobby on the Beat

**Sample of inspectors to constables.*

In all, a majority of all officers questioned recognized that some kind of positive attitude towards the police from the public lies at the core of policing by consent. There is very little agreement as to the reasons for and the means by which this positive attitude is created. The fact that police officers do not carry fire-arms was cited by less than 20% of all those questioned, and whilst 22% of senior police officers and 21% of sergeants noted this feature, only 9% of inspectors did so. The traditional nature of policing by consent was appreciated by 22% of senior police officers and 18% of sergeants but by only 4.5 % of inspectors and 1.5% of constables. In contrast, the idea of the police as ordinary citizens in uniform (see chapter 1) was mentioned by 22% of inspectors but by only 7% of constables, 5.5% of senior police officers and 3.5% of sergeants.

Table 6

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of senior police officers*	(18)
(open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)	%
Don't know	----
Not armed	22
Tradition	22
Local identity	5.5
Police are citizens in uniform	5.5
We are not political	----
Trust, respect and confidence of the public	39
Support and cooperation of the public	28
We enforce the law voted democratically	5.5
We do what people want us to do	----
We give the public a service	----
Most people accept us	----
We are not aggressive	----
We are not military	----
We treat every one equally and with care	----
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered	11
We portray a good image	----
Consultation between the police and the public	44.5
We are accountable to the public	22

**Senior police officers: chief inspector and above.*

Three different aspects of the political legitimacy of the police were identified, albeit by very small numbers of officers. The first, the consent obtained through local consultation, was noted by 44.5% of senior police officers but by no other respondents. This difference of responses between upper and lower ranks is probably explained by the fact that almost all the work of local consultation, with the Police Authority but also with consultative groups, is carried out only by the senior officers.

In contrast, the idea that the police service is apolitical or non-partisan, advanced by 6.5% of those between the ranks of constable and inspector, was not mentioned by a single senior police officer. The third element, that consent arises through the enforcement of democratically voted laws, was cited by 5% of all respondents with little difference according to ranks. Finally, a practical or strategic view of the logic of policing by consent was that it represents an essential method for a small number of policemen to control a vastly greater population. One inspector in Crawley exposed this view succinctly: "there is no other way; otherwise we would be outnumbered"⁷. This opinion was shared by 11% of senior police officers and 13% of inspectors.

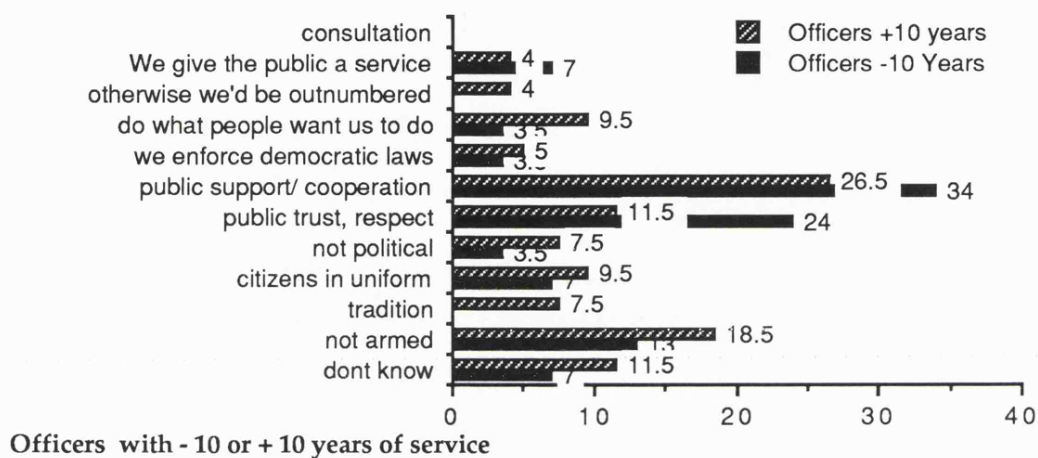
Table 7 shows that there is one major difference between those who have been recruited during the last ten years and others. "Public support and cooperation", and "public trust and respect" are much more frequently cited by the officers with less than ten years of service. That is perhaps a reflection of some of the changes in training which were noted in the previous chapter. Another feature which emerges in this table is that

⁷ *Interview: Inspector, Crawley, April, 1989.*

officers who have been in the police for less than ten years cite fewer precise features of policing by consent than their more experienced colleagues.

Table 7

**In your opinion, what are the major elements in the i
of policing by consent?**



The picture which emerges from the results of these interviews is that, whilst most police officers are familiar with the idea of policing by consent, it means little more than a vague notion that the police have, or should have, widespread support and cooperation, or at least trust and respect from their fellow citizens. Only in the top ranks of the Sussex Police Force were the core elements of policing by consent, as discussed in national political debates, recognized. The higher the rank, the more likely an officer is to be familiar with these core elements.

This conclusion is confirmed by the results of a parallel series of interviews, twenty two in all, of police officers on probation in Sussex. Indeed, only 36% of those interviewed had ever heard of the expression of policing by consent before. Only 18% had any idea of what it could mean,

out of which only 9% thought that it was specific to Britain (see table 8).

Table 8

Number of officers	(22)			
	%			
Have you heard of the expression before?	Yes	36	No	64
Do you know what it means?	Yes	18	No	82
Is it specific to the English Police?	Yes	9	No	9
*It is specific to the English police because:				
The police is separate from the army		4.5		
Not armed		13.5		
Local identity to british policing		4.5		
Tradition		13.5		
<i>*Open-ended question</i>				

Police officers on probation

These findings do not imply that police officers in Sussex are in any sense hostile or aggressive towards the public or that they believe that it is legitimate to act without the approval of the general public. They simply show that despite ten years of important public debates about policing in Britain, the numerous publications (books and articles) by leading police officers, the programmes about the issue on television and radio and the research output by academics, many police officers remain unaware of the basic principles and traditional views of the model of their role held by dominant national elites. Indeed, like many others in the lower ranks of other professions, the constables and sergeants and many inspectors, are not concerned by the theoretical and philosophical analysis of their role; they are more preoccupied by practical, personal and moral aspects of their work. The traditional feature of police organisation in Britain, that all senior police officers start at the level of constable has, however, the consequence, and probably the advantage, that police chiefs are at least familiar with the ways of thinking of their subordinates. The results of the Sussex interviews also suggest that the idea of policing by consent is only

studied, discussed and analysed by those in the senior ranks, whilst they are in Bramshill, the national training centre for senior police officers.

Police views about the positive changes during the last decade

Amongst the many initiatives of the last decade to improve policing, some have been particularly concerned with improving relations between the police and the public, at least in the eyes of their proponents. These initiatives included the creation of more formal structures for greater consultation at the local level (as suggested by the Scarman Report), the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the return of more policemen to front-line police work by the increased use of civilians, the creation of the Crown Prosecution service, the establishment of neighbourhood watch schemes, the introduction of community policing and the attempt to use professional public relation techniques (see chapters 4 and 5). The question posed to the Sussex police officers, however, did not seek to reveal the extent of the officers' knowledge of these policy initiatives but rather to assess their appreciation of their implementation. The objective was to discover which initiatives were seen by police officers as having led to better police-public relations.

The first and perhaps the most surprising result of these interviews, as shown in tables 9 and 10, was the revelation that a substantial minority of police officers thought that no initiatives taken during the last ten years had made any substantial contribution towards improving relations between the police and the public. Over one fifth of respondents in all ranks were in this minority: 25.5% of constables, 32% of sergeants, 35% of inspectors and 22% of senior officers above the rank of inspector.

Table 9

In your opinion, what are the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

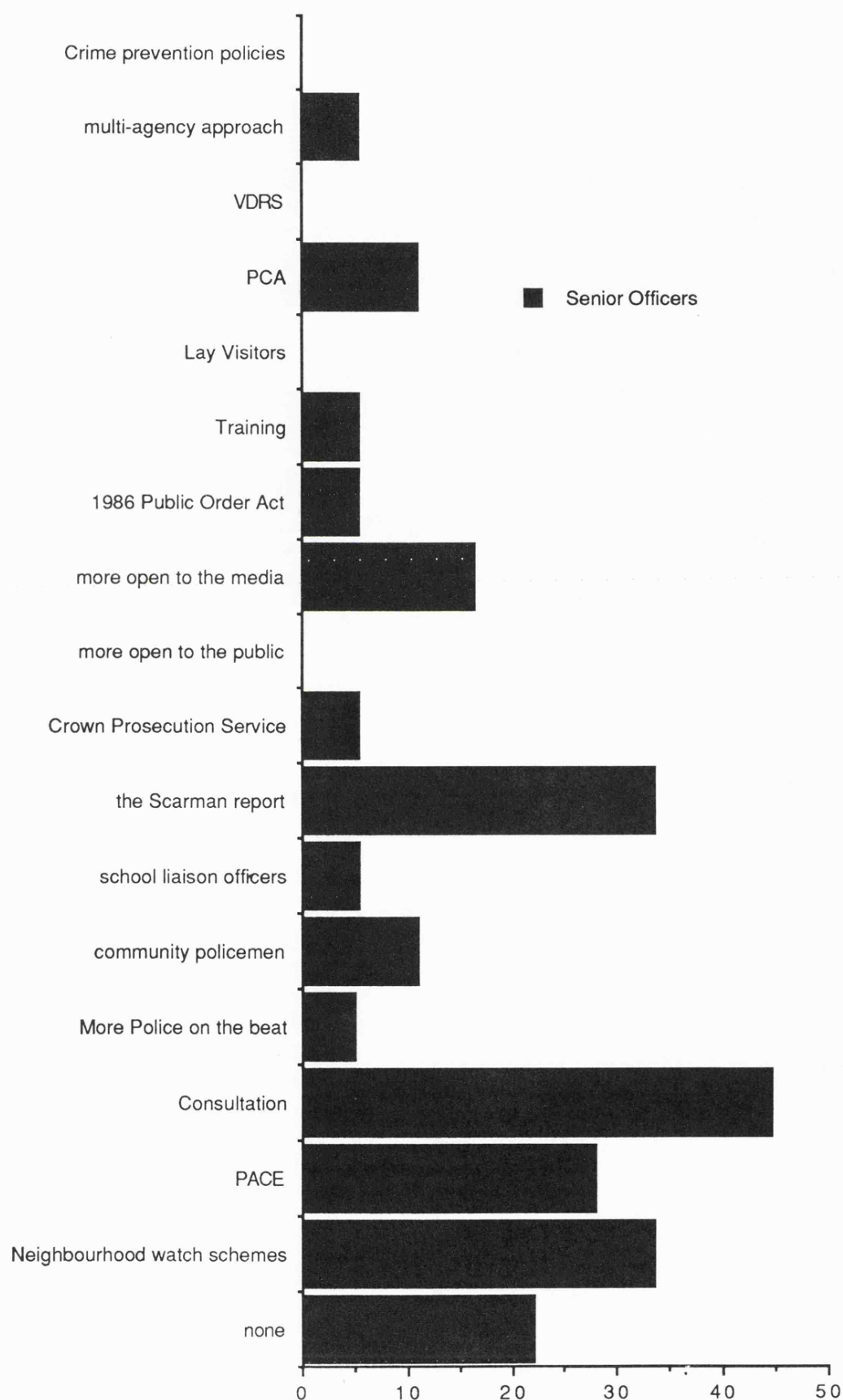
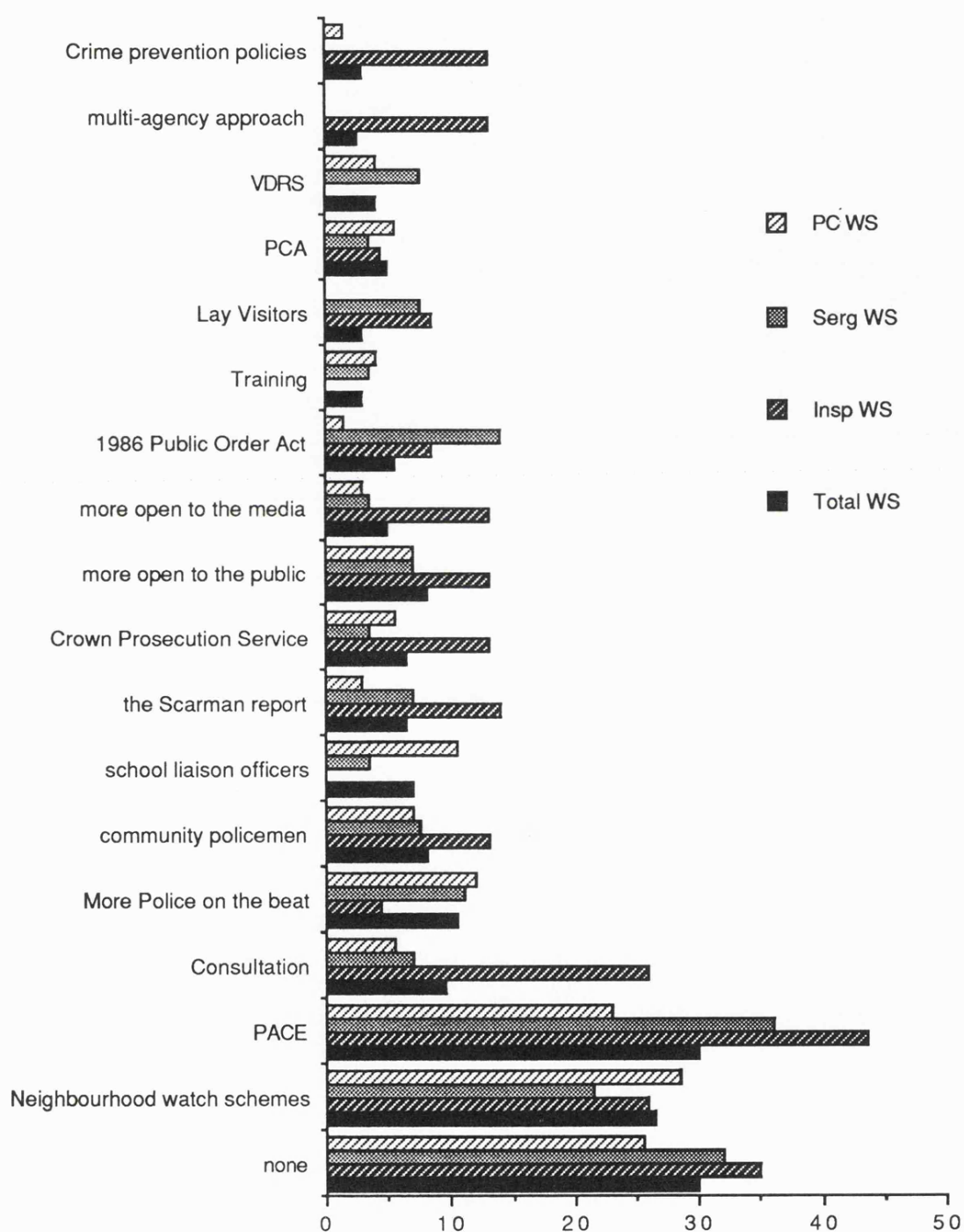


Table 10

In your opinion, what are the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?



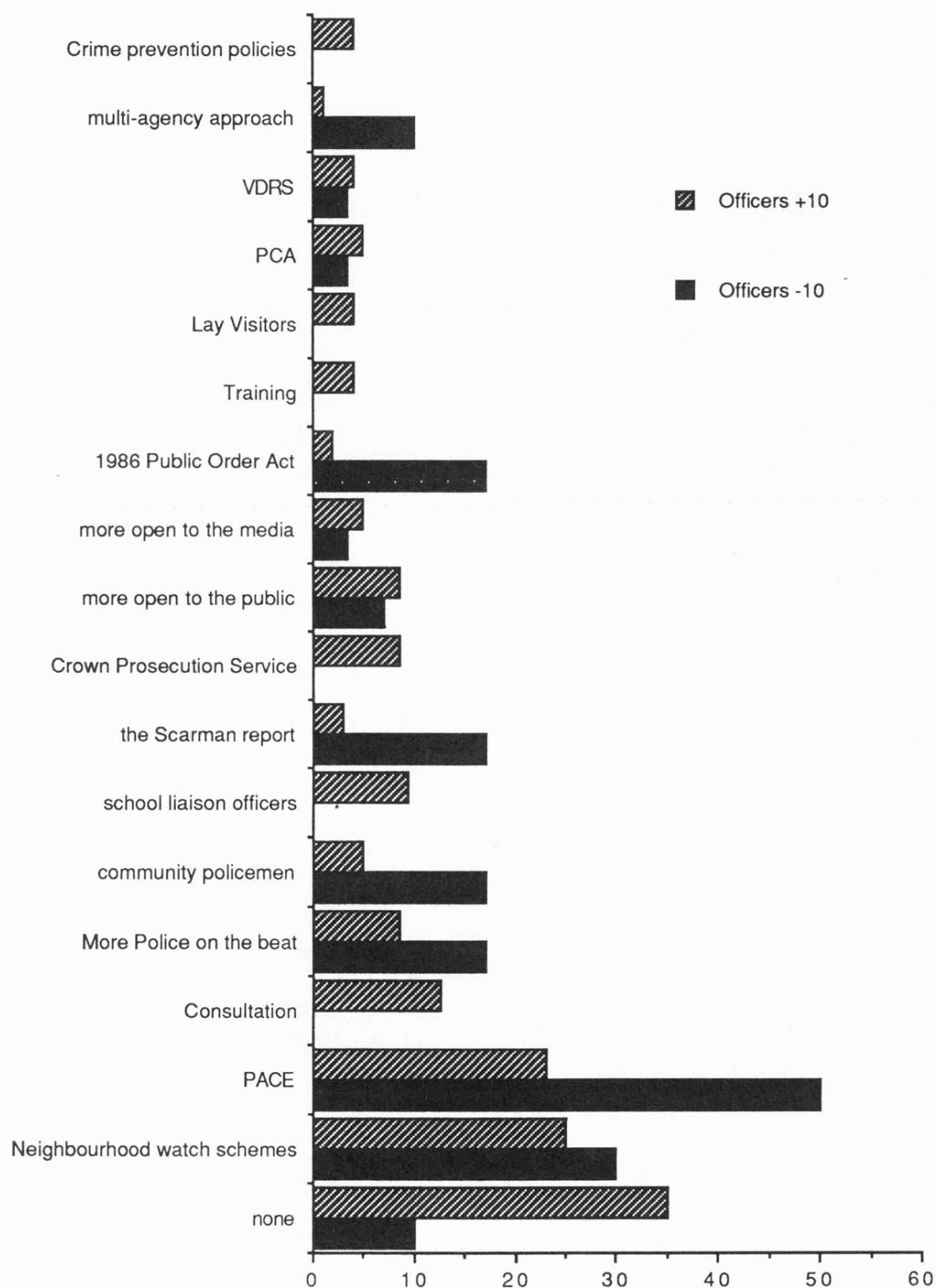
Whole sample (insp to PC)

Table 11 shows that officers who have been recruited in the last ten years think more positively about recent initiatives than their more experienced colleagues, of whom 35% are members of the "no-change minority". This finding corroborates responses from the questions on policing by consent, suggesting that changes in training, especially since the Scarman Report, could have had some impact. This conclusion would appear to be confirmed by the other responses to this question. The single initiative most frequently cited as making a positive change in police relations with the public was the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (by 30%). Its importance was noted by 50% of officers with less than ten years of service but by only 23% of all officers with more than ten years of service. 43.5% of all inspectors, 36% of all sergeants, 28% of all senior police officers, 23% of all constables cited it.

Officers who have been in the police for less than ten years seemed to be more receptive to other initiatives. They advanced the benefit of neighbourhood watch schemes, the Scarman Report, community policing, beat policing, the 1986 Public Order Act and the multi-agency approach to policing appreciably more than their colleagues with more than ten years of service. Nonetheless, there were some striking differences between the views of the fairly new police officers who had experienced the newer training schemes and those of the senior officers responsible for establishing those training arrangements. Even neighbourhood watch schemes were more frequently cited by senior police officers than by those who had been in the police for less than ten years. On local consultative groups the gap was enormous, from 44.5% of senior police officers to 0% of the new recruits. Again, only 3.5% of the officers with less than ten years of service cited openness to the media whereas 16.5% of senior police officers did so.

Table 11

In your opinion, what are the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

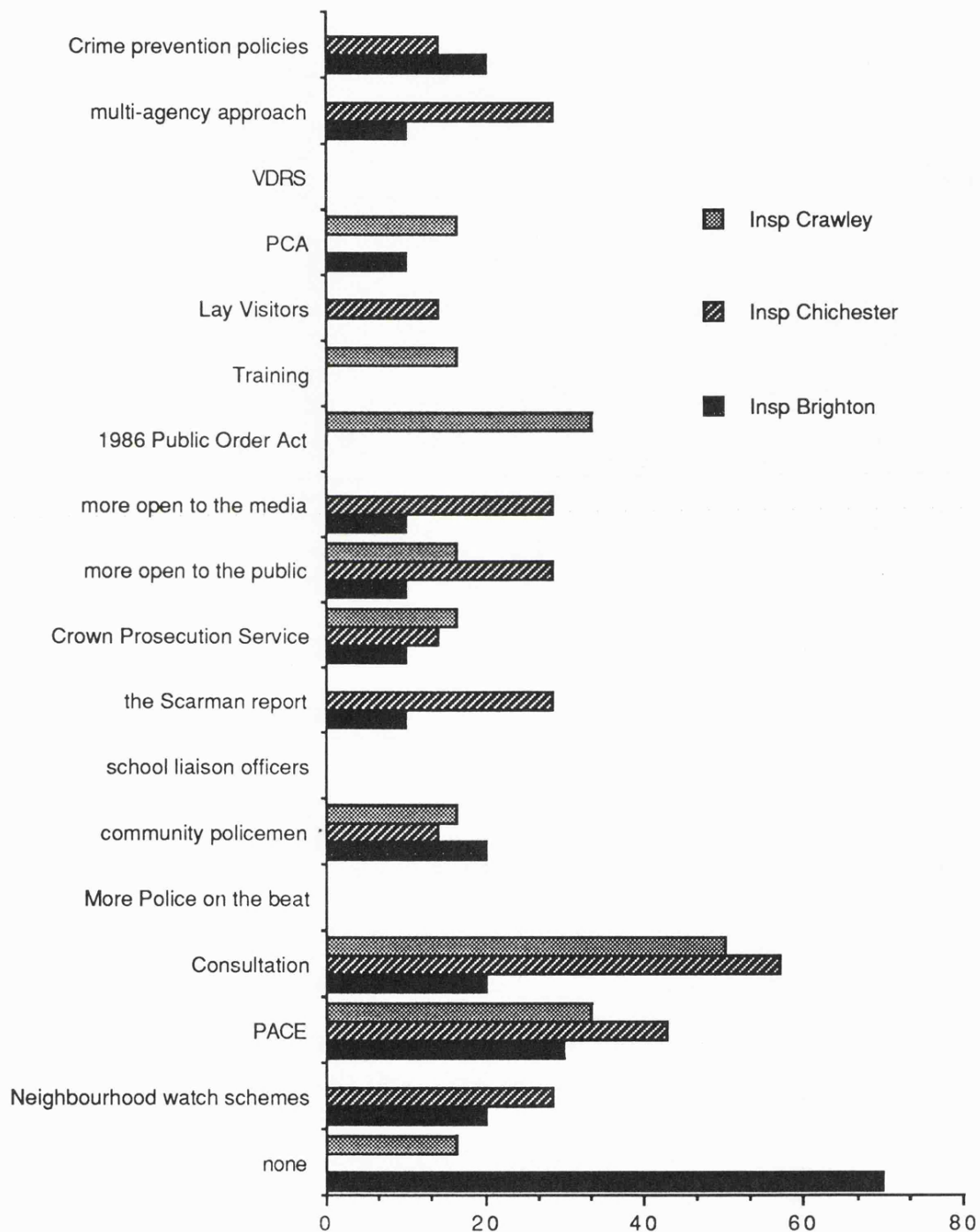


Some of the other results shown in this table appear paradoxical. On the one hand, a higher percentage of inspectors (35%) than any other rank saw no positive changes during the last ten years; on the other, however, those inspectors who saw changes cited more than the officers in any other ranks (see table 9). The two-thirds of inspectors who believed that there were improvements during the last ten years saw a large number and great variety of types of improvements. Part of the explanation for this variety of views amongst inspectors is provided in table 12. The most important variable appears to be the place where they work. In Chichester, all inspectors interviewed cited one or more positive initiative (and a substantial 57% cited 'consultation'), whereas in Brighton a massive 70% of inspectors could not identify a single positive initiative.

In contrast, constables were less inclined (25.5%) to see no positive initiatives than sergeants and inspectors. They cited fewer measures than the inspectors or sergeants, except for neighbourhood watch schemes which were cited by 28.5%. Again it would appear from a comparison between tables 10 and 11 that there is a difference within the ranks of the constables between officers with less than ten years of service and their older or more experienced colleagues, with the more recent constables being much more positive than the others, including senior police officers. There were differences between the responses of constables according to the station in which they were based and the area they served. Neighbourhood watch schemes are an example of such differences since they were cited positively by only 6% of the constables interviewed in Crawley and 21.5% in Brighton but by 46.5% of those interviewed in Chichester.

Table 12

In your opinion, what are the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?



Inspectors in the three police stations

Similarly 26.5% of the constables questioned in Chichester mentioned school liaison officers, whereas none did in either Crawley or Brighton. It seems paradoxical that constables in Chichester, the least urban area and with much lower crime rates than either Brighton or Crawley, should have more constables who positively appreciated not only neighbourhood watch schemes, community policing and school liaison officers but also the Scarman Report, local consultation, VDRS and public relation initiatives. It would appear, therefore, that reforms which were primarily intended for improving police-public relations in troubled inner-city areas are seen as most successful, or at least more useful, by police officers who serve in relatively peaceful semi-rural areas.

The overall picture which thus emerges from the study of police officers' points of view in Sussex about the reforms which have taken place during the last ten years is that more than two third of those interviewed judged some aspects of those reforms as positive changes. However, there are more positive judgements amongst senior police officers and inspectors, except in Brighton, and amongst those who have been in the police for less than ten years.

Views of police officers about impediments to policing by consent

The attitudes of the officers in the Sussex Police Force towards existing obstacles to policing by consent are summarized in tables 13 to 19. At first sight these findings appear to be in marked contrast with those about major initiatives to improve police-public relations discussed in the last section.

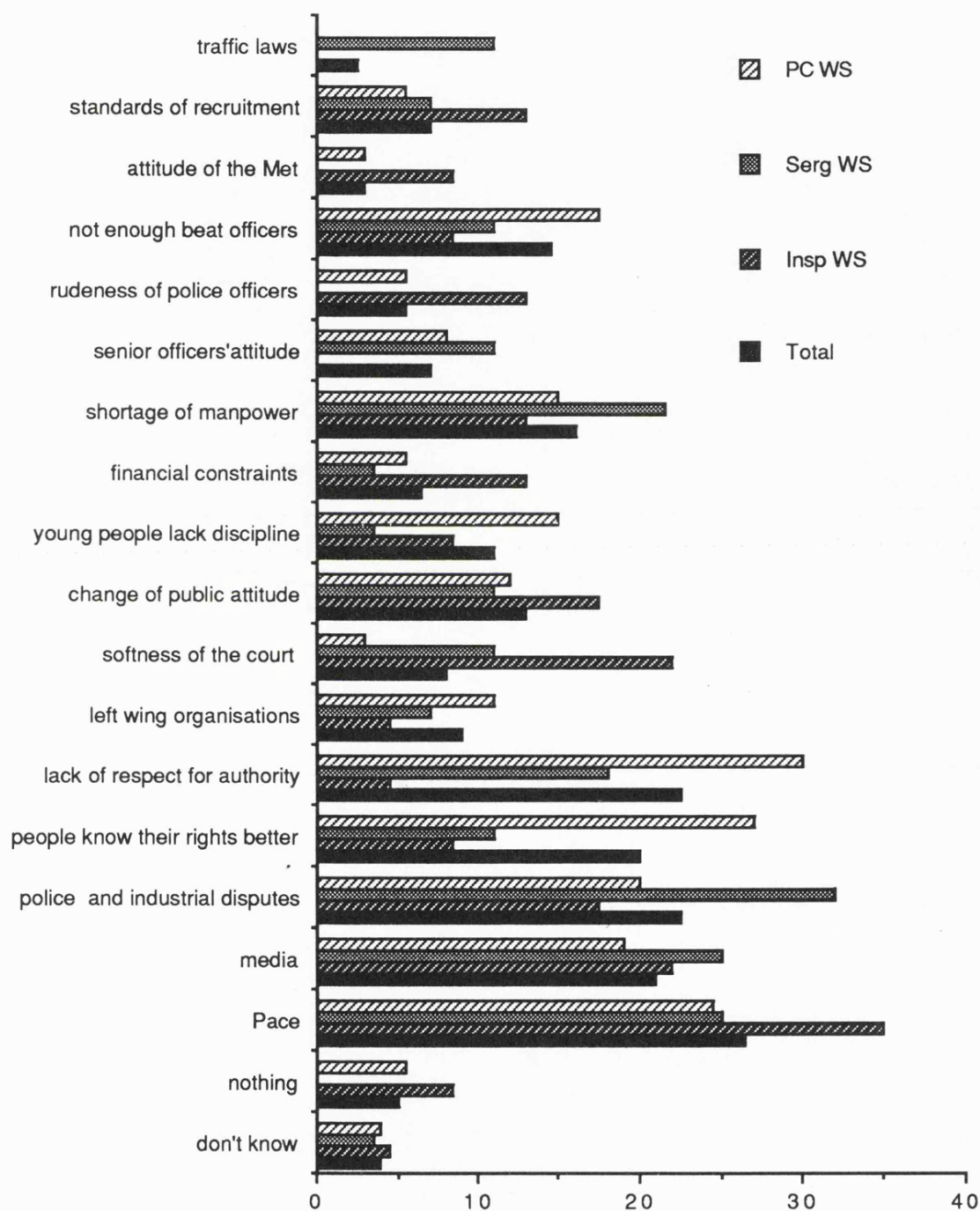
First police officers seemed to find it much easier to identify problems than to perceive solutions: whilst 30% of the total respondents in the

sample from the ranks of constable to inspector could cite no positive initiatives, only 9% had no comments to make on impediments to policing by consent (see table 13). Nonetheless, this comparison is somewhat misleading, since the previous question limited the range of responses about sources of improved police-public relations to major legislative or other initiatives during the last decade whereas the question "what do you think has most impeded policing by consent" placed virtually no limitation on the respondents. Given the open-ended nature of the question, it is hardly surprising that many of the responses concerned the attitudes and behaviour of the public rather than decisions taken by the government. Sussex police officers, perhaps unsurprisingly, remained ungenerous in attributing responsibility for non-consensual policing to themselves.

The single most cited impediment to policing by consent was nonetheless governmental in origin: the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984. This reply represented 26.5% of the responses in the full sample of police officers between the ranks of constable to inspector with 24.5% PCs, 25% sergeants and 35% inspectors, respectively. Amongst senior police officers this Act was cited by 28% (see table 14). The 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, however, was the most frequently cited, by 30% of constables, sergeants and inspectors, as the major initiative which had contributed to improve police-public relations during the last ten years. Hence, far from leading to the creation of a new consensus amongst police officers, the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act would appear to have provoked considerable dissension. However, police opinion about PACE was not as polarized as these figures would suggest. Indeed, almost a third of those who named it as a positive initiative, also identified it as an obstacle.

Table 13

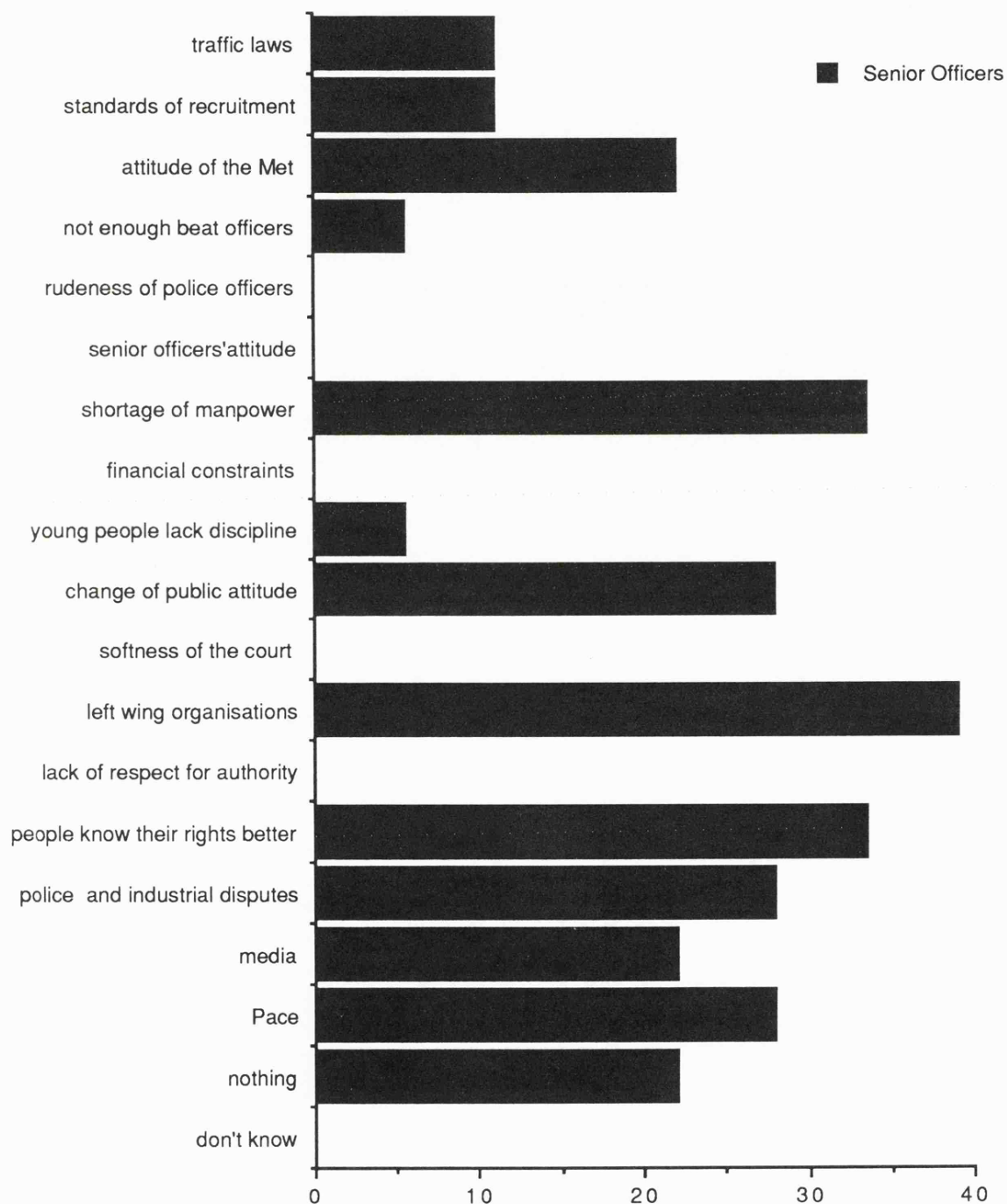
In your opinion, what has most impeded
policing by consent?



Whole sample (Insp to PC)

Table 14

In your opinion what has most impeded
policing by consent?



Senior officer sample

Many of these respondents would have agreed with the assessment of one detective constable: "PACE has regularized the way in which we work. It has given more powers to the police but it has also had the negative effect of restricting our actions"⁸.

Two other aspects of tables 13 and 14 are noteworthy. The first is "the softness of the court" a reponse given by 22% of inspectors but by very few others. It seems probable that the direct experience of inspectors in court prosecution work before the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service in 1986 helps to explain their high response although why Crawley and Brighton were particularly affected remains a mystery (see tables 16, 17, 18). The second is the high number of senior officers who cited "left wing organisations" as impediments to policing by consent. There appears to be an appreciable difference between the views of the leaders and those of other officers in this respect, since only 8% of the inspector to constable sample cited it, when 39% of the senior officers did.

Senior police officers and inspectors appeared to be much better informed about the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act and therefore better able to see both positive and negative aspects. At the same time, as table 15 shows, officers who were recruited during the last ten years, and were mostly in the ranks of constable and sergeant, were much more likely than officers with longer police service to see the positive aspects of the 1984 Act. In contrast, their more experienced but less recently trained colleagues were more likely to cite it as an obstacle to policing by consent.

The second most cited obstacle to policing by consent amongst officers between the ranks of constables and inspectors, also rose out of government

⁸ *Interview*: Detective Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

policy, but not legislation: the Government's use of police officers during industrial disputes. This response was remarkable in that it was spontaneously volunteered by similar minorities of all ranks, with 17.5% of inspectors, 20% of constables, 28.5% of senior police officers and of 32% of sergeants. The length of service appeared to make very little difference. Indeed, 23% amongst those with more than ten years of service cited it, but so too did 20% of their junior colleagues. There were, however, differences between the three police stations, with the officers based in Brighton much more aware of this problem (58.5% of sergeants in Brighton quoted it) than their colleagues elsewhere. This response was least often volunteered in Chichester by officers in all ranks, although again the highest score was amongst sergeants there, with 20%.

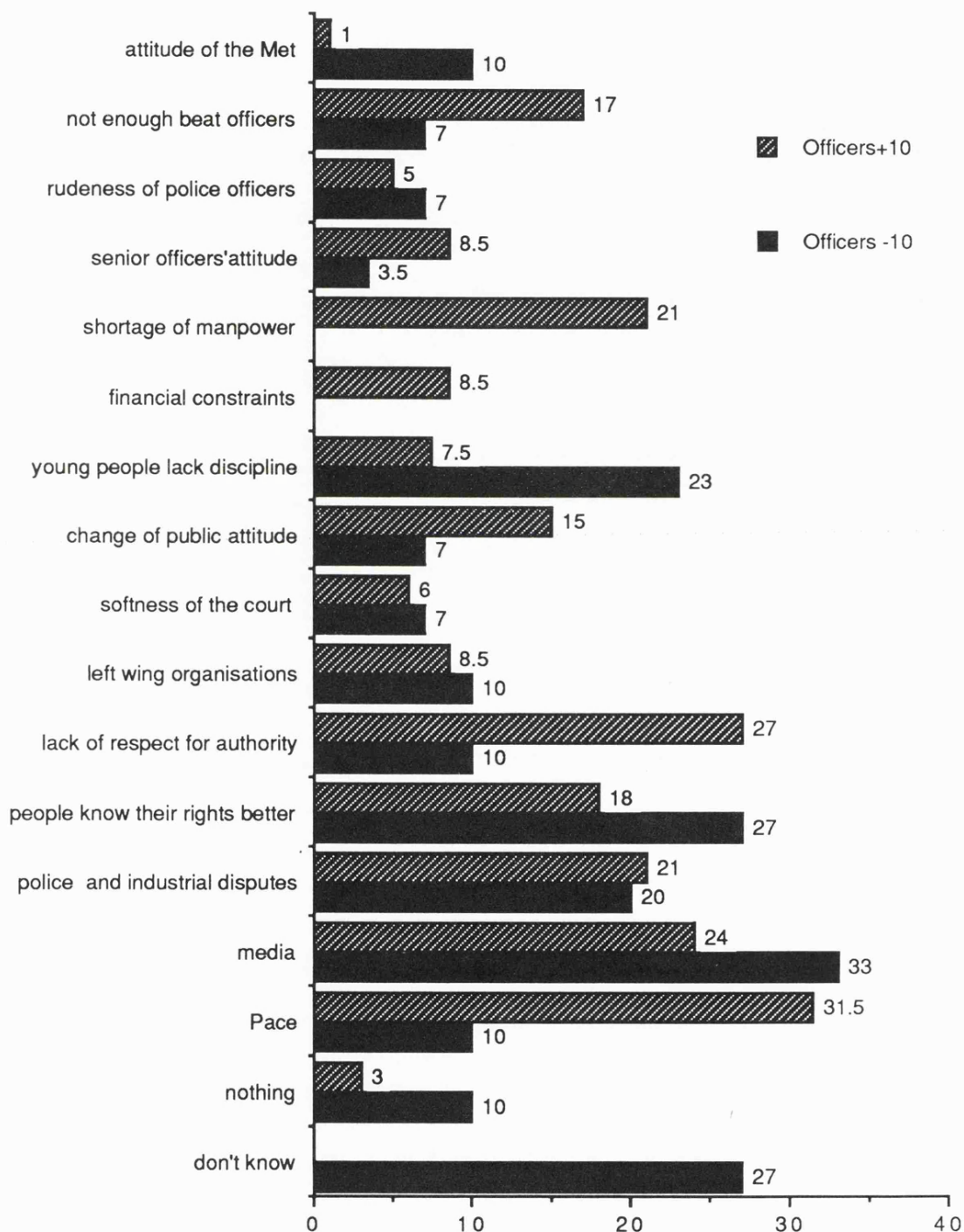
Thus, it is clear that for a substantial minority in the Sussex police force, there was considerable disquiet about the way the police had been employed by the Thatcher Government during the industrial disputes of the 1980s. Several officers cited the Wapping dispute, but many more mentioned the miners' strike of 1984-85. "Because of that many people saw us as Maggie's boot boys"⁹: the comment of this constable was a sentiment articulated in almost identical terms by many of those in all ranks who shared this view.

The virtual absence of references to the use of police to control the 1981 inner-city riots, a problem mentioned by only one police officer interviewed, is noteworthy. This findings suggests that the nature and length of time of the conflict rather than the methods employed were the main causes for concern.

⁹ *Interview: Constable, Crawley, April, 1989.*

Table 15

In your opinion, what has most impeded
policing by consent?



Sample of officers with -10 Or +10 years of service

Table 16

In your opinion what has most impeded
policing by consent?

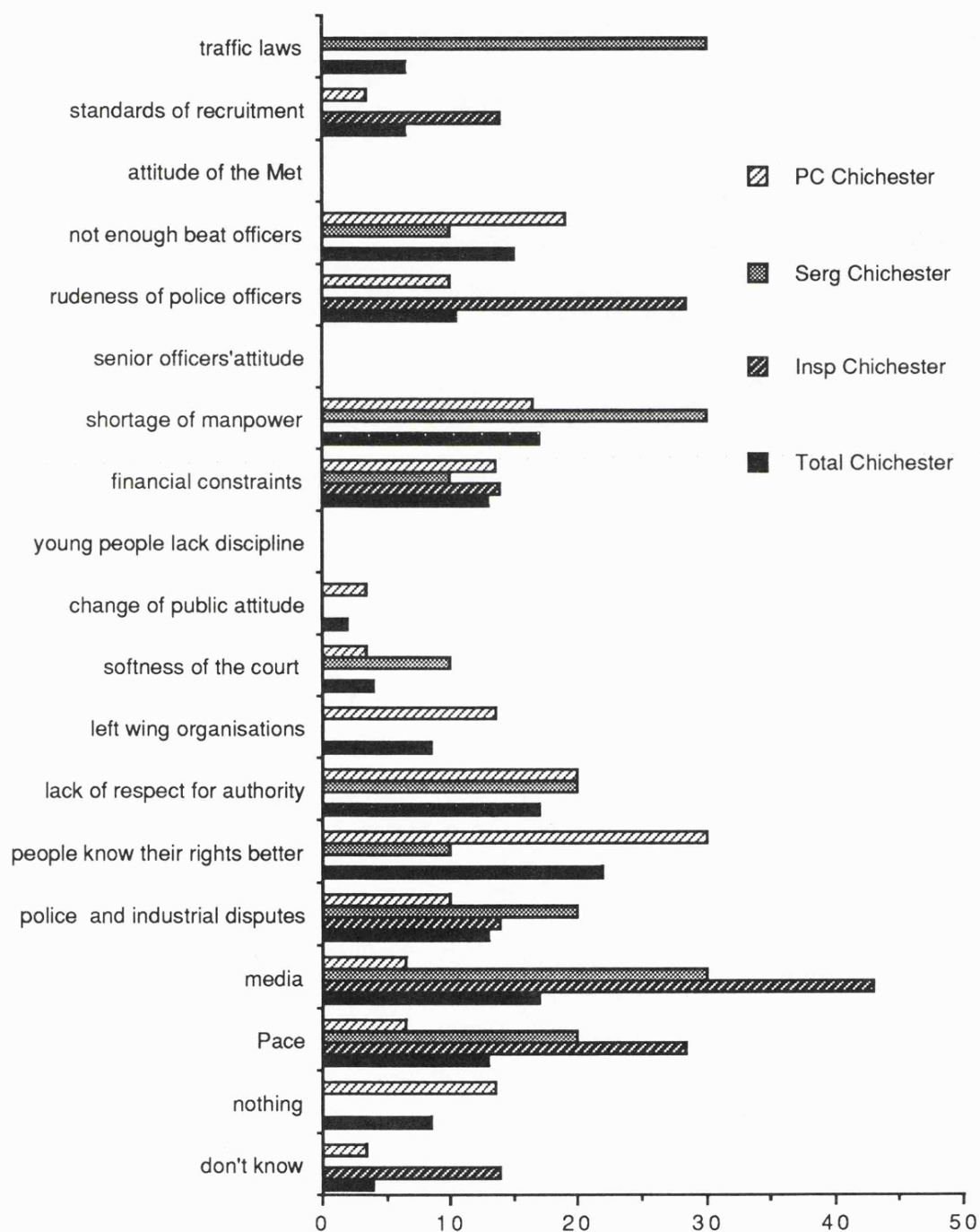
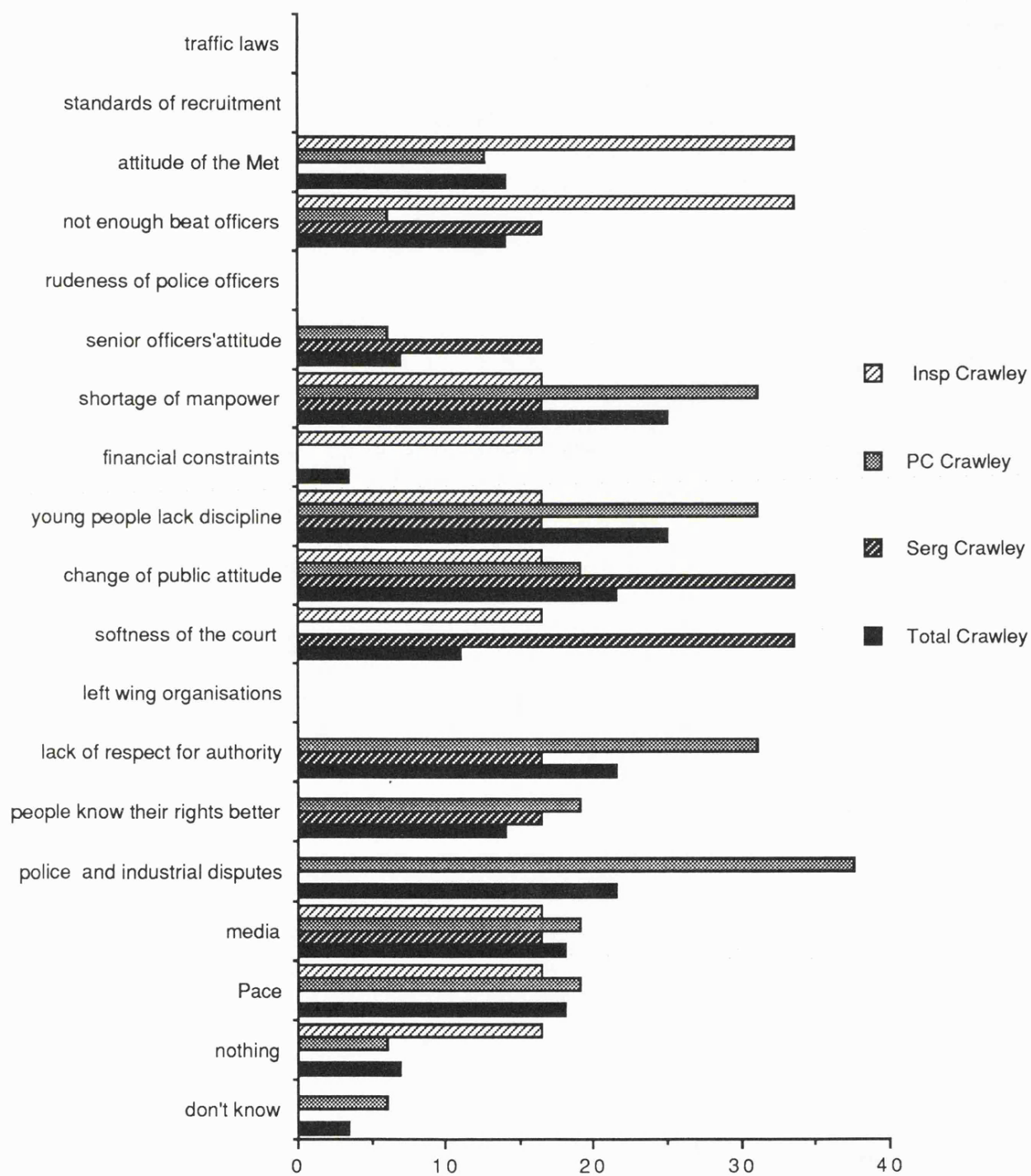


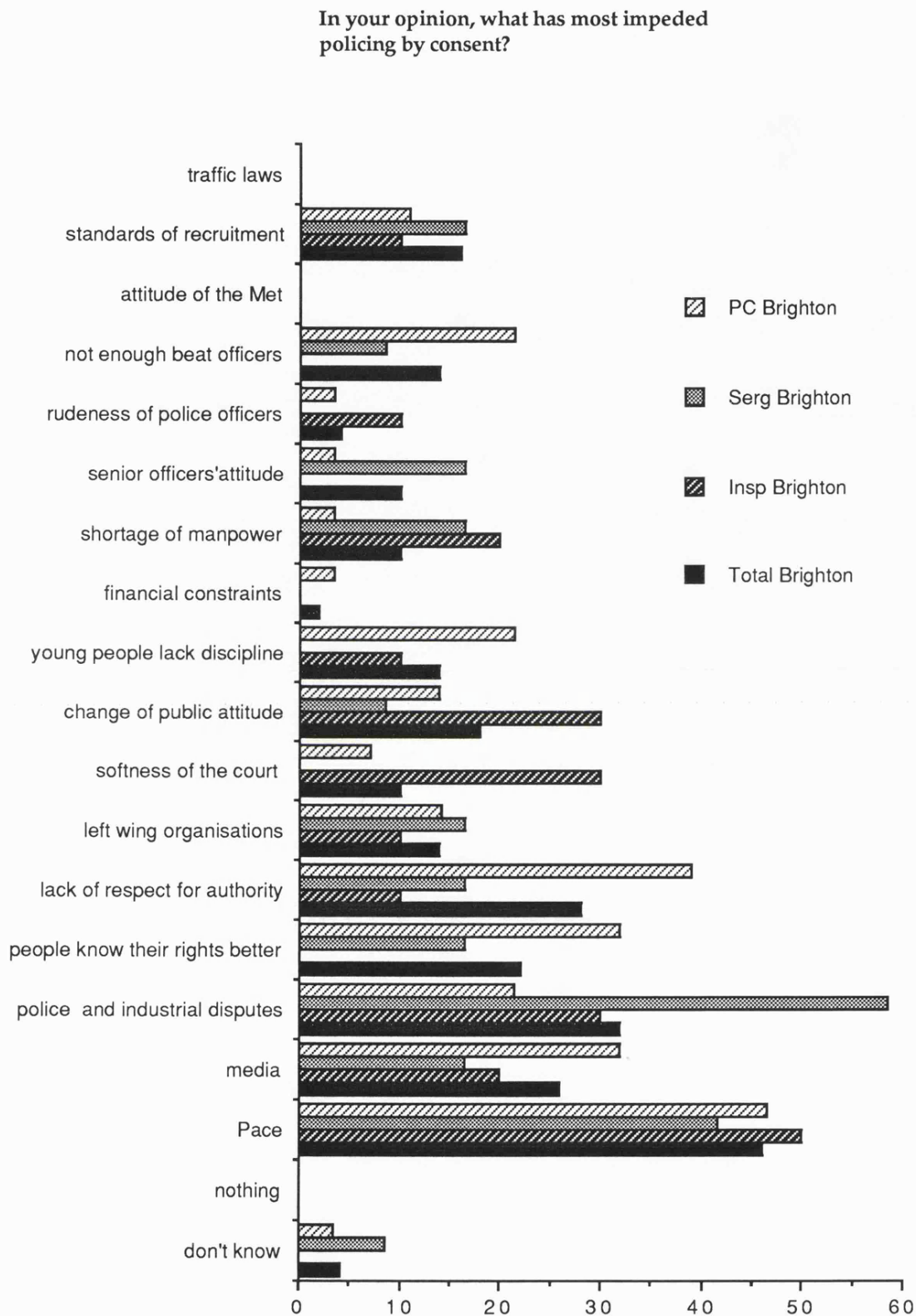
Table 17

In your opinion, what has most impeded policing by consent?



Crawley sample (Insp to PC)

Table 18



Brighton sample (Insp to PC)

It is paradoxical that several positive initiatives which were cited earlier, notably the creation of more formal structures of consultation at local level, were made in response to the 1981 riots rather than to the conflicts during the industrial disputes of the 1980s. Furthermore, the lack of references to the 1986 Public Order Act, either as an improvement or as an obstacle, seems surprising since this act gave new powers to the police for dealing with public order problems. However none of the officers interviewed had been involved in dealing with any major public disorder since that Act came into force.

Whilst these two different government policies were the most frequently given single responses, different aspects of changing public attitudes and behaviour were together the most numerous. Amongst those the most important were "the lack of respect for authority", "people know their rights better", "the changes of public attitude", "the activities of left wing organisations", "young people lack discipline" and "the negative approach of the media towards the police". The public lack of respect for authority was a response given by one fifth of those interviewed between the ranks of constable, sergeant and inspector but by none of the senior police officers and by only 4.5% of inspectors. Hence, sergeants and above all constables with 30% most frequently gave this response. The reply that "members of the public are more aware of their rights" was almost as common a response as the lack of respect for authority, and once again, it came more often from constables (27%) than from sergeants (11%) or from inspectors (8.5%).

Nonetheless, there were two appreciable differences. The first was that the better public knowledge of rights was cited by a third of senior police officers, whereas none had cited the lack of respect for authority. The second

was that whilst 27% of those with under ten years of service gave this reply, only 18% of those with over ten years of experience did so. In contrast, the lack of respect for authority was mentioned by only 10% of the "under ten years of service" but by 27% of the category of "over ten years". This finding appears to confirm the view that those who, by either their high responsibilities or their recent training have been obliged to study social changes affecting policing, are more likely to recognize the growing importance of public rights as opposed to the declining authority of the police.

Such differences, however, do not appear to have relevance for police attitudes about the role of the media, an impediment to policing by consent for 19% of constables, 22% of both inspectors and senior police officers and 25% of sergeants. In one respect, however, the responses of senior police officers about social changes were distinctly different from those of their lower rank colleagues, namely the importance attached to the activities of left wing organisations. More senior police officers cited this factor as an important obstacle to policing by consent (38.5%) than any other single response. In contrast, it was cited by only 11% of PCs, 7% of sergeants and 4.5% of inspectors.

The distinctiveness of the attitudes of senior police officers was apparent in the responses they gave about obstacles to policing by consent arising from within the police service itself. Shortage of manpower in the Sussex police force was cited as a problem by 33% of senior police officers but by only 16% of all other ranks. The attitude and behaviour of the Metropolitan Police was identified as an obstacle by 22% of senior police officers but by only 3% of all other ranks, although by 14% of all ranks in Crawley, the nearest station to the Metropolitan Police District. In contrast,

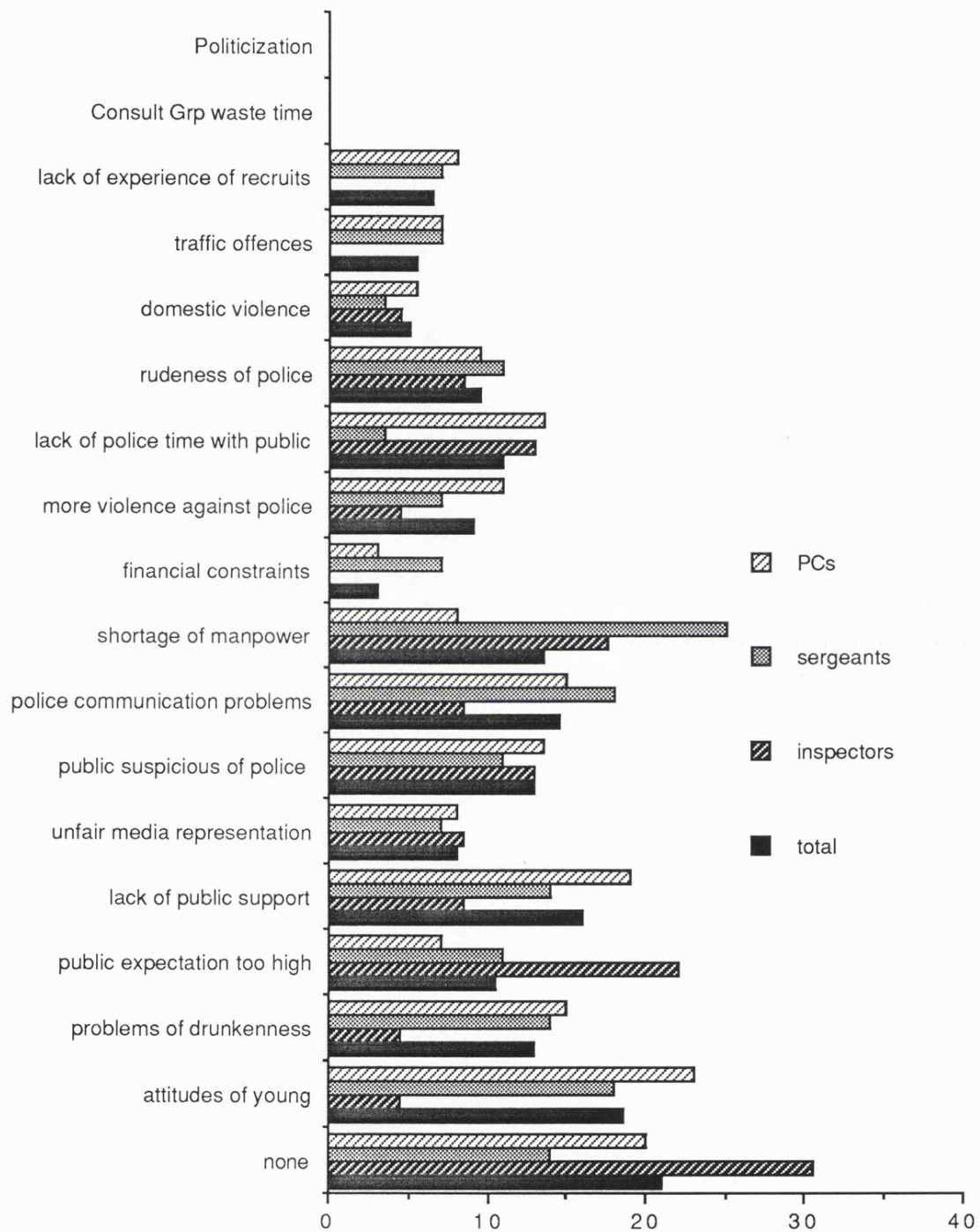
7% of the inspector to constable sample mentioned that the attitudes and decisions of senior police officers had impeded policing by consent whereas not surprisingly no senior police officer mentioned it at all. Another interesting feature was that 14.5% of the lower ranks pointed out that policing by consent had been impeded because of the lack of police officers on the beat whilst only 5.5% of senior officers seemed to share this view. At a time when much of the public debate about policing by consent has focussed on the resuscitation of beat policing as oppose to "panda cars" and responsive policing, it seems to be ironical that so few senior police officers saw the shortage of beat officers as a problem.

Many of these findings were confirmed by the responses of officers to a much less abstract question: "what are the major problems you experience on the ground?". The replies to this question are shown in tables 20 to 24. An interesting feature of the results is that the proportion of officers between the ranks of constable to inspector, who had experienced no major difficulties in their work, was twice as great (21%) as the number of those who could identify no impediment to policing by consent. In contrast, however, the proportions were reversed amongst senior police officers, 22% of whom saw no obstacle to policing by consent, but only 5.5% of whom experienced no major problem in their work. In short, those who are in most frequent direct contact with the public experience fewer problems than those in managerial positions.

The main feature of these tables, is their similarity to those which present the officers' views of impediments of policing by consent. Once again it appears that a substantial minority of officers had problems dealing with young people. These problems seemed to decline with experience and rank. Thus 40% of those who have been in the police for less than ten years

Table 19

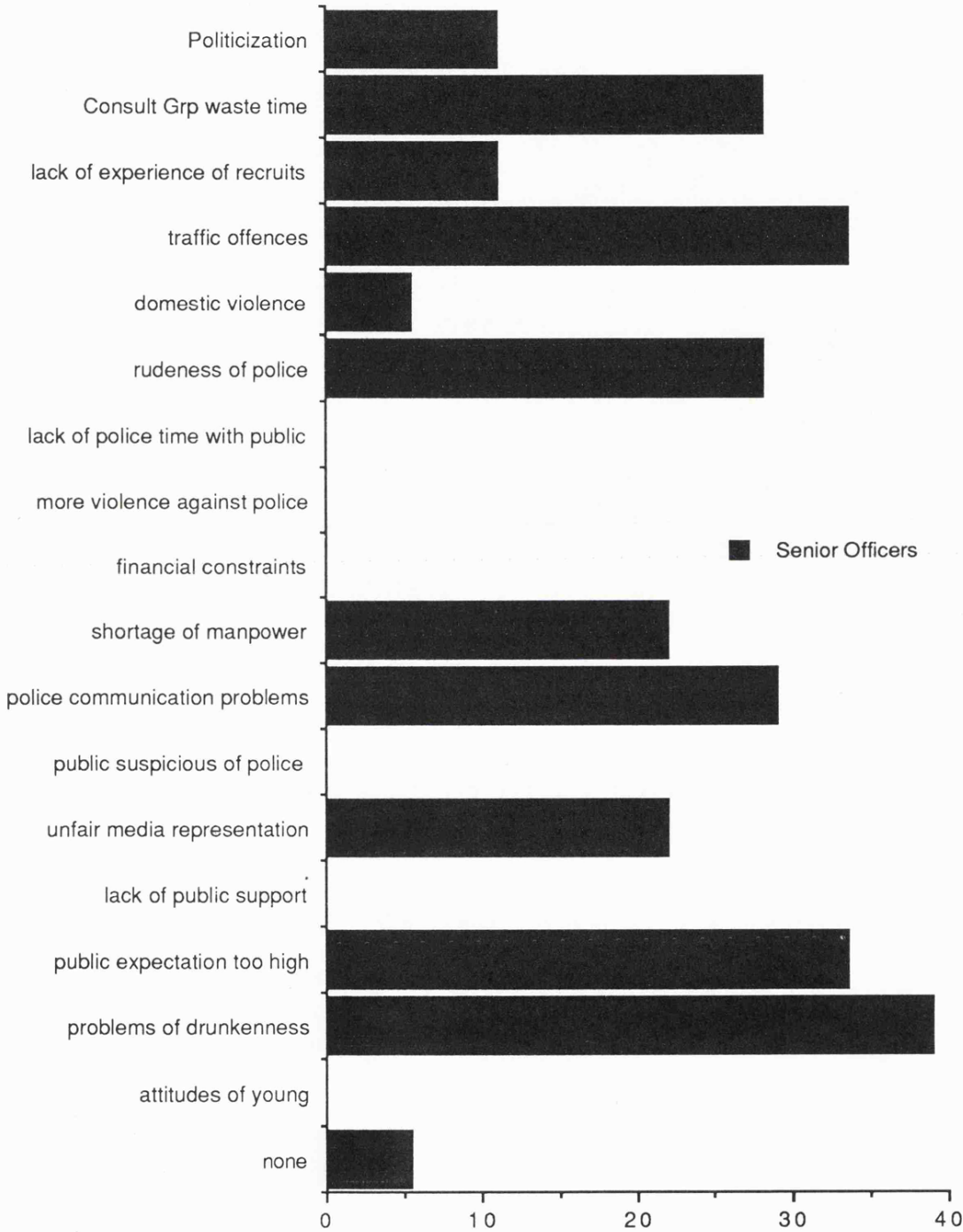
What are the major problems you experience on the ground?



Whole sample (Insp to PC)

Table 20

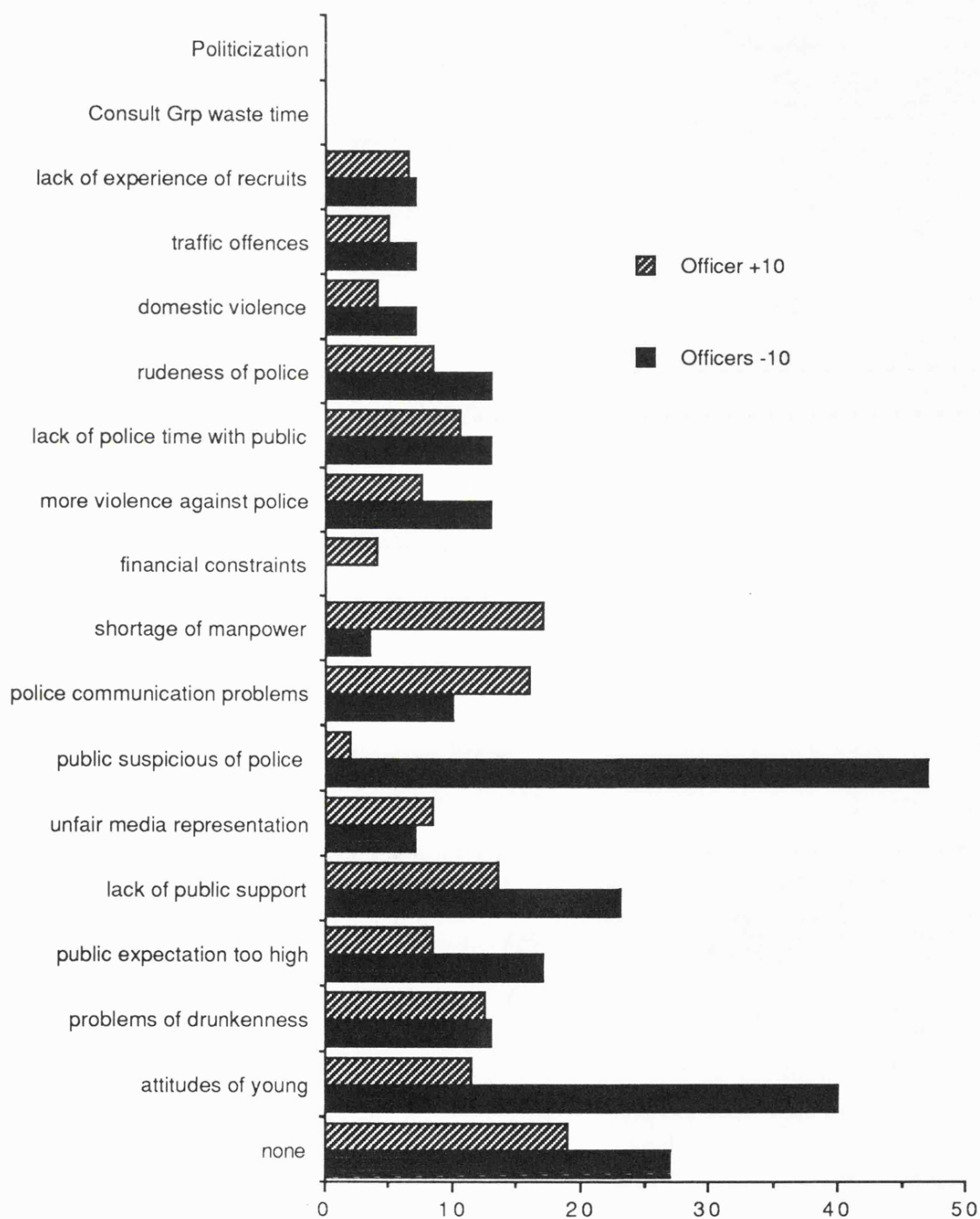
What are the major problems you experience on the ground?



Senior Officers

Table 21

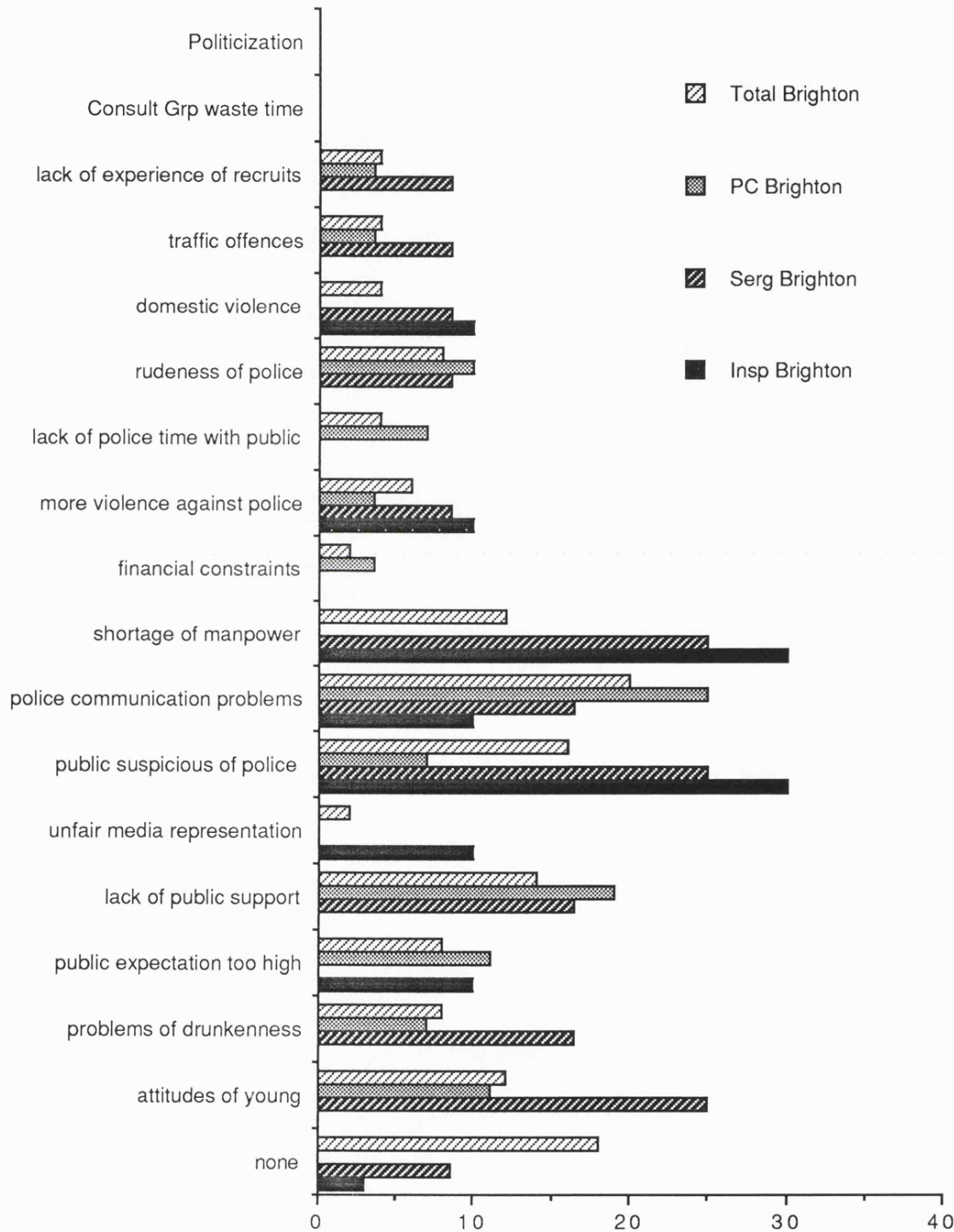
What are the major problems you experience on the ground?



Sample of officers with -10 or +10 years of service

Table 22

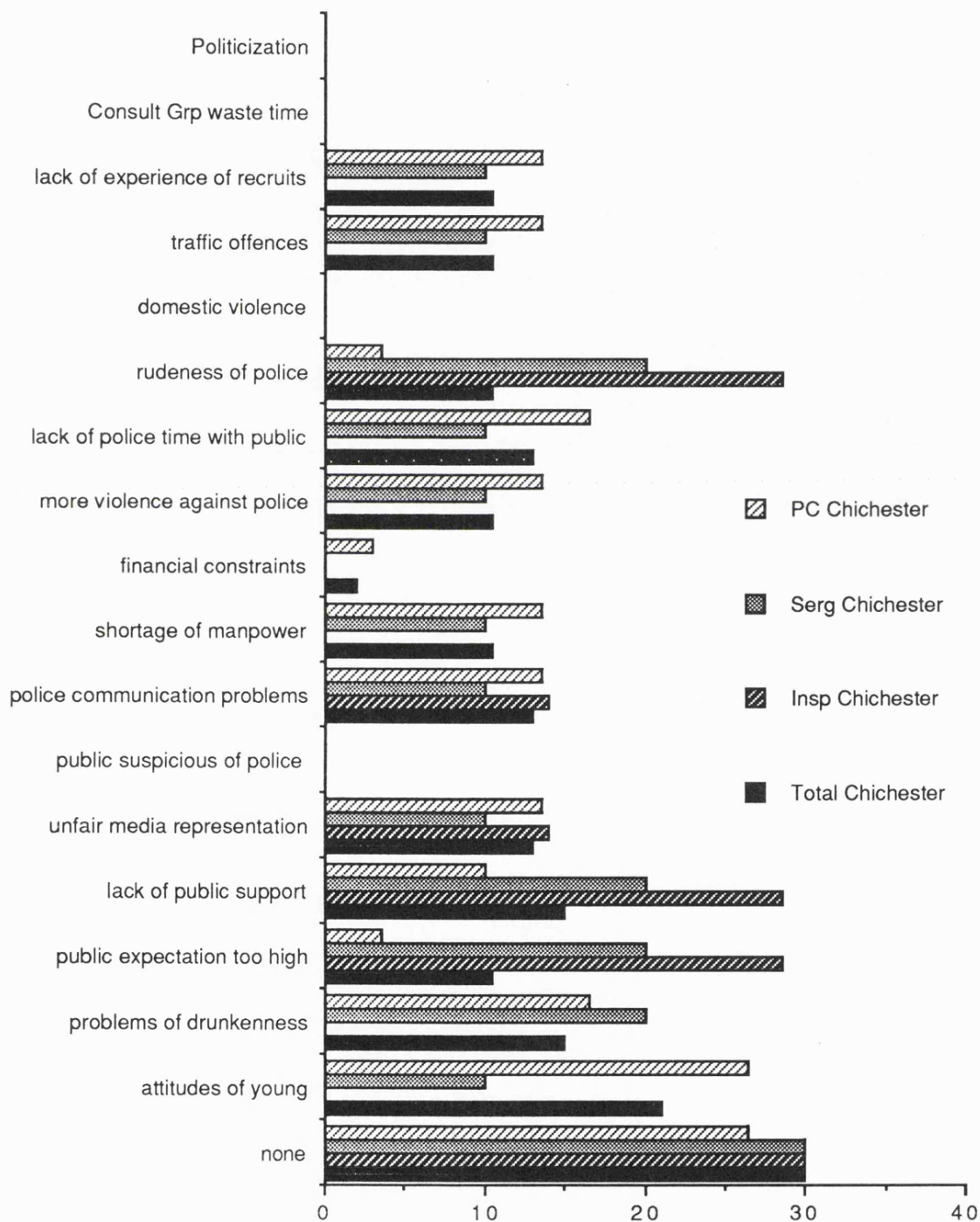
What are the major problems you experience on the ground?



Brighton sample (Insp to PC)

Table 23

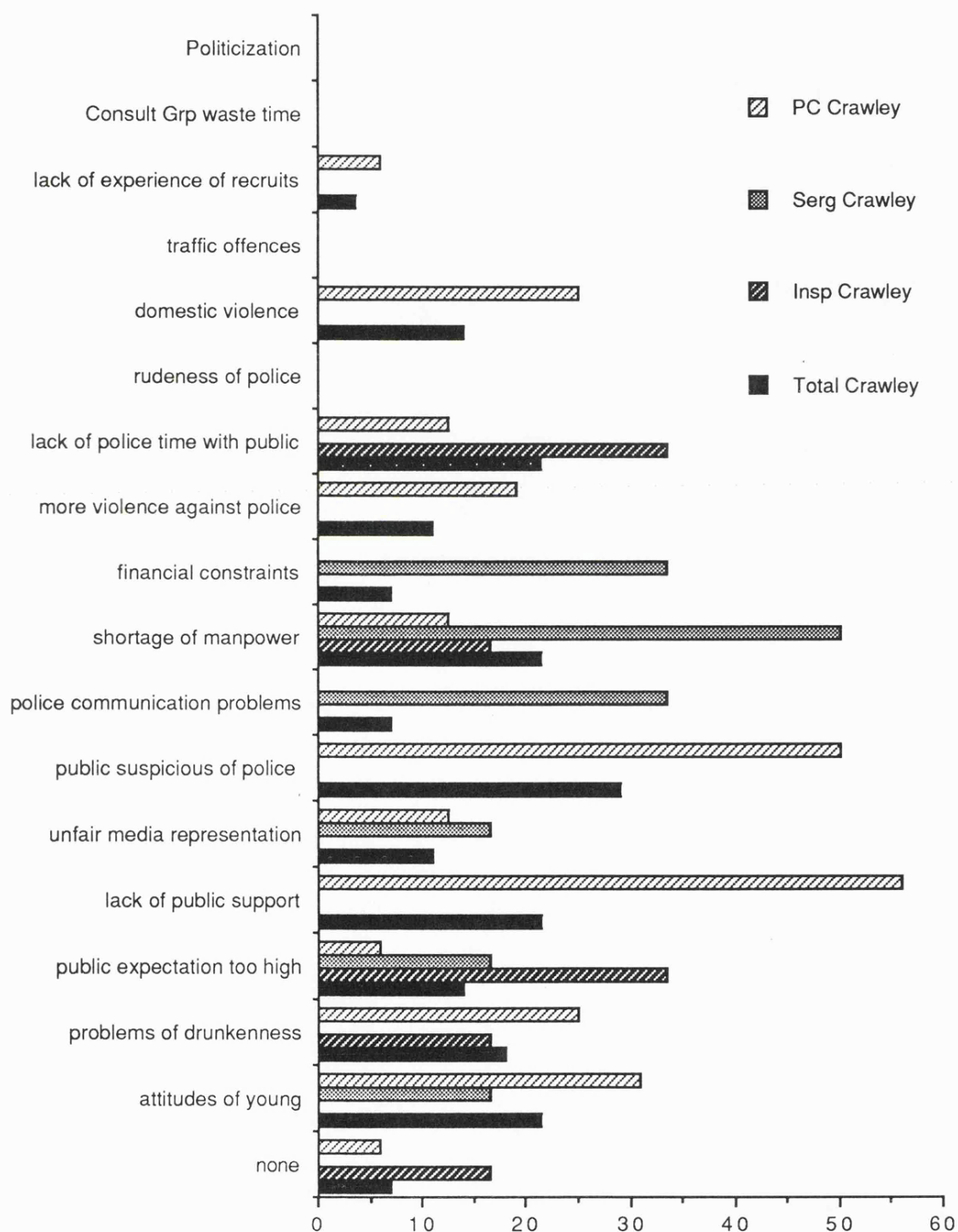
What are the major problems you experience on the ground?



Chichester sample (Insp to PC)

Table 24

What are the major problems you experience on the ground?



Crawley sample (Insp to PC)

experienced such problems, whereas only 11.5% of those with more than ten years of service did so. Furthermore this difficulty was admitted by 23% of constables and 18% of sergeants but by only 4.5% of inspectors and by no senior police officer.

The second most frequently cited problem, the lack of active support from the public, is much more important amongst lower ranks and amongst officers with less than ten years of service than amongst senior police officers. It was cited by 19% of constables and 14% of sergeants but by only 8.5% of inspectors and not by any senior police officers. Again, only 13% of those with more than ten years of experience cited it as a problem, whereas 23% of those with less than ten years of service did so. In contrast the problem that "the public is suspicious of the police" was advanced by similar proportions of constables, sergeants and inspectors, but they were almost entirely amongst the officers with less than ten years of service. No senior police officer and only 2% of those with over ten years of service gave this response, although almost half (47%) of those with under ten years of service did so.

Officers of all ranks admitted that problems arose because of approaches of the police to the public. Some spoke generally of "communication problems" but others admitted "heavy handedness and rudeness". In both cases senior police officers were more likely to cite these problems than officers between the ranks of constable and inspector. A contrast is also clearly apparent between senior police officers and those in other ranks in attitude towards the amount of time spent in direct contact with members of the public. None of the senior police officers identified "not spending enough time with members of the public" as a problem, whereas 11% of junior officers did so. 28% of senior police officers felt that

consultative groups established, as required by section 106 of the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, was a major source of wasted time in Sussex, whereas no officers from the lower ranks mentioned it. That, again, seems to be paradoxical since 44.5% of senior police officers identified consultation as a major element of policing by consent. During the interviews, in spite of some reticence about consultative groups, no alternative was proposed by the senior police officers interviewed to guarantee consultation. They seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the unofficial consultative infrastructure which existed before 1981.

A similar contrast between senior police officers and officers of lower ranks was found in their attitude towards very practical problems. Shortage of manpower cited as a practical problem by 22% of senior police officers was referred to by only 13.5% of those in the junior ranks, although 25% of sergeants mentioned it. Problems of dealing with drink-related incidents and the consequences of drunkenness were noted by 39% of senior police officers but by only 13% of the others. Similarly, traffic offences were cited as a major problem by 33.5% of senior police officers but by only 5.5% of those from other ranks.

The replies to this question varied considerably between the three police stations concerned. In Chichester there were 30% of all police officers who experienced no major problem, and this group included 57% of the inspectors. In Crawley only 7% of officers experienced no problem, and all the sergeants cited one or more problems. In Brighton the most frequently cited problem was that of communication between the public and the police, which was noted by a quarter of all constables, whereas in Crawley, public suspicion of the police was the most frequently cited difficulty, mentioned by 50% of constables.

The overall picture which emerges from the survey of the views of police officers about obstacles to policing by consent and about practical problems of daily police work is complex. On the one hand, there are substantial numbers of police officers who identify changing public attitudes towards authority in general and the police in particular as the major causes of both the practical difficulties they face each day and the general trend of declining political legitimacy of the police. On the other hand, many police officers blame aspects of governmental policies as major sources of difficulties in police-public relations; and in particular the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the deployment of the police by the government during industrial disputes. Nevertheless, some police officers from all ranks but part of a very small minority, admitted that real problems were created by the actions and words of members of the police forces themselves.

Conclusion

It is tempting to conclude that many police officers in Sussex share a Brechtian view of relations between the public and the police: that if consent does not exist, it can be best produced by changing the public, not the police. Nonetheless, such a conclusion is misleading in several respects. First, it neglects the admission by some police officers of all ranks that something is rotten in the state of policing, and that the attitude and behaviour of some police officers should be modified. Furthermore, a few officers specifically noted that the Sussex Police Force faced problems of public suspicion and consequent practical difficulties because of the highly critical views of the public about the behaviour of the neighbouring Metropolitan Police Force.

A second reservation is that there is no clear common standard by which officers judge policing by consent. If the concept of policing by consent as employed by politicians, historians and theorists is familiar to senior police officers, they are very much the exception rather than the rule. Policing by consent appears to be an elite myth employed to legitimize a professional police force within traditional British democratic theory rather than an operational criterion relevant to, and familiar in, the daily work of ordinary police officers.

A third problem is that some officers are distinctly unhappy with the reforms of the last decade and the changed governmental approaches to the use of police forces. If some aspects of the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act were viewed positively, others were seen either as making police work much more difficult or as contributing to the growth of public distrust of the police. Some aspects of the Act were judged very differently by individual police officers: almost half of the senior police officers interviewed felt that the new local consultative arrangements enhanced public consent but at the same time almost a third of the same group thought that they were a waste of time. It remains surprising that over one fifth of those questioned attributed spontaneously responsibility for present problems to the Governments' use of the police during the industrial disputes which took place during the last ten years.

The findings of these interviews lead to the conclusion that the view that there is a common strong police consensus, a unified professional set of values and behavioural norms, is highly implausible. On the one hand, many in the Sussex Police Force saw the problems of policing Sussex as being different from those elsewhere and appreciably different from those

in Greater London, next door. On the other hand, even within each rank or each area, a wide variety of views was held.

These findings appear to be in marked contrast with the image of a distinctive police culture which is given by Holdaway, Smith and Norris and which Graef's collection of interviews appears to illustrate¹⁰. That police culture appears to be based on the values and attitudes of patrol work and Tarling's Home Office study suggested the representativeness of this focus on patrol work, since before 1988 it accounted for 65% of police manpower time¹¹. The difference may be explained in part by the nature of the Sussex sample, which was "mixed" in the sense that it included officers from all ranks, in all jobs and from both rural and urban areas.

¹⁰ S. Holdaway, *Inside the Police*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983; C. Norris, "Avoiding Trouble: The Patrol Perception", in M. Weatheritt (ed.), *Police Research: Some Future Prospects*, Aldershot, Avebury, 1989; R. Graef, *Talking Blues*, London, Collins, 1989.

¹¹ R. Tarling, *Police Work and Manpower Allocation*, Home Office Research and Planning Unit Paper 47, London, Home Office, 1988.

Chapter 7

Police and Society: Integration and Distance in Sussex.

The last chapter's analysis of attitudes towards policing by consent, and the reforms and problems of the 1980s, showed that there is no consensus on these issues amongst police officers in Sussex. This chapter examines the extent to which police officers are integrated in or cut off from ordinary society. By studying the backgrounds of these officers and their own assessments of the impact of their work on their lives, this chapter further assesses whether the "ordinary citizens in uniform" model or the distinctive "police culture" concept can be applied to the Sussex Police Force.

The focus of the first section of this chapter is on the officers themselves and their current social backgrounds. This section is complemented by an examination of the views of these officers about the impact of their work on the rest of their lives. The results reinforce the conclusion of the last chapter that in many ways the police officers, like their ordinary fellow citizens, hold a variety of views about policing. No consensus of "police values" can be identified.

The second section of this chapter concentrates on a few distinctive

elements in the work and lives of Sussex police officers and examines the links between these differences and the attitudes towards policing which were analysed in the last chapter. This study reveals that, whilst all police officers are in some ways affected by their jobs, a relatively small minority differ from their colleagues by their choice of life-style: they pass most of their work and free time in a highly police-dominated environment.

The final section examines the attitudes and values of this minority of police officers who appear to live in a largely "police-enclosed" world. The findings call into question the existence of a police sub-culture, a particular set of views and values which reflect the closed horizons of life and work cut off from normal contacts with ordinary citizens. The conclusions from this chapter confirm and complement those of the previous one about the extent to which the idea of policing by consent is relevant to the lives and work of ordinary policemen in Sussex.

The Sussex police officers: social and professional origins

One element in the model of policing by consent is that police officers should be ordinary members of the general public: "citizens in uniform". This idea, as noted in the second chapter of this thesis, pre-dates the creation of the first professional police force in 1829 and is derived from the Saxon notion of the village constable, that of the community policing itself. This principle was clearly articulated in the report of the 1929 Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure¹:

" The police of this country have never been recognized, either by law or by tradition, as a force distinct from the general body of citizens. Despite the imposition of many extraneous duties on the police by legislation or administrative action, the principle remains

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure*, London, HMSO, 1929, Cmnd. 3297, paragraph. 15.

that a policeman, in the view of the common law, is only a person paid to perform, as a matter of duty, acts which, if he were so minded, he might have done voluntarilyIndeed, a policeman possesses few powers not enjoyed by the ordinary citizen As a matter of principle, the police should have as few powers as possible which are not possessed by the ordinary citizen and their authority should rest on the broad basis of the consent and active co-operation of law-abiding people".

In contradistinction, several writers² have suggested that modern police forces are manned by officers who in many respects are different from most ordinary citizens. They have argued that police views of their own work and powers reflect a distinctive police culture which is special and different from that of the ordinary man in the street. The interviews conducted in Sussex provide some evidence on which to assess the relevance of these views to that county's police force.

Table 1 shows the profession of the fathers of the officers interviewed. What is clear from this table is that there is no predominant professional or social background. Indeed, Sussex police officers come from almost every kind of social background, with parents in a great variety of jobs. It is exceptionnal for policing to be a family business; indeed only six percent of the sample had fathers in the police service, although they form the single biggest group. However, it is possible that other officers had some more distant family contacts with the police service perhaps an uncle or a cousin. These interviews concentrated only on the fathers' professions and none of the interviewees spontaneously volunteered information about other relatives in the police. A small number of officers, nonetheless, as discussed

² R. Reiner, *The Blue Coated Worker*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978; S. Holdaway, *Inside the British Police*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983.

below, revealed that they had married into "police families". Furthermore, few of the officers were sons or daughters of men in professions close to or linked with policing. Only one officer was the son of a prison warden, one other the son of a security officer and five had fathers in the armed forces.

Table 1: The professions of all police officers' fathers

Number of police officers	(143)
Father's job	%
Police officer	6
Engineer	6
Farmer	6
Lorry driver	5
Middle manager	5
Senior manager	5
Shopkeeper	4.5
Carpenter	4.5
Bank/P.Office staff	4.5
Armed forces	4.5
Civil Servant	4.5
Teacher	2.5
Taxi driver	2.5
Baker	2.5
Railway man	2.5
Accountant	2.5
Insurance Agent	2.5
Priest	2.5
Company Director	1.5
Solicitor	1.5
Forestry worker	1.5
Surveyor	1.5
Electrician	1.5
Plumber	1.5
Factory worker	1.5
Security officer	0.8
Hospital staff	0.8
Miner	0.8
Welfare officer	0.8
Pharmacist	0.8
Lloyds underwriter	0.8
Road sweeper	0.8
Milkman	0.8
Prison officer	0.8
Artist	0.8

Most of the officers in the sample came from lower middle-class

backgrounds. Several had parents who were shopkeepers, teachers, civil servants, carpenters or electricians. A small number came from the upper-middle or middle-middle classes with fathers who were company directors, senior managers, accountants or even, in one case, a Lloyds underwriter. Very few of the officers in the sample, however, clearly came from a working-class background; only 2% of officers described their father as railway men, 5% as lorry drivers, 1.5% as factory workers, one a miner and another one as a road sweeper. These results, however, do not necessarily imply that the sons and daughters of workers are excluded, or exclude themselves, from the police service. They may well reflect the relative numerical unimportance of the industrial working class in the population of Sussex. This interpretation is to some extent confirmed by the comparatively strong representation of the offspring of those in typically rural jobs. 6% were sons and daughters of farmers and 1.5% of forestry workers. Nonetheless, the overall impression is that these police officers come from diversified social and professional backgrounds.

This view is also confirmed by the information in table 2 which shows the jobs held or other experience of officers interviewed before their entry in the police force. Once again, the most striking feature is the sheer variety of the work experience of these police officers before they joined the police. Although very few had experience of higher education (1.5%), the great majority had previous work experience (61%) and (37.5%) had worked for over five years in other jobs before joining the police force. In most cases, those who had worked before had held only one job, but (19.5%) had moved around between several different jobs. Almost all those included in that latter group had virtually no qualifications. The largest number of police officers were recruited from the armed forces, but even those represented only 20.5% of the total sample. Many of the other jobs held by

officers before entering the police required few qualifications.

A minority of the officers questioned, however, had held jobs which required some professional qualifications. They included engineers and school teachers. There was also a former university lecturer in sociology. Once again industrial working class jobs were relatively under represented (only one steel worker) but there were two officers who had previously been farmers. The general pattern is that most police officers in Sussex had previous work experience before starting a career in the police force, and that many of them were in lower middle-class jobs needing few, if any, qualifications. There was no common class background or identity.

In contrast, a minority, 23.5%, entered the police force directly from school with no previous professional experience and 13% joined as police cadets at the age of sixteen. Since the recent abolition of the police cadet entry scheme, those who wish to join the police must either stay at school until the age of 18 or work in some other job. From the small sample of 22 new recruits interviewed in Sussex it appears that very few of the newcomers now join the police at the minimum age. Almost all who joined at the age of 19 or 20 had some kind of employment experience outside the police. The great majority of officers in the Sussex Police Force have had some direct personal experience of "ordinary" work.

An examination of very different aspects of the lives of police officers, their spare time activities, the subject of table 3, provides another perspective on its normality or specificity. The results of these tables may be compared to those in *Social Trends* and the *General Household Survey* for the population of Great Britain as a whole. The results of the 1987 *General*

Household Survey showed that TV is watched by 99% of the adult population³.

Table 2: Previous experience of officers before joining the police

Time spent before joining the police	%
Over 10 years of previous work experience	6
5 to 10 years	31.5
0 to 5 years	24.5
University or college	1.5
Police Cadets	13
Direct from school	23.5
 Previous jobs before joining the police	 %
Armed forces	20.5
A variety of different jobs	19.5
Bank clerk	4.5
Engineer	4.5
Teacher	3.5
Fireman	3.5
Shop assistant	3.5
Carpenter	3.5
Decorator	2
Farmer	2
Lower level manager	2
Plumber	2
Graphic designer	1
Sales representative	1
Car mechanic	1
Delivery man	1
Draughtsman	1
Steel worker	1
Local government officer	1
University lecturer	1

It is striking that in response to the question: "What are your spare time activities?" not a single officer interviewed in Sussex mentioned watching television or listening to the radio. As it was clear, from other conversations with those interviewed, that most officers were familiar with

³ *The General Household Survey*, London, 1987.

television programmes, this absence of response seems strange. Television viewing is not recognised as a distinct spare-time activity but just an ordinary part of every-day life. Certainly this explanation was suggested by one sergeant interviewed: "Television is not usually entertaining, it is just there all the time"⁴.

The same explanation, however, does not appear to apply to the absence of any mention of cinema-going, since 5% of those interviewed mentioned visits to the theatre. In comparison, in the 1987 *General Household Survey*, 11% of the sample representative of the whole UK population had been to the cinema in the previous month. Hence, it appears that cinema-going is actually very rare amongst Sussex police officers. In contrast, the number of theatre-goers may be atypical of the whole British population, although it perhaps reflects the fact that both Brighton and Chichester, where the majority of the sample was based, have well known, lively and popular theatres and that cinemas are not proportionately as numerous.

⁴ *Interview: Sergeant, Brighton, March, 1989.*

Table 3

What are your spare time activities?

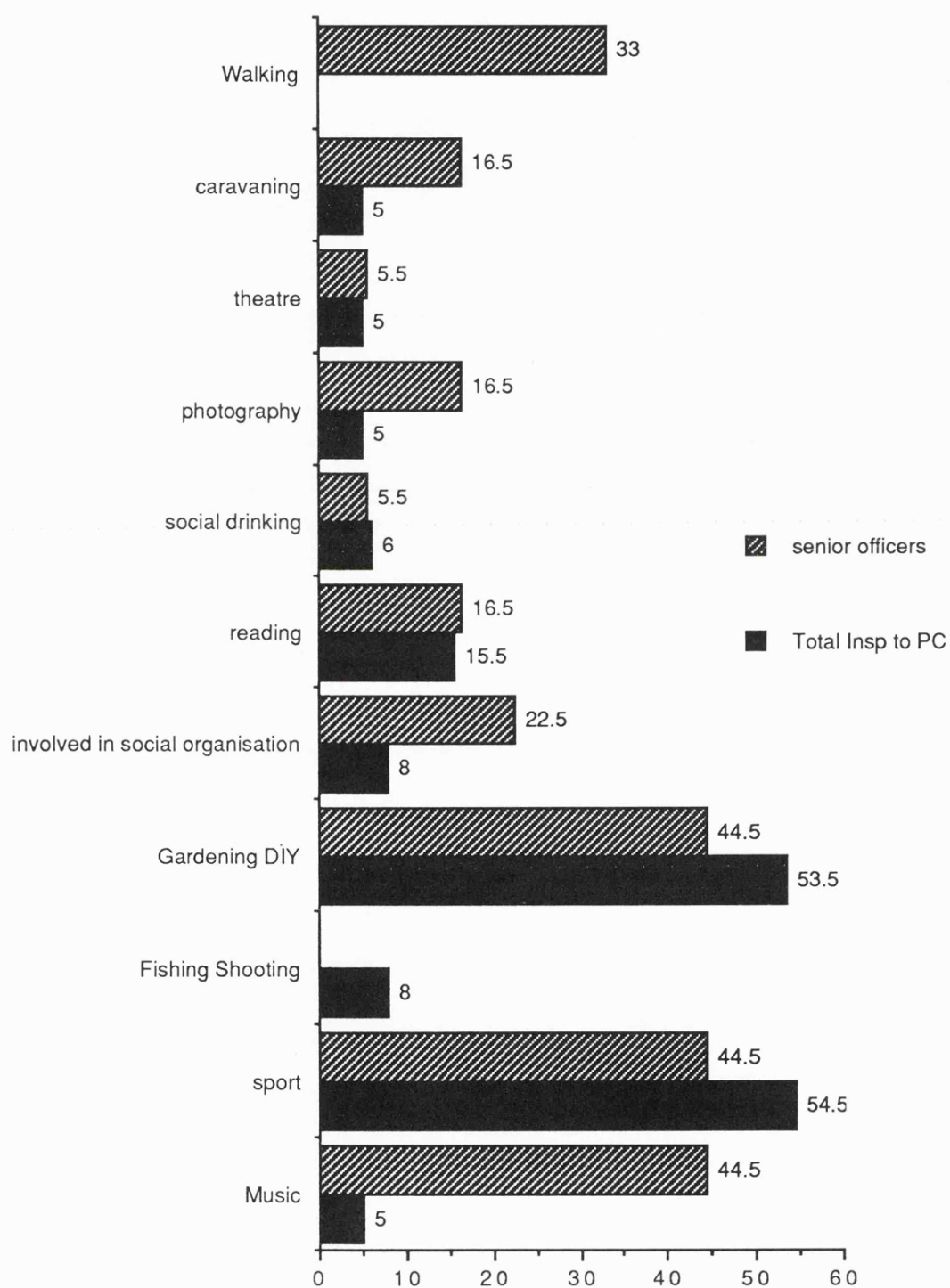
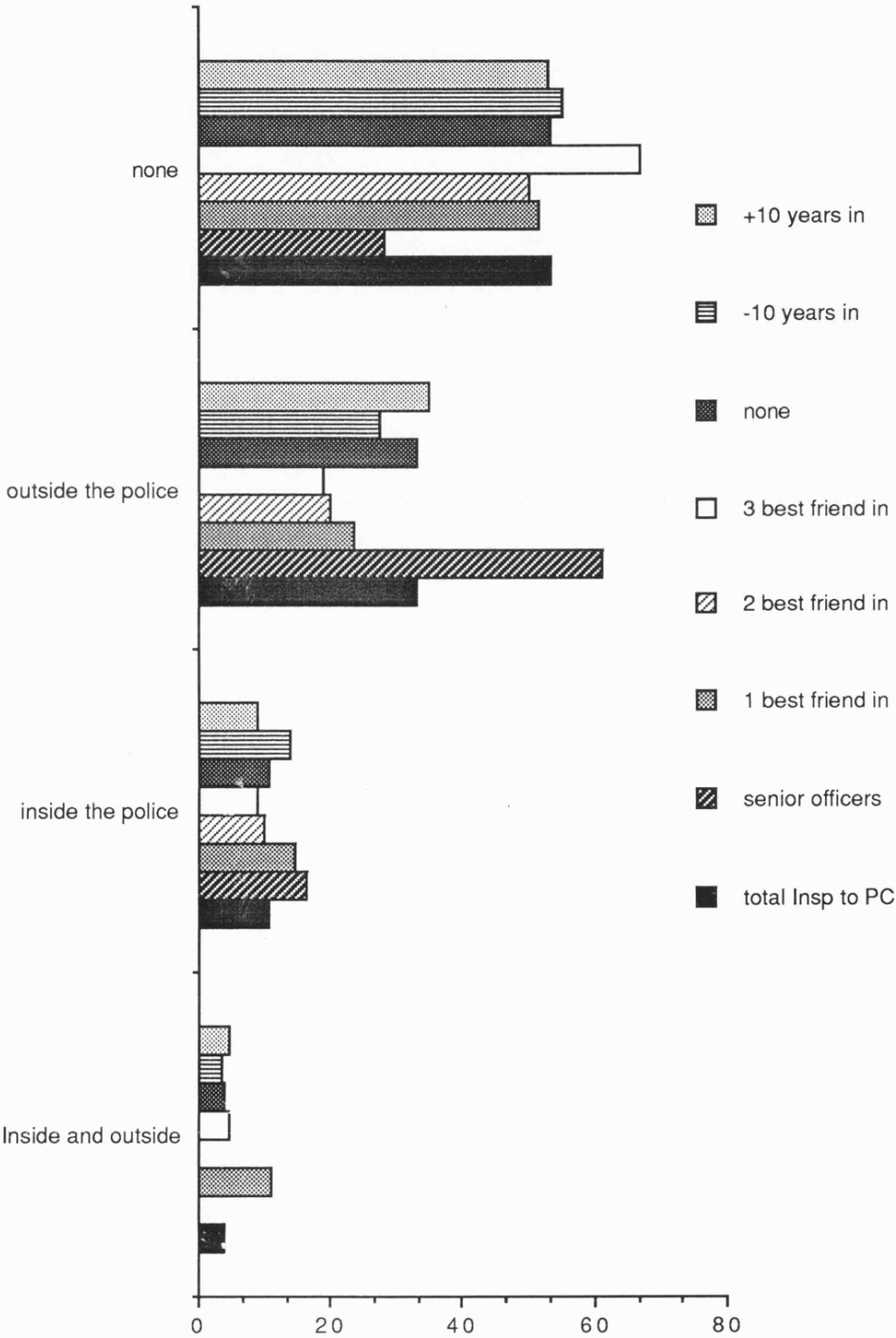


Table 4

Do you belong to any club?



For the police officers of Sussex, as for most people in Britain, the major spare time activities are sports, gardening and do-it-yourself work. As table 3 shows, younger officers are more likely to be interested in sport, whereas the older ones prefer to do gardening or do-it-yourself activities. A third of all senior officers interviewed were regular walkers and distinguished walking from other sports. Further questioning of some of those interviewed revealed that the reply "sport", or the mention of a particular sport (football and golf were frequently cited), was slightly ambiguous: for many of the younger officers it meant that they played the sport, whilst for the older ones it often implied that they watched it, either live or on television. "I'd say that football is still my main spare-time interest, although I haven't actually played a game for a good ten years", one inspector admitted⁵. This finding again suggests that many officers watch television but do not consider it to be a spare time activity in itself.

One other conclusion to be drawn from table 3 is that older and more senior officers are more likely to participate in almost every kind of social activity, except sport and social drinking, than their younger colleagues. In this respect police officers appear to be very similar to the rest of the population. This observation is confirmed in table 4 which shows that half the officers interviewed did not belong to any club or society, whilst one third were members of one or more clubs unrelated to the police and only one tenth were involved in clubs and societies open only to police officers and their families. In the responses to this question there appears to be a "perception gap" similar to that noted above over television. All police officers are automatically members of the police club based in their local police station, but the vast majority use its facilities only during breaks when they are on duty. Hence, it appears that only the small minority who

⁵ *Interview*: Inspector, Brighton, March, 1989.

use the police club as a social organisation outside working hours perceive it as a distinct social club. Indeed one constable summed up this majority view as follows: "of course everyone belongs to the police club, but I never use it when I am not at work"⁶.

Senior officers were generally much more active in clubs and societies than those in other ranks and almost always in organisations completely outside the police. The majority of all officers who were club members did not volunteer the name or nature of the organisations to which they belonged, but a few senior officers cited the Rotary Club and one officer in Brighton even admitted to being a member of the Freemasons.

These findings do not imply that police officers rarely see each other in their spare time. Informal conversations revealed that some of them are members of the same clubs outside the police where they may play sport together or merely socialize in the convivial surroundings of the club houses. To explore further the extent to which police officers socialize with each other or outside the police, those interviewed were asked about the jobs of their three closest friends and whether or not any of their wife's (husband's) close friend were married to police officers. Tables 5 (a) and 5 (b) both show that for the vast majority of officers in Sussex regular social contacts are in no way limited to those involved in the police work. Indeed two-fifths of officers up to the rank of inspector and three-fifths of those above that rank did not have a police officer amongst their best friends, and of those, three-quarters had wives (or husbands) who had no friends married to police officers. A further 28% of constables to inspectors and 22% of senior officers had only one of their closest friends in the police and of those, 73% had wives (or husbands) with no close friend married to police

⁶ Interview: Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

officers .

There was, however, a small minority of officers (21% amongst constables to inspectors and 11% amongst senior officers) who admitted that all three of their closest friends were police officers. Amongst these respondents there was the highest positive response to the enquiry as to whether their spouses had a close friend in the police (62%). What emerges is that whilst most police officers in Sussex have a wide variety of social contacts, approximately one-fifth very frequently socialize with other members of their own profession. Those with their three closest friend in the police and wives and husbands with close friends in the police appear to form a distinctive social sub-group.

One illustration that they do form such a sub-group is, as table 6 shows, that amongst those officers whose three closest friends are in the police there is the most widespread belief that their spouses do not strongly dislike their jobs. In contrast, 25% of repondents with no police officers amongst their closest friends and 30.5% of those with only one of their closest friend in the police believe that their wives dislike their profession. A quarter of all those interviewed thought that their wives merely accepted their work, leaving slightly less than half the respondents who believed their spouses liked their jobs.

A second demonstration of the distinctiveness of the sub-group whose three closest friends were in the police and whose wives had close friends married to officers in the police is given in table 7. Amongst those from the total sample of constables to inspectors who had children, 37% thought that

Table 5 (a)

What jobs do your three best friends have?
(number of three closest friend in the police)

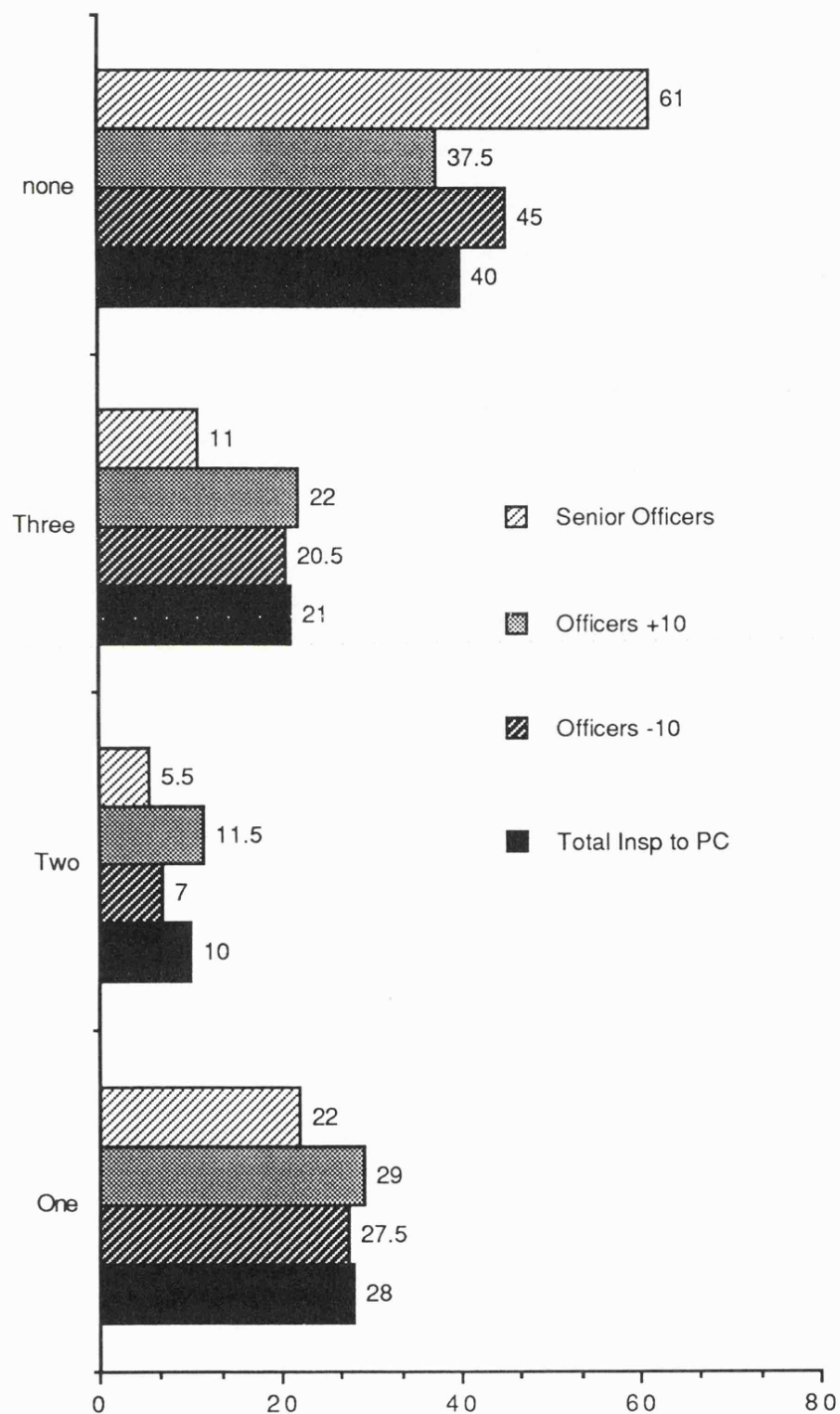


Table 5 (b)

Are any of your spouse's friend married to police officers?

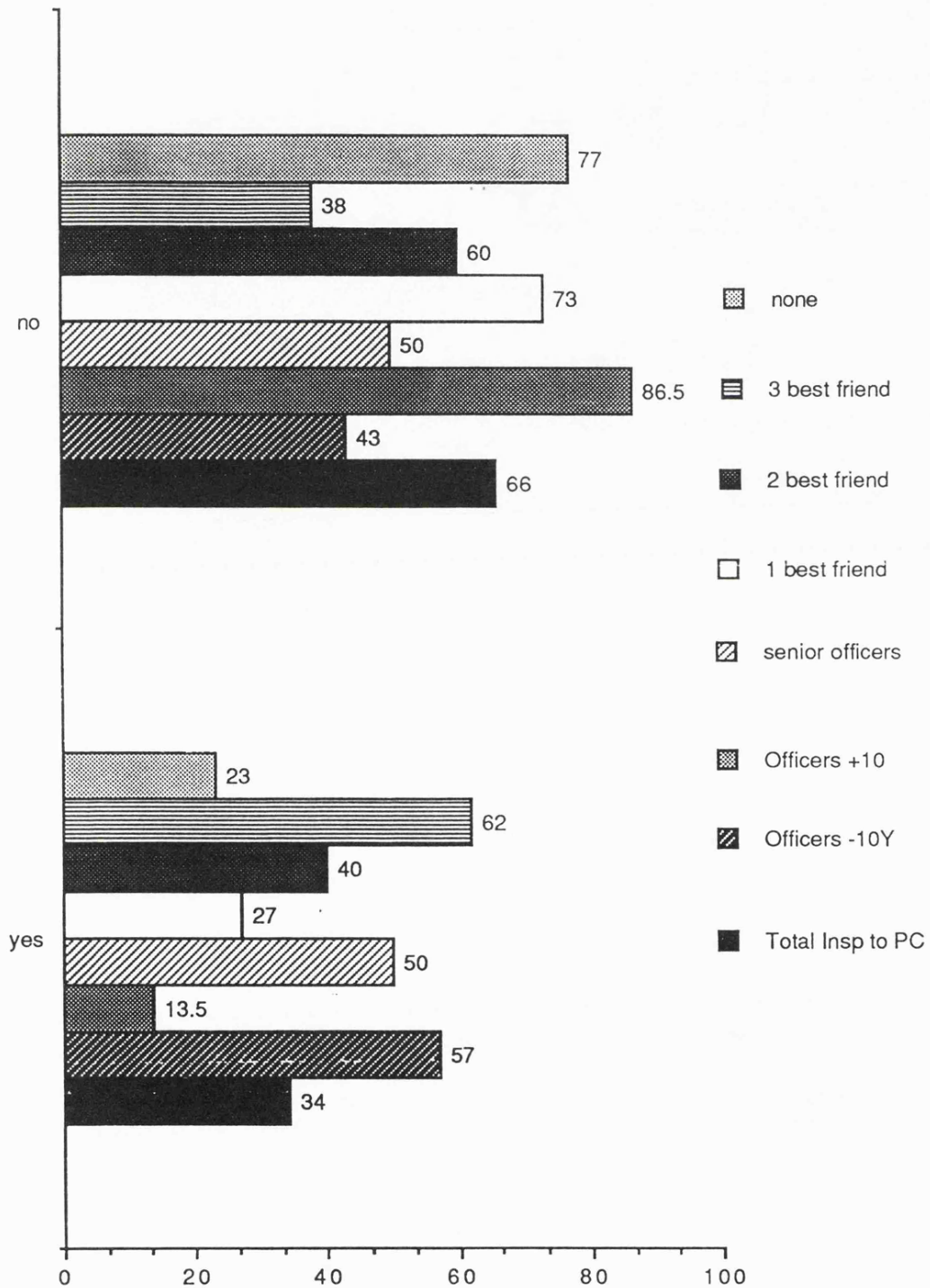


Table 6

What does your wife feel about your being in the police?

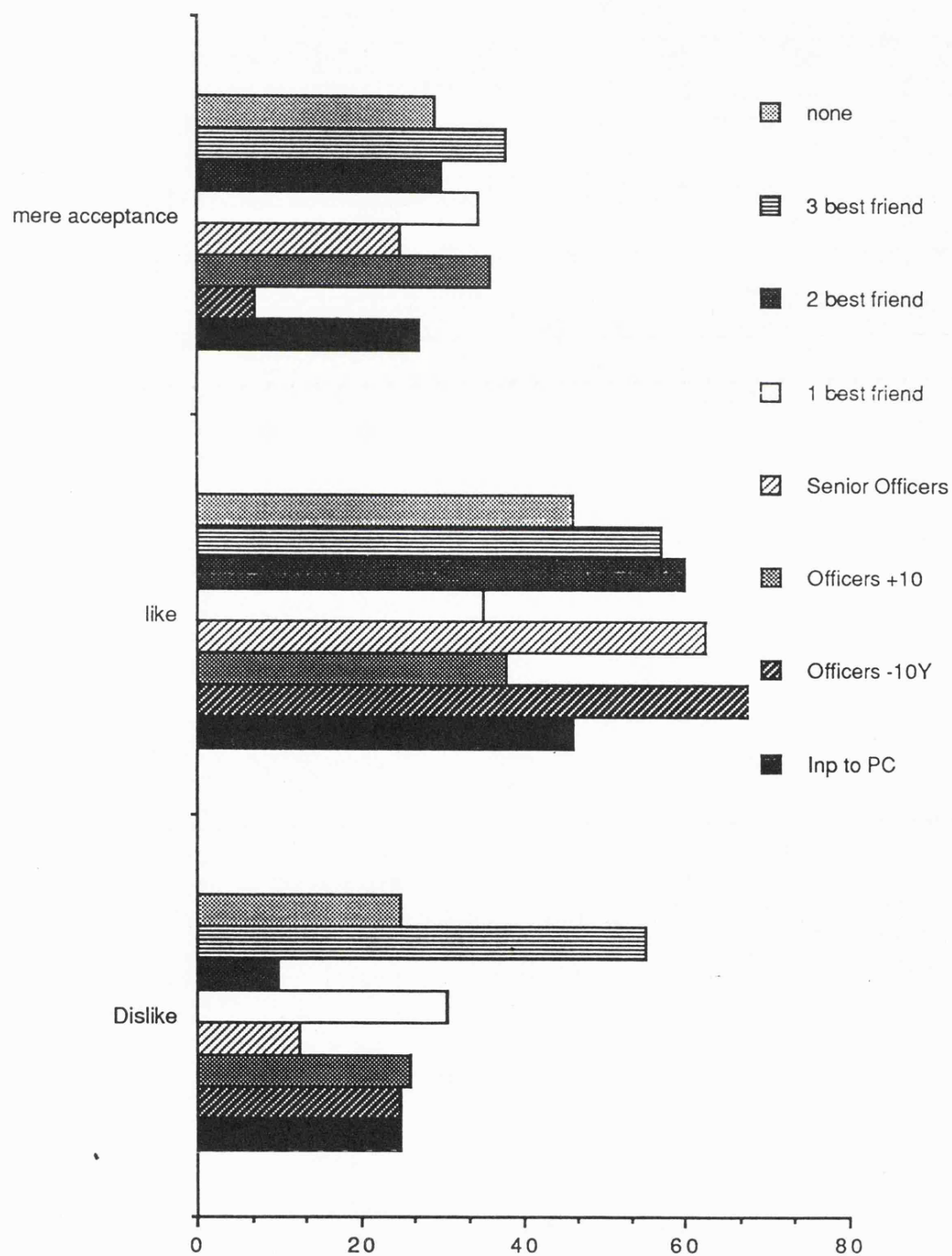
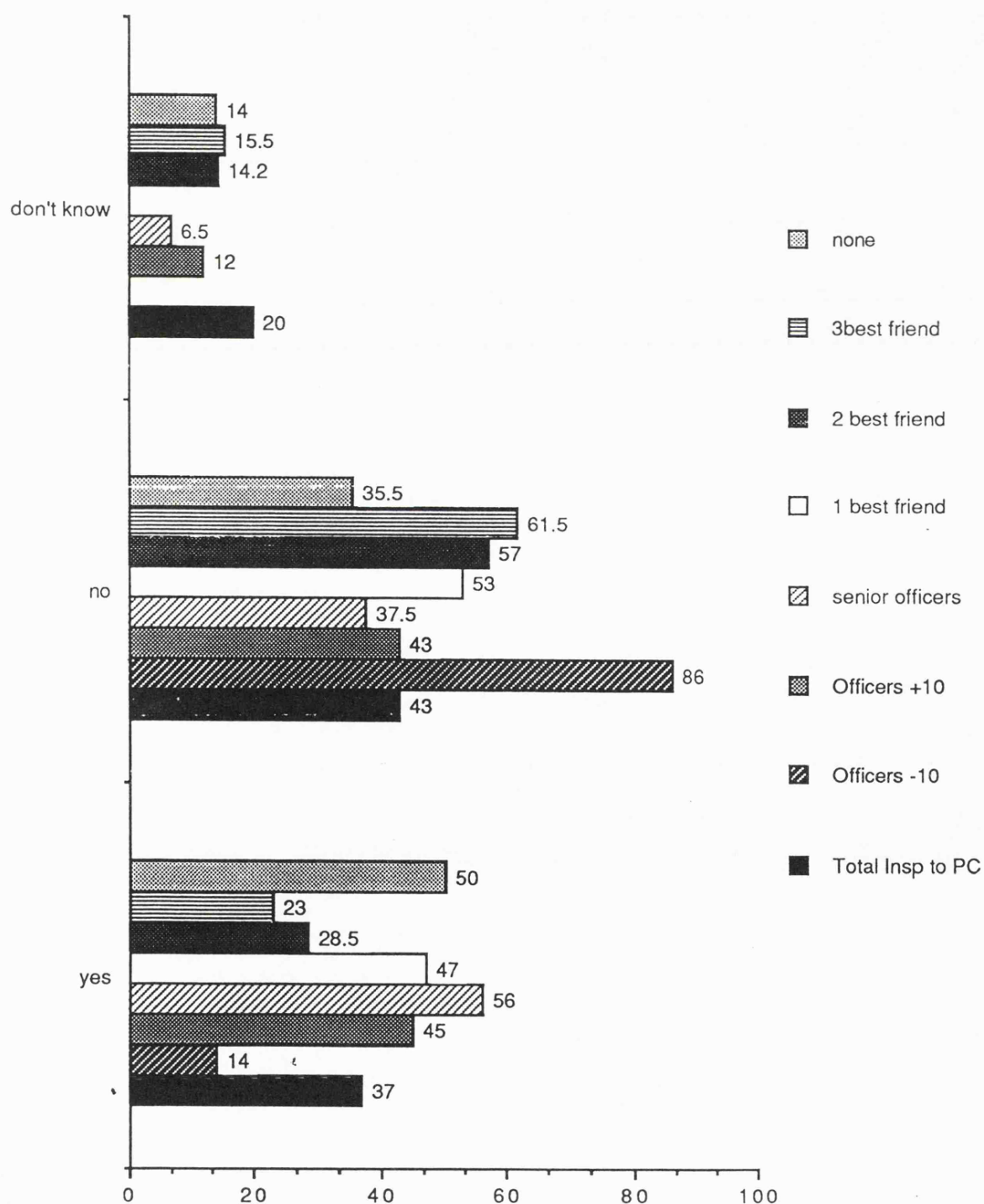


Table 7.

Have your children suffered any prejudice because of your job?



their children had suffered prejudice at school, whereas 43% thought they had not. In contrast, 61.5% of those in the sub-group believed that their children have not suffered any prejudice because of their jobs, and only 23% of those respondents thought their offspring had suffered in this way.

A second demonstration of the distinctiveness of the sub-group whose three closest friends were in the police and whose wives had close friends married to officers in the police is given in table 7. Amongst those from the total sample of constables to inspectors who had children, 37% thought that their children had suffered prejudice at school, whereas 43% thought they had not. In contrast, 61.5% of those in the sub-group believed that their children have not suffered any prejudice because of their jobs, and only 23% of those respondents thought their offspring had suffered in this way.

A further contrast is provided by the responses of those officers who had none of their three closest friends in the police, of whom 50% thought that their children had suffered some prejudice because of their jobs. The high score of positive responses to this question, 56% amongst senior police officers, suggests again that senior officers are much more sensitive to the public image of the police amongst young people than the sub-group with three close friends in the police from the sample of constables to inspectors.

What emerges from these responses of the officers interviewed is that most of them appear to be and see themselves as being fairly typical of society as a whole. The idea of an isolated police world created or reinforced by a distinctive social pattern does not apply to the majority in the Sussex police force. There is a minority sub-group whose members' social backgrounds are markedly police-orientated. More strongly held pro-police views would be expected amongst this minority.

Distinctive features of police life in Sussex

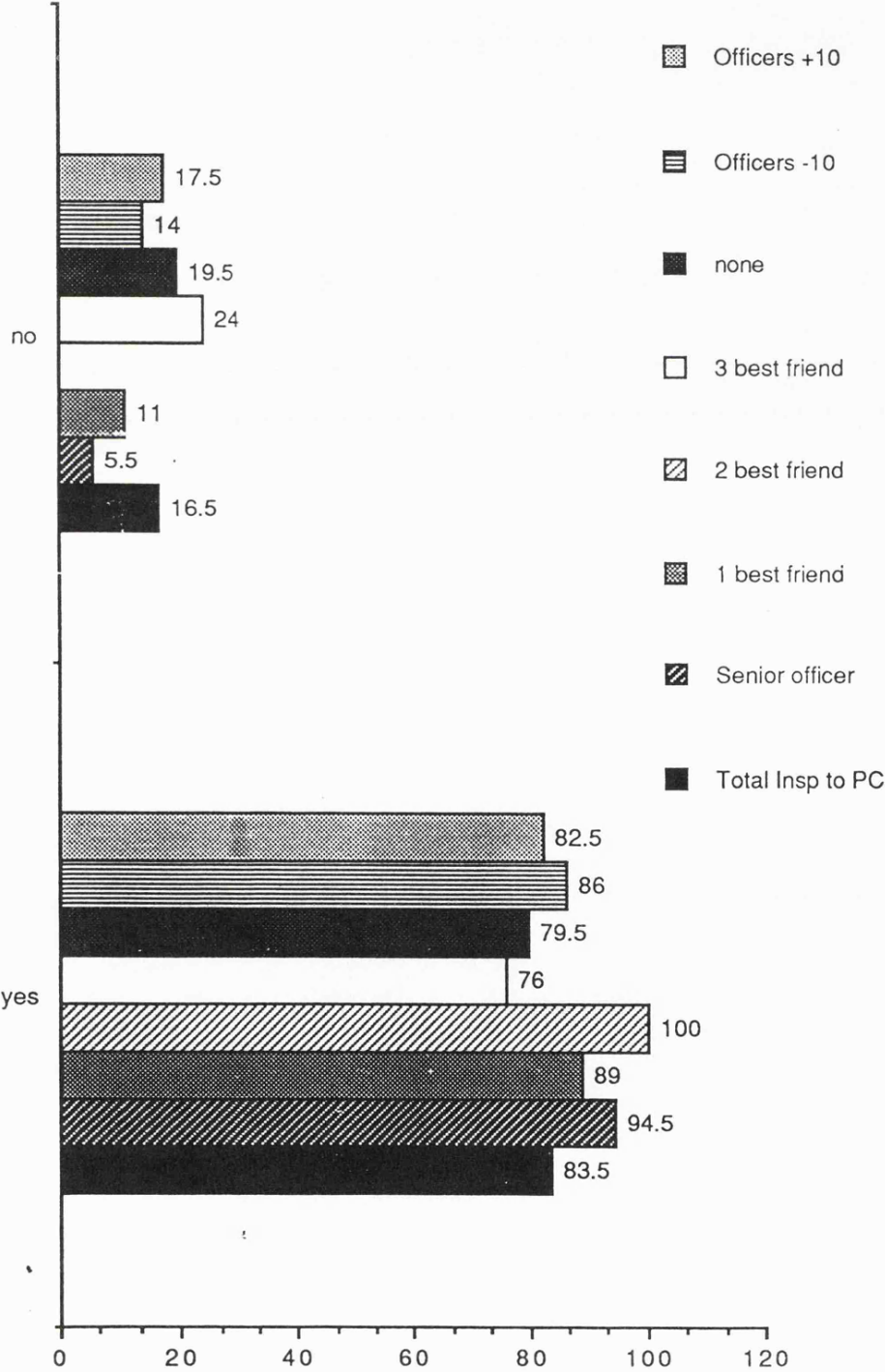
Despite the apparently varied social backgrounds of most police officers, one striking feature of the responses of the officers interviewed (as shown in table 8) is that the great majority (83% of constables to inspectors and 100% of senior police officers) believe that becoming a policeman changed their lives significantly. The types of change which had been experienced, however, varied considerably.

At first sight this response seems in no way surprising; a similar pattern of replies would probably be provoked by posing the same question to a similar sample of the members of many other professions. This impact of career choice is experienced in other jobs - doctors, fire-men and ambulance drivers are good examples - where shift-work and emergency call-out are involved. As table 9 shows, problems of living full and active social and family lives whilst working shifts were the most frequently cited explanations of the impact of membership of the police force.

In other respects, however, the police responses were distinctly different from those which might be expected from the members of comparable professions. Many officers expressed sentiments of the restrictive and negative impact of their job on their lives. These critical responses reflect widespread feeling of embarrassment about some aspects of police work. There are, nonetheless, other officers who are proud of their job and see it in positive terms. However, a reluctance to admit one's job is not unique to Sussex police officers and many tax inspectors and doctors probably have the same reaction, although perhaps for different reasons. It suggests that the nature of their work in some ways differentiates police

table 8

Do you think becoming a policeman has affected your life?



officers from those in other jobs. This sense of distinctiveness, however, seemed less strong than the "social isolation" reported by other researchers on police culture⁷.

Although difficulties imposed by the necessity of responding to emergencies at any time of day or night, and shift-work, were most often cited as the biggest changes which resulted from joining the police, these problems were cited by only 42% of the respondents in the sample of constables to inspectors and only 16.5% of those in senior ranks. Within the main sample, however, there were some differences in response rates. Newer members of the force cited these difficulties more frequently than those with over ten years of service (55% and 38% respectively), and those with their two closest friends in the police resented it most (80% noted it).

The comments made about shift work varied considerably. Many officers simply mentioned shift work without further elaboration whereas others were more negative. One constable commented sadly: "I have no social life because of the shift work". Another inspector explained: "You can't have a social life, you can't organize anything in advance"⁸. A woman police constable pointed out: "Most of my friends work from 9 to 5, so it is difficult for me to keep in touch with them"⁹. A constable also said: "My wife works from 9 to 5 and sometimes I hardly see her at all"¹⁰.

⁷ W. Westley, *Violence and the Police*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1970, ch3; M. Cain, *Society and the Policeman's Role*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973; R. Reiner, *op.cit.*, ch3.

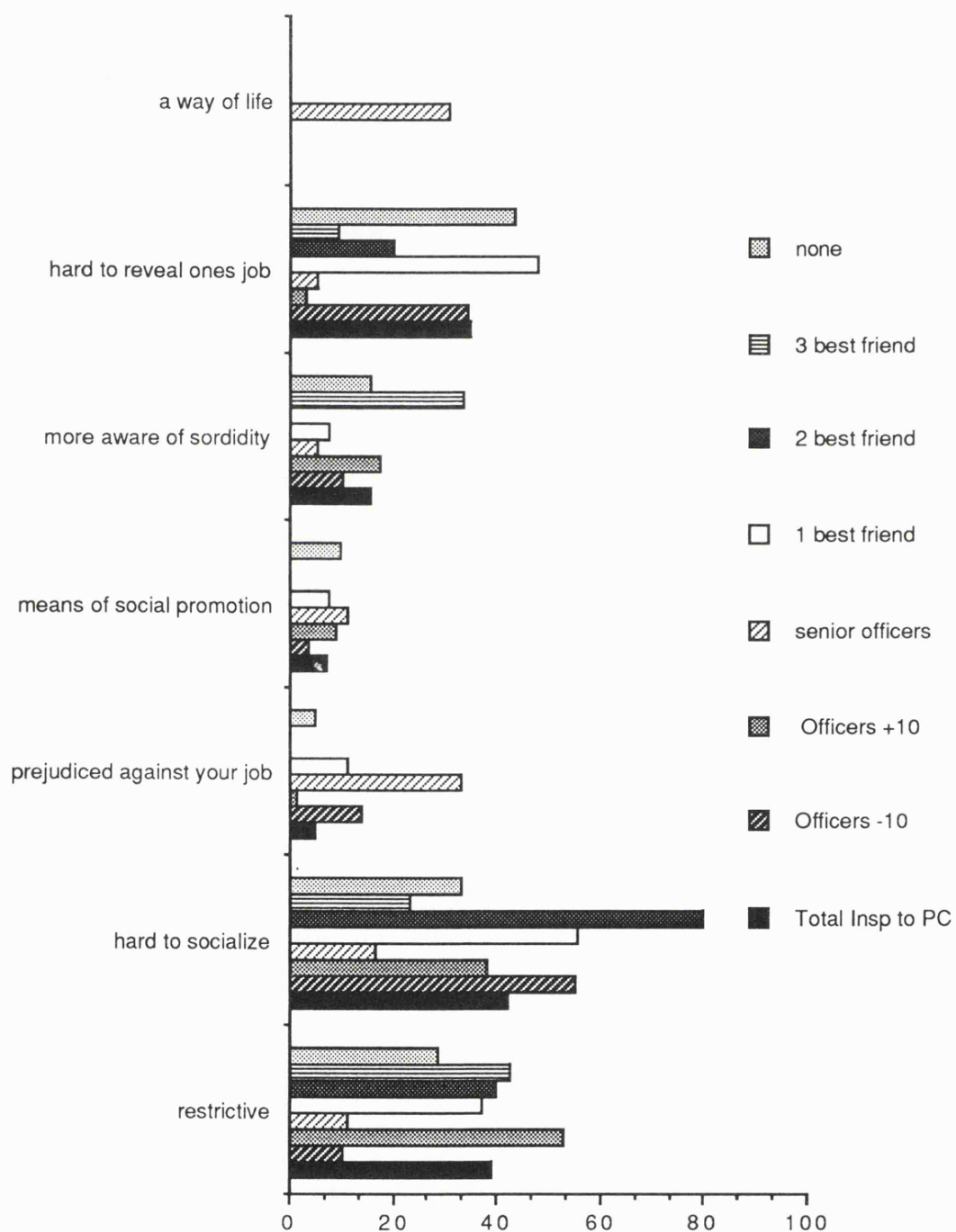
⁸ *Interviews*: Constable, Inspector, Chichester, May, 1989.

⁹ *Interview*: Woman Police Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

¹⁰ *Interview*: Constable, Crawley, April, 1989.

Table 9

How has your job affected your life?



For senior police officers, although the discomforts of shift work are but a distant memory, they are still sometimes remembered. A senior police officer noted: "I don't do shift work now but when I did it was difficult to do a lot of things like singing with my choir"¹¹. In this respect the originality of the British idea that all senior police officers must rise from the ranks has some useful effects: they are aware of and very sensitive to the disruptive effects of shiftwork on the family and social life of their subordinates as a consequence of having experienced it themselves for a number of years. In contrast, very few senior police officers in France for example have direct personal experience of that kind as most pass directly into the upper ranks by means of postgraduate competitive entry examinations.

In other respects such international contrasts would not be found. Thus, a substantial minority - 39% - of the Sussex sample of constables to inspectors mentioned that police work restricted their choice of friends and outside activities because of the suspicious or even hostile attitudes of other people (as distinct from the time constraints of shift work). One constable succinctly explained: "I lost several friends when I joined the police, their attitudes towards me changed completely"¹². Another constable had a similar reaction: "The attitudes of your friends really change when they find out that you are a policeman. None of them are as open as they used to be"¹³. Happily joining the police does not always have the dramatic effect that it had on one sergeant: "When I joined I had a complete change of

¹¹ *Interview*: Senior Officer, Lewes, Headquarters, March, 1989.

¹² *Interview*: Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

¹³ *Interview*: Constable, Chichester, May, 1989.

friends. Most of my old friends left me because of it"¹⁴.

The constraints, however, are not only on friendships. Several police officers mentioned that all their activities had to be both legal and respectable, that minor anti-social behaviour or petty offences which ordinary people would tolerate amongst their friends or acquaintances were not acceptable from police officers. One constable noted: "You have to behave yourself in public better than anyone else"¹⁵. Some even admitted that their own behaviour before joining the police had been less than perfect. One sergeant said: "Before I joined the police I was a bit wild. Joining the police makes the way you behave differently. You can't afford to do certain things"¹⁶. A very practical illustration of such constraints was given by a senior police officer: "I am friendly with a builder, but when he works for me, I can never give him cash - without paying VAT - like everyone else"¹⁷. A few senior officers noted that the police face a danger of social isolation. One commented: "Some people don't want to know you as an individual; they are suspicious of any policeman. So, a policeman often feels a bit cut off from the rest of the community in which he lives"¹⁸.

In contrast with these rather negative views, more positive effects of joining the police were mentioned by a very small number of the sample of constables to inspectors. Only 7% of these officers expressed such positive

¹⁴ *Interview: Sergeant, Crawley, April, 1989.*

¹⁵ *Interview: Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.*

¹⁶ *Interview: Sergeant, Crawley, April, 1989.*

¹⁷ *Interview: Senior Officer, Lewes, Headquarters, March, 1989.*

¹⁸ *Interview: Senior Officer, Brighton, March, 1989.*

views, as did an only marginally greater proportion of senior officers (11%) "People like to say that they have a friend who is a policeman, they are seen as very important or at least rather influential" was the view of a senior police officer¹⁹. A constable noted: "It made my life a lot better, I became much more confident, I go out more. I meet more people, and it has certainly increased my circle of friends"²⁰. In Chichester a former farmer pointed out: "As a farmer I did not get the chance to see many people and I worked very long hours. Now there are more opportunities to go out and socialize"²¹.

Another positive aspect mentioned by one PC in Chichester was "It is a long term job, you feel secure in the police, you won't get the sack"²². The same point was volunteered by almost three quarters of those interviewed, usually at the end of the interviews, when informally talking about why they had joined the police. This view, however, was not expressed in response to the question about the impact of joining the police on their lives. During more informal conversations, in a very similar way, a substantial majority mentioned the good salaries and pension advantages, whereas in the interviews only two officers had referred to the high salaries as being one of the changes which resulted from joining the police. Many of the older police officers interviewed also admitted that the 1979 pay rise had influenced them not to leave the force. In contrast, a number of those who had joined the police after 1979 acknowledged that good remuneration was one of the reasons for their choice of joining the police (usually in

¹⁹ *Interview*: Senior Officer, Lewes, Headquarters, March, 1989.

²⁰ *Interview*: Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

²¹ *Interview*: Constable, Chichester, June 1989.

²² *Interview*: Constable, Chichester, May, 1989.

addition to the variety of activities involved in police work). As table 10 shows, this perception is accurate. Indeed, comparing the salaries of police officers of those of similar age, qualifications and experience in other sectors reveals that police officers are generally better-off than their non-police counterparts.

However, whilst most Sussex police officers recognize this advantage, it does not necessarily mean that they are satisfied with what they receive. Some believe that the difficult and sometimes dangerous nature of their job merits greater financial rewards. One officer in Crawley moaned: "I don't think policemen are well paid for what we have to put up with"²³.

Table 10: average incomes in police and other jobs ²⁴

profession	average gross weekly income
	in 1985
police constables	£244.8
police inspectors & above	£339.2
secondary teachers	£209.5
S.R. nurses & midwives	£150.0
ambulance staff	£169.3
welfare workers	£192.5
general administrators (local government)	£238.9

²³ *Interview: Sergeant, Brighton, March, 1989.*

²⁴ *A Guide to the Met*, London, Greater London Council, p.76; these figures refer to 1985.

Resentful comments about high house prices and exorbitant mortgage rates were also common amongst these police officers. Furthermore, as noted above, the salary improvements did not lead to any massive police support for the deployment of police against trade unions in industrial disputes. On the contrary, the government's use of the police during industrial disputes - especially the miners' strike - was seen as a major impediment to policing by consent (see chapter 5). It would appear that many of the Sussex police officers are aware of both their relative salary advantages and the problems of high housing costs in South East England.

For a minority of the police officers interviewed a very different form of awareness was also a consequence of joining the police service - 15.5% of those interviewed volunteered that police work had altered their perception of life by revealing a more sordid or criminal side of society which had hitherto been unknown to them. A constable in Brighton explained as follows: "It made me realize what really happens in the world, the sordid part of life. Before [I joined] I did not realize people had so many problems"²⁵. A similar view was expressed by a WPC in Crawley: "You see life from a different angle, you are not so naive, you are more aware of what is going on in society"²⁶. Several who put forward this view noted that their whole way of looking at society had become more negative. As one PC put it: "It changes your attitude towards a lot of things, it makes you much more cynical and inquisitive"²⁷. A sergeant expressed an even more

²⁵ *Interview*: Constable, Brighton, March 1989.

²⁶ *Interview*: Woman police Constable, Crawley, April 1989.

²⁷ *Interview*: Constable, Crawley, April, 1989.

cynical feeling: "You tend to think everyone you meet is a villain"²⁸. Others, however, were much more positive about their work. One senior police officer explained: "I gained many qualities. I see things from a much wider perspective. I am less trustful of people and nothing shocks me anymore"²⁹.

A much larger minority voiced awareness that police officers were unpopular in society as a whole. 35% of those interviewed acknowledged some awareness of their embarrassment about being a member of the police force by their admissions of being reluctant to talk about or identify their professions to people they encountered in social life outside the police. Moreover, 5% of the sample of constables to inspectors volunteered that in the course of their work they have become aware that many ordinary people were prejudiced against or downright hostile towards the police. One PC stated: "If I go to a party where there are no policemen I won't ever say that I am a policeman because it can cause aggravation"³⁰. Another PC in Chichester said: "You just feel it with outsiders, their attitudes change when they realize you are a policeman"³¹. A constable in Brighton expressed this feeling more strongly: "Some people just don't want to know if they find out that you are a policeman"³². Another succinct expression of this view was: "I try not to say that I am a policeman, but I don't hide it. If I

²⁸ *Interview*: Sergeant, Chichester, May 1989.

²⁹ *Interview*: Senior Police Officer, Headquarters, March 1989.

³⁰ *Interview*: Constable, Crawley, April, 1989.

³¹ *Interview*: Constable, Chichester, May, 1989.

³² *Interview*: Constable, Brighton, March, 1989.

do admit it, it changes people's attitudes to me"³³. A few of those interviewed behaved in the same way as one inspector: "If I am asked what I do, I usually say I am a civil servant"³⁴.

The responses to questioning about the impact of joining the police service on individual officers reveal that many are aware of being different from people in other jobs. Furthermore, feelings of embarrassment at belonging to the police service are admitted by a substantial minority. Hence, many Sussex police officers do not see themselves as ordinary citizens in uniform and do not believe that ordinary citizens see them in that way. Large numbers of them are dismayed by the realisation that their fellow citizens do not fully appreciate their work.

The insiders - subgroup or subculture ?

The first section of this chapter noted that the responses to the questionnaires allowed the identification of a group of 27 police officers who might be described as "insiders", since all three of their closest friends were members of the police force. Furthermore, 70% of them did not belong to any social club or organisation other than the police club. 62% of them have wives whose close friends were married to police officers. It therefore seemed reasonable to hypothesize that if a distinctive police sub-culture existed in the Sussex Police force, it was most likely to be found amongst the members of this statistical subgroup of "insiders". This aspect might be revealed by a separate analysis of the responses of these "insiders" to all the interview questions posed.

³³ *Interview: Sergeant, Brighton, March, 1989.*

³⁴ *Interview: Inspector, Chichester, May, 1989.*

The members of this sub-group were different from other officers in that 76% of them thought that policing by consent is a specifically British tradition, whereas only 53% of the whole sample from inspectors to constables held that view. However, there was no difference between the insiders and other police officers in the proportions of those who were familiar with the expression. Nor was there any distinctive interpretation of the meaning of policing by consent. Amongst the responses of members of that sub-group to the question about the major initiatives which have helped to improve police-public relations during the last 10 years, a small number of differences emerged. In general the members of the sub-group were rather more pessimistic than their peers. 57% of them believed that there had been no important initiative at all, whereas the proportion was 30% for the whole sample. Only 14% of them cited neighbourhood watch schemes (26.5% for the whole sample) and 19% mentioned the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, as compared with 30% for the whole sample. However a mere 14% of the sub-group cited "community policing" - a response given by only 9% of the whole sample.

When asked about major impediments to policing by consent, the insiders gave very similar responses to their peers in every respect except one: 32% of that group thought that the government's deployment of police during industrial disputes was a major impediment to policing by consent, whereas only 22% of the whole sample held that view.

When asked to identify major problems of ordinary work on the ground the members of the subgroup were notably more optimistic. They were more numerous to deny having any problems (28%) than their peers (21%), but much less numerous to criticize the attitudes of young people

(4.5%) compared to 18% of the whole sample. However 28.5% of the "insiders" volunteered that the unfair representation of the police in the media caused them practical difficulties whilst only 8% of the whole sample did so.

Informal conversations with these "insiders" and observational fieldwork did not suggest that their sense of collective solidarity was any stronger than that of most of their colleagues. Outsider rank-and-file constables were no less critical of senior officers, nor were uniformed officers any less sarcastic about their CID colleagues than others. Like most others, they had a sense of their clear identity as members of a special profession but they showed no particular idealism and provided no evidence of having a stronger *esprit de corps* than other officers.

This brief examination of the responses of the sub-group reveals that, in spite of the fact that its members spend much of their time in police company, they are not markedly different from their fellow police officers. Thus, the hypothesis that these "insiders" might have distinctive attitudes, representative of a police sub-culture, is in no way proven.

Conclusion

Robert Reiner, in his chapter on "cop culture"³⁵, identifies seven "core characteristics" of police life: mission, suspicion, isolation, conservatism, machismo, racial prejudice and pragmatism. This

³⁵ R. Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1985, p.85.

classification represents a critical synthesizing of the work of other researchers³⁶, and Reiner acknowledges that there is little consensus amongst police researchers on this subject. He also admits that there are considerable variations in organisational cultures and individual attitudes. The information from the interviews of members of the Sussex Police Force presents a picture which is rather different from that given by Reiner.

The Sussex officers were approached with a neutral open-ended questionnaire; many of the qualities they ascribed to themselves or to others were volunteered by the respondents rather than provoked by the interviewer prompting. A more directive approach might have stimulated some officers to display qualities of machismo and racial prejudice, but this open-ended approach did not. However, it revealed that some officers exhibit some of Reiner's other characteristics.

Several officers stated that their work in the police had made them more aware of criminal and anti-social behaviour and hence more suspicious of their fellow citizens. Others, in their responses to questions about improvements in police-public relations and impediments to policing by consent, revealed rather conservative and pragmatic approaches. Others volunteered their belief in the social utility of their work, their professional *mission* of protecting their fellow citizens.

The single most widespread characteristic found in the Sussex police force, however, was a sense of differentiation. Many officers saw themselves as being different from the rest of society and felt somehow distant from others. Even amongst those who admitted real pride in their jobs, there were some who readily revealed their belief that policemen were

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 99-100.

not liked or respected by their fellow citizens.

This sense of distinctiveness amongst the Sussex police officers, is nonetheless somewhat paradoxical. By their social origins and activities outside police work, most of those interviewed did not appear to be very different from ordinary members of the public. Unlike neighbouring police forces like the Metropolitan Police or the West Midlands Police that of Sussex does not have a public reputation tarnished by serious scandals. On the contrary, the Brighton survey on *The Police and the Community* revealed that the work of the police was widely respected³⁷. It would seem, therefore, that there are fewer grounds for the widespread feelings of social isolation amongst the Sussex police officers than there are in other police areas.

The explanation of this paradox is suggested by the numerous criticisms made by Sussex police officers of the media and the representation of the police on television and in the press. It would appear that these officers expect the rest of the population of the country to judge them by the image of policing portrayed in the media. Hence, resentment at having to apply reforms which often appeared inappropriate and unnecessary for the problems and circumstances of Sussex seems to be mirrored by frustration at a public image largely built on the difficulties of urban police forces portrayed in the national media.

³⁷ Community Safety in Brighton, Report of a Survey and Consultation, by Clare Demuth, Brighton Council Police and Public Safety Unit, April 1989.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This chapter resumes, draws together and develops the main conclusions of the two sections of this thesis. It shows the relevance of these findings to continuing debates in both British politics and political science on three controversies. The first is that of the re-distribution of political and administrative power from the periphery to the centre. The second concerns the extent to which governments can regulate professions and professional organisations which were hitherto autonomous without provoking their partisan politicisation and thus undermining their social legitimacy. The third is that of the functionality - or dysfunctionality - of myths of an idealised past for analysing and finding policy solutions for problems of the present.

The scope and findings of this thesis

This thesis began with a paradox: the constant reiteration during the 1980s by police leaders, politicians, journalists and even academics of the need massively to increase support for and to reduce criticisms of the police by the public; the announcements of ministers and police chiefs of a series of reforms to attain these goals; and the constantly growing evidence that

neither the exhortations nor the reforms were working. On the contrary each new study published showed that public trust in and respect for the police service were continuing to decline. The central topic of this thesis is the concept of policing by consent and the initial objectives were to examine the significance of that concept in the preparation of policy reforms during the 1980s and to analyse the relevance of policing by consent to the implementation of the new policies at the local level.

These twin goals imposed a sub-division of the research and of the thesis into two sections. The first comprises an examination of the meaning, origins and development of the idea of policing by consent and an analysis of the relevance of that concept in recent debates about policing and the major policy reforms adopted by successive Conservative Governments during the 1980s. The second is a case study of the front-line implementation of these reforms and practical evaluation of their results by the officers of one local police force, that of Sussex. Together these sections underline the inherent ambiguity of policing by consent for both policy-makers and policy implementers. Almost all acknowledged it was a desirable goal for which to strive, but there was no consensus as to what it involved or the methods by which it might be attained.

The first chapter of the thesis shows that if the terms of political debates and the particular policies adopted in Britain were distinctly British, the problems faced were in many respects similar to those experienced in other large European states. By the somewhat inexact measure of official crime statistics Britain's record was in line with those of comparable European states. Whether or not public disorders became more common or more violent in Britain than elsewhere is very difficult to assess. By recent previous British standards, however, the confrontations between sections of the public and the police in the riots of 1981 and 1985 and during the many industrial disputes throughout the decade seemed exceptional.

Nonetheless much of the political debate in Britain was more about policing than about law and order in general, precisely because of the widespread demand for policing by consent.

Many of the major criticisms of police action were voiced in a small number of urban agglomerations and most notably in the capital. This concentration of protest reflects not only the location of the main problems but also two basic features of the organisation of the police system in Britain. The first is the territorial bases of police organisation: England and Wales are policed by 43 area police forces. The second is local accountability: all but one of those forces are answerable to local police authorities comprising representatives of local councils and magistrates. The exception to this rule is the Metropolitan Police with over 27 000 officers, by far the biggest police force in Britain, which is answerable only to the Home Secretary. There has been more public criticism of, and scandals about, the Metropolitan Police than about any other police force. Behaviour and attitudes of officers in the Metropolitan Police Force, however, have been studied as have other major urban police forces. Hence this case-study selected a large but non-metropolitan police force where the problems of Greater London were not found and where, with Conservative domination of local governments, there was no major partisan problem. The forces of Kent, Essex and Sussex were chosen as potentially suitable for such a case-study and the Deputy Chief Constable and Police Authority of Sussex, the first approached, generously accepted to allow and facilitate this research.

The second chapter begins the examination of the concept of policing by consent with an analysis of the ideas of "police" and "consent" in British democratic theory. It underlines that public consent rests on three fragile equilibria. The first is that between the operational autonomy of the chief constables and supervision by political authorities. The second is that between the establishment of national laws and common standards by

central government, and the administrative supervision of police forces by local councils and magistrates. The third balance is between preventive and public-service policing and responsive or fire-brigade police work. The chapter also demonstrates that there is an inherent conflict of objectives between that of increasing respect for law and the law enforcers and that of radically changing society which leads to social protest and public demonstrations. The socio-political context necessary for policing by consent is one of consensual, relatively peaceful evolution. The divisions and clashes inevitable during an attempt rapidly to effect a massive redistribution of power and wealth in society are not conducive to policing by consent.

This view is confirmed in the third chapter which examines the evolution of the British police system since the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Force in 1829. The origins of the idea of a professional police force operating with popular consent are seen to lie in the liberal justification of the earliest police structures as developments of the traditional idea of community self-policing and in the concessions of policing style and powers made to conciliate those hostile to the import of a despotic continental police system. This chapter reveals that periods of widespread public respect for the police were exceptions rather than the rule, and that, if the 1950s had been one such period, the growth of public criticisms of many aspects of policing had been taking place throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The fourth chapter analyses the policing problems, the political debates, the research projects and studies and the major policy reforms which followed during the 1980s. Two major features of these reforms are underlined. The first is the contribution of police officers and organisations to the reform process. If public confidence in the police had fallen and public criticism of the police had proliferated massively, it was in a large

part a consequence of behaviour by police officers. There were numerous cases of officers who did not respect "Judges' rules" about evidence and questioning, who used coercive force to obtain confessions, who made deals with criminals to improve clear-up rates or who acted with gratuitous brutality. There were others who took bribes or acted in racist ways varying from verbal abuse to non-assistance of those in danger.

Police officers contributed to the controversies in other ways. One was through the campaigns of the Police Federation, notably those in favour of greater powers and higher salaries for the police, for stiffer sentences and for the return of capital punishment. Some prominent police leaders bear part of the responsibility for these controversies. Commissioner Sir Robert Mark may have cleaned up the corruption in the Metropolitan Police but he also campaigned publicly for an end to the traditional right of silence of suspects and resigned noisily in protest against the creation of the first independent body to deal with complaints from the public against the police, the Police Complaints Board. Such behaviour suggested that a traditional element of policing by consent, the partisan neutrality of the police, could no longer be counted on. Public statements by Police Federation leaders and by chief constables such as James Anderton in Greater Manchester, that it would be difficult for the police service to work for a Labour Government, appeared to confirm this view.

Police leaders were involved in the debates about how to re-establish policing by consent. Some leaders argued that public support for and trust in the police service could best be achieved by improving police *effectiveness* which meant more officers, greater powers, more equipment, more technology and higher salaries. Others, however, believed that the solution was to be found in re-building regular and frequent contacts between police officers and the community they serve: by more effective police authority supervision, by local consultative institutions and by

methods of community policing including the re-introduction of beat patrolling on foot. John Alderson, the Liberal former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall advanced this case in several books and articles and submitted arguments of a similar kind to Lord Scarman's inquiry into the Brixton riots. His views, however, infuriated other chief constables who mocked him as "a soft liberal accustomed to policing tourists and sheep"¹.

In the first three years of the Conservative Government, hard-line police views appeared to prevail. The resources available for policing were increased, tougher tactics were adopted for dealing with public disorders, anti-riot weapons were purchased and used and the first draft of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act included proposals for increased police powers in line with the wishes of the Police Federation. By 1981, however, the tide was beginning to turn. Lord Scarman's official inquiry in Brixton led to a report which was highly critical of hard-line policing methods. The Government itself demanded that the police service like other public services should improve its efficiency. It accepted the arguments of lawyers, magistrates and civil liberties' groups that the Police and Criminal Evidence Act should contain provisions for better protection of suspects and strict limitations on police powers.

Much of the debate was about legislative reforms and in particular about the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. The conflictual nature of the debate in part reflected the anxiety of the opposition and of many lawyers and civil rights activists that civil liberties would be endangered if the police were given the untrammelled powers demanded by many of their leaders. Ironically, there was little debate by politicians about the wide-ranging managerial reforms associated with the Financial Management Initiative nor was there much public discussion of the massive spending

¹ A. Sampson, *The Changing Anatomy of Britain*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, p. 211.

programmes on new technology which were agreed jointly by central and local authorities in the common police service committee. Much of public politics was about police powers whilst important financial policy choices were often made in negotiations which received little public attention.

The public controversies, debates and reforms had one other impact: the launching of a whole series of research projects about policing. Some focussed on aspects of police work, others on organisation or financial accountability and yet others on public opinion. Almost every year during the 1980s a new major study or substantial opinion survey reminded public, police and politicians alike that the problem of public distrust in the police remained unsolved.

The analysis of the organisational changes in Sussex by which the national reforms were implemented reveals the important limitations on the operational autonomy of the chief constable and on the local supervision of the police service. It demonstrates that the community policing road to regaining public consent was only one aspect of the overall policy package. Adopting new technology to improve effectiveness and new managerial structures and methods to improve efficiency were equally important. Furthermore whatever the local chief constables and police authority may have wanted, these latter two priorities were imposed from the centre. The consequences were a substantial increase in the financial and manpower resources devoted to new technologies and management as well as to the training requirements of both.

The case study of the Sussex Police Force, the second section of this thesis, focusses on attempts to implement nationally prescribed reforms in local circumstances. The first of the three chapters in this section examines the organisational changes which took place whereas the other two chapters analyse the views of the police officers about the idea of policing by consent

and the reforms they were called upon to implement, and the social background of the officers.

Chapters six and seven examined the attitudes of police officers in Sussex towards the problem of policing by consent, focussing on their work experience and their reactions to the reforms of the last decade. They revealed that there is little to suggest that a common strong and distinctive police culture exists in the Sussex Police Force. On the contrary, there is evidence of a great diversity of views about the nature and sources of public consent or lack of it.

This conclusion, however, does not conflict with those of other studies about the police norms, values and collective solidarity. Rather it suggests that the police service, like policing problems, remains locally diversified. Many Sussex officers recognized that their relations with the public were very different from those of their fellow officers in the big and powerful force next door in Greater London. The nature of police professionalism in Sussex is perhaps more similar to that of the hospital service than to that of a large metropolitan police force: there is a public service approach, a specialized vocabulary, a common knowledge of the internal organisation and a clear hierarchy of command and expertise. Officers in Sussex acknowledged that the experience of policing is different from that in many other professions but do not see themselves as being isolated from or strongly disliked by the public of their area. Some, however, underlined the impact of panda-car policing which means that members of the public meet officers only rarely and most of the time in the context of involvement in problems, hence the development of the image as "fire-fighters", cut off from normal "non-crisis" contacts with the public.

Two interesting exceptions to this generalisation were noted. The first was that officers in Crawley, on the fringes of Greater London, were much

less satisfied with their relations with the public than those elsewhere. The second was that several officers in all parts of the county believed that public consent for policing had been undermined by media portrayals which created nationwide images of typical police behaviour purely on the basis of examples from problem urban areas. Sussex officers, however, do not hold the media to be the sole or even the main cause of changing public attitudes. Many recognise a general evolution of public values and behaviour, especially amongst young people. Three particular features of this evolution were mentioned: the growing awareness of individual rights, the general decline of deferential behaviour towards those in authority and the rising expectations of the public about the conduct of police officers. In general, most officers did not believe the allegations of a few right-wing politicians that all the problems were caused by left-wing activists, although some senior officers did hold this view.

One of the limitations of this survey was that it considered only officers' opinions and made no systematic attempt to evaluate their performance. Indeed a detailed performance study would have required means far beyond those of this research. The fieldwork observation which was possible, however, suggested that even officers who had never heard of the idea of policing by consent often act in a very public-sensitive way. One third of all constables and a quarter of all sergeants interviewed had never heard of policing by consent. But many of these, like M Jourdain with his use of prose, have been doing it unknowingly for years.

The survey revealed considerable scepticism about the contribution of the major reforms of the 1980s towards increasing public confidence for policing in general and widespread doubts about their relevance to Sussex in particular. Once again the diversity of views was striking: the Police and Criminal Evidence Act was the reform the most frequently cited as a major obstacle to such an improvement. One other striking finding from this

survey was that a substantial minority of officers below the rank of chief inspector disapproved of the government deployment of police officers during the industrial disputes of the 1980s and identified it as a major obstacle to the improvement of public attitudes towards the police. Many officers in a rich and prosperous county which is politically dominated by the Conservative Party remain profoundly skeptical about the major policy reforms of the Thatcher decade.

Policing in the centre-periphery conundrum.

One general conclusion from this thesis is that detailed policy-making at the national level for local service provision is often inappropriate. As the Sussex example shows, it may produce reforms which, at the local level, are costly, unnecessary or even irrelevant. This case study illustrates the inevitable element of tension between local police authorities, chief constables and central government, irrespective of partisan considerations. Indeed in this respect, Sussex is particularly revealing in that both county councils and the Police Authority have had Conservative majorities throughout the period of Conservative Governments since 1979. Furthermore the Sussex Conservatives had not been misled by the heresies of Heath and Heseltine. In Sussex, the Police Authority and the Chief Constable, with the support of the local MPs, consistently disputed centrally-determined criteria for establishing the manpower needs of the police force. The Local Police Authority not only wanted more police officers but had no problem to raise the money to pay for half of the extra officers requested. The 1964 Police Act, however, empowered the Home Secretary to veto any additional expenditure proposed by a local police authority which he did not deem necessary. At the same time that act enabled him to impose any spending which he considered essential for the running of a police force. In such conditions, some tension between police authorities and the Home Office is inevitable unless police authority members accept to play a simple

role of a rubber stamp. Furthermore and significantly for policing by consent, it is difficult for any police authority to be seen as having real *authority* over its local police force on behalf of the community it represents.

There is, however, an alternative scenario of police authority-chief constable-Home Office relations, from that observed in Sussex. As the examples of Merseyside in 1981 and South Yorkshire in 1985 illustrate, it is possible that relations between the police authority and chief constable may be openly conflictual as a consequence of the police authority attempting to impose control over the policies of the Chief Constable. In this scenario the Home Office is placed in a role of arbiter and its arbitration is almost always in favour of the chief constable. Once again, the value of a police authority as a link between the local community and its police force is seriously weakened. The 1964 Police Act seems seriously to have undermined local accountability in policing and to have condemned police authorities to play the role of a chained dog: they may sleep, bark or strain at the leash but they can never bite. More accurately their teeth may be used only when appointing new chief constables.

The findings of chapters four and five, however, showed that whilst central-local tensions exist, there is a large area of complicity. Tri-partite joint national policy making between representatives of the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the two associations of local councils (ACC and AMA) has become increasingly important. Such decision-making, however, suffers the difficulty of all corporatist devices of non-accountability. It is neither central or local, neither democratic nor expert. It is theoretically accountable to no one. The Common Police Service Committee is virtually unknown to politicians and public alike. Whether or not it makes "good" decisions, it plays no role in legitimizing policing policies with the public.

Two other questions about centre-periphery relationships, are raised by this thesis. The first is the appropriateness of the functions which are left to the local level. It is arguable that research and experimentation with new equipment, methods and management structures are most efficiently carried out by central authorities or at least by central allocation to chosen case study police forces. Equally the idea of local purchasing autonomy seems highly questionable. Central procurement of all equipment would lead not only to the compatibility of equipment between police forces, thereby facilitating mutual assistance operations but also to lower cost by bulk purchasing. In the 1980s one existing central service providing police personal radios was dismembered.

The second question concerns the present territorial division of England and Wales into 43 police forces. First, there is the historic anachronism of the City of London Police Force, which is the only truly local police force in Britain, serving one square mile but accountable to the least democratic local government body, the Corporation of the City of London. More important is the problem that the smaller police forces and even the medium-sized police forces like Sussex are neither local nor regional. They are not local in the sense that they are not linked to elected local governments: most police forces serve groups of counties rather than towns or districts with strong identities. They are not regional since there are no clear regional identities government, in England and Wales. In any case, they are not big enough to provide their own specialist services for training, for certain types of criminal investigation or for the coordination of operations to meet major emergencies. Nor are they big enough to ensure that collusion between chief constables and local party bosses does not occur. The recent conflict between the Derbyshire Police Authority and

the Home Secretary revealed that, twenty six years after the 1964 Police Act, the Home Office remains suspicious of such collusion².

The present distribution of roles and powers between the Home Office, the chief constables and local police authorities, and the territorial division into 43 police forces do not appear to encourage public confidence in the political neutrality or the democratic accountability, much less the local accountability of the police service. Nor is the problem solved by the creation of formal but powerless consultative groups. These are costly and time-consuming for police officers, but unsatisfactory for those who desire democratically legitimate local supervision. By leaving these institutional problems unsolved, one possibility of encouraging the growth of public consent for policing was ignored by the reform of the 1980s.

Politics and the police profession.

The nature and extent of police professionalism is an important issue in the interpretation of the political role of policing. According to Patrick Dunleavy³, it is central to both the "institutional-pluralist" and the "radical" views of the law and politics. In the "institutional-pluralist" view "safeguards of impartial law enforcement are the separation of policing and prosecution functions from direct control by governments ... particularly the professionalism of police forces". In the radical view "police forces in Britain are almost uncontrolled by anyone outside the force. Semi-elected regional police authorities have very little power over chief constables, who control all operational decisions police value systems are inherently

² *The Independent*, 14th April 1990.

³ P. Dunleavy, "Topics in British Politics", in H. Drucker, P. Dunleavy *et al.*, *Developments in British Politics*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1986, pp. 334-336.

authoritarian and conservative". Dunleavy further suggests that a plausible radical case " would focus on the systematically class-biased development of legal and police professionalism". Both views assume that police professionalism exists. They merely dispute its nature and its socio-political autonomy. This thesis suggests that the situation is far more complex than is suggested by either of these two views. The idea of a powerful professional structure is called into question in five respects.

First, the Sussex Police Force exemplifies the increasing diversification which has taken place within the police service during the last ten years. This thesis noted the importance of computing and telecommunication skills, the growth of specialist training courses and the introduction of a type of corporate management (with the three assistant chief constables regularly exchanging responsibilities in an attempt to improve coherence on an increasingly disparate organisation). The interviews revealed two rather different views of policing. The first, the "techno-cop" approach, stressed the application of new technologies and the importance of expertise acquired by formal study and tested by written examination. In contrast, the generalist approach underlined the importance of common sense and experience as key qualities for effective policing. The conflict between such leaders of the profession as Alderson and Anderton appears to be mirrored by a basic division of professional values throughout the lower ranks. These differences are additions to the traditional conflicts between senior officers and lower ranks and between the CID and the uniform branch.

The second reservation is that the diversity of views reflects the diversity of social origins and previous work experiences of police officers. In 1986, Bradley, Walker and Wilkie summarising research to-date on the social and economic background of police officers concluded that the findings "reveal the typicality rather than the uniqueness. Few trends appear which do not equally apply to other similar occupational groups

except that, for the recent police recruit, educational attainments have become a little higher and previous work experience a little narrower"⁴.

The Sussex officers, like those studied by Cain, Reiner and Smith⁵, were very largely from the skilled working-class or the lower middle-class. In our study, as elsewhere, very few came from the upper or middle-middle classes. The only difference in Sussex was that a number came from agricultural backgrounds and very few came from the industrial working class. Given the rural character of Sussex and the local recruitment of officers, this difference is hardly surprising. There were some marginal differences in the findings of our Sussex sample from those of earlier studies on previous work experiences of police recruits. Whilst Reiner found that almost four fifths of his sample had experience of at least one job before joining the police, these jobs tended to be transient⁶. In Sussex, however, only 60% had previous work experience but two thirds of these had held their previous job for over five years before entering the police service. The jobs they held, however, were varied. These results again underline the diversity of background of police officers and suggest that they do not begin their professional lives with any common class identity or interest.

Nor does this research suggest that police training tends to instil such an identity. Since the Scarman Report police training programmes have

⁴ D. Bradley, N. Walker and R. Wilkie, *Managing the police*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986, p. 163.

⁵ M. Cain, *Society and the Policeman's Role*, London, Routledge, 1973, ch. 4; R. Reiner, *The Blue Coated Worker*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978, ch. 9; D. Smith, *Police and People in London*, vol 3, *A Survey of Police Officers*, London, Policy Studies Institute, 1983, ch. 2.

⁶ R. Reiner, *The Blue Coated Worker*, *op. cit.*, pp.152-53.

been deliberately modified to ensure respect for racial and social diversity. There has been encouragement and funding for full-time university studies, often in the social sciences. Furthermore our survey revealed that a substantial minority of officers were profoundly dismayed by the role they had been called upon to play in industrial disputes. Whilst this research did not reveal anything about the recruitment criteria of those responsible for selecting the new officers, the interviews with the small sample of new recruits suggested that the diversity of social origins has not declined. Thus the idea of the police service as a self consciously middle class profession is an over simplification.

A third complicating factor is that the maintenance of common professional work standards by regular and effective supervision and inspection, which is common to most professions, does not appear to operate effectively in the police service. One of the traditions of British policing was the discretionary power of the constable. Early studies of policing practice noted that the informal norms of the rank and file were as important as the formal rules in urban areas and that community norms were very influential in rural areas⁷. In both cases the formal command structure had but a limited influence. This observation appeared to be reinforced by some of the scandals of the 1970s when senior officers failed to control their subordinates. Members of the public experience the actions of rank and file police officers rather than the speeches of their commands. One basic aim of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act in its final form was strictly to limit the autonomy of rank and file officers. In interviews, however, several Sussex police officers voiced their dislike of the provisions of the Act and in a small number of cases the Act was flouted during our observational fieldwork. Thus the effective power of the professional hierarchy still remains open to question.

⁷ M. Cain, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-246.

The fourth factor is ambiguity about the nature of the police as a professional organisation. Traditionally the police had a public service ethic but it has been increasingly re-orientated towards the values of the private sector. As Sinclair and Millar concluded on the Home Office Circular 114-1983, the Government appeared to view "the police and other public services as analogous, say, to a shoe factory"⁸. The Audit Commission and the Inspectorate of Constabulary reiterated the need for a managerial approach to police command. In Sussex efficient management was a top priority and the notion of corporate identity was discussed by senior officers with all the enthusiasm of business school graduates. This managerial approach, however, was little known or appreciated by anyone below the rank of chief inspector. It was as if the leadership of a public service army had been taken over by generals from the private sector.

The final factor was the single minded approach of the Thatcher Governments to all professions in the sector public. The attitude of these governments was made most explicit at the time of the Ponting case⁹, that servants of the Crown were for all practical purposes servants of the government of the day. The jury may have rejected the judge's advice in this sense but Sir Robert Armstrong, head of the Civil Service, re-affirmed it as a basic rule for all civil servants. The Government made no secret of its expectation that the police service should assist it by enforcing its policies. At the time of the miners' strike, chief constables were reminded in public as well as in private of their obligations to ensure respect for the law and to maintain public order. *Sotto voce* comments about the possibility of

⁸ I. Sinclair and C. Miller, *Measures of police effectiveness and efficiency*, Home Office Research and Planning Unit Paper 25, London, Home Office, 1984, p. 12.

⁹ Gillian Peele, "The State and Civil Liberties", in H. Drucker, P. Dunleavy *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-164.

creating a French-style CRS and a direct Home Office control were not unknown. The evidence from the Sussex interviews was that many officers greatly resented being called upon to police industrial disputes and realized that public support and trust for police operations in Sussex had been undermined by the policing of the miners' strike and the Wapping dispute. They recognized that the Government's hope that the traditional political neutrality of the police forces would increase the acceptability of tough police action during the strikes was misplaced. On the contrary the consequence was a further reduction of public confidence in that neutrality.

What emerges from this thesis is that neither the "institutional pluralist" or the "radical" views of police professionalism is close to the complex and evolving reality of police views and practices in Sussex. The "institutional pluralist" model is an ideal type close to that which in the views of many police officers should legitimize the operational autonomy of the police which in turn would reinforce public consent. The radical view is, as Dunleavy admits, a theoretical justification for effective local democratic control of police forces as a means of restoring public confidence in the police. Police officers themselves, however, admit that public consent requires both local and national accountability but also sufficient operational autonomy so that chief constables can reject requests to use their officers in ways which lead to a public perception of a partisan identity. As many studies have shown, police officers are often pragmatic and conservative in outlook and the Sussex officers were no exception. Nonetheless, a conservative outlook does not mean systematic support for the policies of a Conservative Government which challenged traditional police practices and patterns of organisation, and reduced the social legitimacy of policing. Many Sussex police officers admitted to feeling different, rather than isolated, from the rest of society by their work.

Nonetheless the trend in this rural provincial force was towards "the social isolation" noted in studies of urban police forces¹⁰.

The myth of policing by consent and policy-making.

Policing by consent is an ambiguous concept. In theoretical terms it is easy to define as an end, but it is difficult to establish the means by which it may be created and maintained. Historically, it is equally ambiguous; if there is some evidence of widespread public consent for policing in the 1950s, there are few grounds for supporting that such social legitimacy has characterized professional British policing since its creation in 1829. Both theoretical and historical analyses tend to relate such social legitimacy to methods and styles of policing (a balance of local and national democratic supervision and autonomy in operational matters) rather than to the social and political context of policing. One theme of this thesis has been that in such socially and politically turbulent times as the 1980s, policing by consent is more a myth than a relevant policy model.

The vagueness of the concept has deprived it of any real policy value. Some police leaders and Conservatives argued that policing by consent implied the achievement of public support by improving the effectiveness of police-operations which in turn meant effective central control, panda cars, computers, increased police powers, use of CS gas, riot shields and rubber bullets. Other police leaders and many liberals disagree and propose community policing and non-conflictual crowd control techniques as the route back to policing by consent. Local labour leaders demand powerful local elected police authorities as the essential reform for re-establishing

¹⁰ S. Holdaway, *Inside the British Police*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983.

policing by consent. A concept sufficiently promiscuous to cohabit with such opposed views is of no direct relevance for policy making.

The myth of policing by consent may even be dysfunctional. By focussing on the public appreciation of the police this concept may distract policy makers from the political and social problems which render attempts to recreate policing by consent by institutional reforms pointless. Conversely policy makers by distracting the public with the goal of re-establishing policing by consent may attempt to avoid resolving such social and political conflicts. The concentration on the declining popularity of the law enforcers may have diverted public attention from the policy failures of the law-makers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire

What is your:

age:

marital status:

rank:

period of service in the police:

job experience before joining the police:

father's job:

What are your spare time activities?

Do you belong to any club?

What jobs do your three best friends have?

What does your wife feel about you being in the police?

Have your children suffered any prejudice because of your job?

Are any of your spouse's friends married to police officers?

Have you heard of the expression "policing by consent" before?

Do you think it is specific to England?

In your opinion, what are the major elements in the idea of "policing by consent"?

In your opinion, what are the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

In your opinion, what has most impeded "policing by consent"?

What are the major problems you experience on the ground?

Appendix 2: The Results

Whole sample

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of Police officers		(125) Total %	(23) Insp %	(28) Serg %	(74) PC %
Heard of the expression before.		76	100	75	67.5
Not heard of the expression before.		23	----	25	32.5
Is it specific to England	Yes	53	52	50	54
	no	30.5	17.5	22	38
	Dk	17	30.5	28.5	8

Number of police officers	(125) Total %	(23) Insp %	(28) serg %	(74) PC %
What are the major elements (open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)				
Don't know	10.5	9	3.5	13.5
Not armed	17	9	21.5	17.5
Tradition	5.5	4.5	18	1.5
Local identity	4	4.5	3.5	4
Police are citizens in uniform	9	22	3.5	7
We are not political	6.5	9	3.5	7
Trust, respect and confidence of the public	13.5	13	25	9.5
Support and cooperation of the public	28	48	28.5	21.5
We enforce the law voted democratically	5	9	7.	3
We do what people want us to do	8	----	7.	11
We give the public a service	5	----	3.5	7
Most people accept us	1.5	----	3.5	1.5
We are not aggressive	2.5	----	7.	1.5
We are not military	4	4.5	3.5	4
We treat every one equally and with care	5	4.5	----	7
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered	3	13	3.5	----
We portray a good image	2.5	4.5	3.5	1.5

(responses given by only one person)

The public pays us
 We are accountable to the public
 Multi-agency approach
 Jack of all trades
 Prevention
 Support of the judiciary
 We should not hide behind democracy
 The idea of the bobby on the Beat.

Whole sample

What are the major problems you experience on the ground

Number of police officers	(125)	(23)	(28)	(74)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
None	21	30.5	14	20
Attitudes of young people	18.5	4.5	18	23
Problems related to drunkenness	13	4.5	14	15
The level of public expectation is too high	10.5	22	11	7
Lack of support from the public	16	8.5	14.	19
Unfair representation in the media	8	8.5	7	8
The public is suspicious of the police	13	13	11	13.5
Communication problems among police officers	14.5	8.5	18	15
Shortage of manpower	13.5	17.5	25	8
Financial constraints	3	----	7	3
More violence against the police	9	4.5	7	11
Lack of time spent with the public	11	13	3.5	13.5
Heavy Handedness and rudeness of policemen	9.5	8.5	11	9.5
Domestic violence	5	4.5	3.5	5.5
Traffic offences	5.5	----	7	7
Lack of previous experience of new recruits.	6.5	----	7	8

Whole sample

What has most impeded policing by consent?

Number of police officers	(125) Total %	(23) Insp %	(28) Serg %	(74) PC %
Don't know	4	4.5	3.5	4
Nothing	5	8.5	----	5.5
PACE	26.5	35	25	24.5
Media	21	22	25	19
The way the police was used in industrial disputes	22.5	17.5	32	20
People are more aware of their rights	20	8.5	11	27
Lack of respect for authority	22.5	4.5	18	30
Left wing organisations	9	4.5	7	11
Civil liberty organisations	3	----	----	5.5
Softness of the Courts and lack of punishment	8	22	11	3
Change of Public Attitude	13	17.5	11	12
Lack of trust of the public	2.5	----	----	4
Young people lack discipline	11	8.5	3.6	15
Increased public expectations	3	----	----	5.5
Financial Constraints	6.5	13	3.5	5.5
Shortage of manpower	16	13	21.5	15
Attitudes of senior police officers	7	----	11	8
Rudeness of police officers	5.5	13	----	5.5
Lack of policemen on the beat and panda cars	14.5	8.5	11	17.5
Attitude of the Met in London	3	8.5	----	3
Not enough time to investigate	2.5	----	----	4
Problems of recruiting and training	7	13	7	5.5
New laws	3	----	3.5	4
Amount of paper work	3	----	----	5.5
Racial problems	2.5	4.5	----	3
Traffic laws	2.5	----	11	----
Breathalyzer test	2.5	----	7	1.5
Recording of interviews	2.5	4.5	----	3
Crown Prosecution Service	2.5	8.5	3.5	----

(Responses given by only one person)

The 1981 riots

Lack of status for community policemen

We are too slow to respond

The present balance between the Haves and the Have-nots

Police officers no longer live in the area they police

Not enough school liaison officers

Not enough support to Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

We don't talk to members of the public anymore.

Whole sample

In your opinion, what have been the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

Number of police officers	(125) Total %	(23) Insp %	(28) Serg %	(74) PC %
None	30	35	32	25.5
Don't know	2.	----	----	4
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	26.5	26	21.5	28.5
PACE	30	43.5	36	23
Consultation	9.5	26	7	5.5
More policemen on the beat	10.5	4.5	11	12
Community policemen	8	13	7.5	7
School liaison officers	7	----	3.5	10.5
The Scarman report	6.5	14	7.	3
Crown Prosecution Service	6.5	13	3.5	5.5
More open to the public	8	13	7	7
More open to the media	5	13	3.5	3
1986 public order Act	5.5	8.5	14	1.5
Training	3.	----	3.5	4
Lay visitors	3	8.5	7.5	----
Police Complaint Authority	5	4.5	3.5	5.5
VDRS	4	----	7.5	4
Multi-agency approach	2.5	13	----	----
Crime Prevention policies	3	13	----	1.5
Better Community relation management	3	13	3.5	----

(Responses given by only one person)

Fixed penalty system
 Licencing regulation
 Civilianization
 Panda policing
 Less paper work
 Less obstruction from left wing politicians
 Better Forensic Science
 Illimination of racist attitude within the police

Brighton

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Numuber of police officers

		(50) Total %	(10) Insp %	(12) Serg %	(28) PC %
Heard of the expression before.		80	100	91.5	68
Not heard of the expression before.		20	----	8.5	33
Is it specific to England	Yes	50	70	58.5	43
	no	14	----	33.5	11
	Dk	36	30	8.5	50

Number of police officers

What are the major elements

(open question, respondants may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)

	(50) Total %	(10) Insp %	(12) serg %	(28) PC %
Don't know	18	10	----	28.5
Not armed	14	----	16.5	18
Tradition	4	----	8.5	3.5
Local identity	4	10	8.5	----
Police are citizens in uniform	4	20	----	----
We are not political	6	10	----	7
Trust, respect and confidence of the public	10	10	25	3.5
Support and cooperation of the public	30	50	25	25
We enforce the law voted democratically	4	10	6.5	----
We do what people want us to do	14	----	16.5	18
We give the public a service	10	----	----	18
Most people accept us	2	----	----	3.5
We are not aggressive	4	----	8.5	3.5
We are not military	2	----	8.5	----
We treat every one equally and with care	----	----	----	----
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered	8	30	8.5	----
We portray a good image	6	10	8.5	3.5

(responses given by only one person)

We are accountable to the public
 Jack of all trades
 The idea of the bobby on the beat.

Brighton**What are the major problems you experience on the ground**

Number of police officers	(50)	(10)	(12)	(28)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
None	18	30	8.5	----
Attitudes of young people	12	----	25	11
Problems related to drunkenness	8	----	16.5	7
The level of public expectation is too high	8	10	----	11
Lack of support from the public	14	----	16.5	19
Unfair representation in the media	2	10	----	----
The public is suspicious of the police	16	30	25	7
Communication problems among police officers	20	10	16.5	25
Shortage of manpower	12	30	25	----
Financial constraints	2	----	----	3.5
More violence against the police	6	10	8.5	3.5
Lack of time spent with the public	4	----	----	7
Heavy Handedness and rudeness of policemen	8	----	8.5	10
Domestic violence	4	10	8.5	----
Traffic offences	4	----	8.5	3.5
Lack of previous experience of new recruits.	4	----	8.5	3.5

Brighton

What has most impeded policing by consent?

Number of police officers	(50)	(10)	(12)	(28)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
Don't know	4	----	8.5	3.5
Nothing	----	----	----	----
PACE	46	50	41.5	46.5
Media	26	20	16.5	32
The way the police was used in industrial disputes	32	30	58.5	21.5
People are more aware of their rights	22	----	16.5	32
Lack of respect for authority	28	10	16.5	39
Left wing organisations	14	10	16.6	14.2
Civil liberty organisations	----	----	----	----
Softness of the Courts and lack of punishment	10	30	----	7
Change of Public Attitude	18	30	8.5	14
Lack of trust of the public	----	----	----	----
Young people lack discipline	14	10	----	21.5
Increased public expectations	----	----	----	----
Financial Constraints	2	----	----	3.5
Shortage of manpower	10	20	16.5	3.5
Attitudes of senior police officers	10	----	16.5	3.5
Rudeness of police officers	4	10	----	3.5
Lack of policemen on the beat and panda cars	14	----	8.5	21.5
Attitude of the Met in London	----	----	----	----
Not enough time to investigate	----	----	----	----
Problems of recruiting and training	16	10	16.5	11
New laws	2	----	----	3.5
Amount of paper work	----	----	----	----
Racial problems	6	10	----	7
Traffic laws	----	----	----	----
Breathalyzer test	6	----	16.5	3.5
Recording of interviews	4	10	----	3.5
Crown Prosecution Service	2	10	----	----

(Responses given by only one person)

We don't talk to members of the public anymore.

Brighton

In your opinion, what have been the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

Number of police officers	(50)	(10)	(12)	(28)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
None	36	70	33.5	25
Don't know	----	----	----	----
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	22	20	25	21.5
PACE	24	30	33.5	14
Consultation	8	20	8.5	3.5
More policemen on the beat	10	----	8.5	14
Community policemen	6	20	8.5	----
School liaison officers	2	----	8.5	----
The Scarman report	6	10	16.5	----
Crown Prosecution Service	6	10	----	7
More open to the public	6	10	----	7
More open to the media	4	10	----	3.5
1986 public order Act	6	----	16.5	3.5
Training	2	----	----	3.5
Lay visitors	2	----	8.5	----
Police Complaint Authority	4	10	----	3.5
VDRS	2	----	----	3.5
Multi-agency approach	2	10	----	----
Crime Prevention policies	4	20	----	----
Better Community relation management				

(Responses given by only one person)

Fixed penalty system

Licencing regulation

Chichester

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of Police officers		(47)	(7)	(10)	(30)
		Total	Insp	Serg	PC
		%	%	%	%
Heard of the expression before.		66	100	60	60
Not heard of the expression before.		34	----	40	40
Is it specific to England	Yes	49	28.5	40	56.5
	no	17	71.5	30	3.5
	Dk	32	----	30	43

Number of police officers		(50)	(7)	(10)	(30%)
What are the major elements		Total	Insp	serg	PC
(open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)					
Don't know		8.5	14	10	6.5
Not armed		2	----	----	3.5
Tradition		4	----	20	----
Local identity		2	----	----	3.5
Police are citizens in uniform		10.5	14	----	13.5
We are not political		14	----	----	13.5
Trust, respect and confidence of the public		10.5	14	20	6.5
Support and cooperation of the public		30	71.5	40	16.5
We enforce the law voted democratically		2	14	----	----
We do what people want us to do		6.5	----	----	10
We give the public a service		2	----	10	----
Most people accept us		2	----	10	----
We are not aggressive		2.1	---	10	----
We are not military		8.5	14	----	13.5
We treat every one equally and with care		13	14	----	16.5
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered		----	----	----	----
We portray a good image		----	----	----	----

(responses given by only one person)

The public pays us
 Multi-agency approach
 Prevention
 Support of the judiciary
 We should not hide behind bureaucracy

Chichester.**What are the major problems you experience on the ground**

Number of police officers	(47)	(7)	(10)	(30)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
None	30	57	30	26.5
Attitudes of young people	21	----	10	26.5
Problems related to drunkenness	15	----	20	16.5
The level of public expectation is too high	10.5	28.5	20	3.3
Lack of support from the public	15	28.5	20	10
Unfair representation in the media	13	14	10	13.5
The public is suspicious of the police	----	----	----	----
Communication problems among police officers	13	14	10	13.5
Shortage of manpower	10.5	----	10	13.5
Financial constraints	2	----	----	3
More violence against the police	10.5	----	10	13.5
Lack of time spent with the public	13	----	10	16.5
Heavy Handedness and rudeness of policemen	10.5	28.5	20	3.3
Domestic violence	----	----	----	----
Traffic offences	10.5	----	10	13.5
Lack of previous experience of new recruits.	10.5	----	10	13.5

Chichester

What has most impeded policing by consent?

Number of police officers	(47)	(7)	(10)	(30)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
Don't know	4	14	----	3.5
Nothing	8.5	----	----	10
PACE	13	28.5	20	6.5
Media	17	43	30	6.5
The way the police was used in industrial disputes	13	14	20	10
People are more aware of their rights	22	----	10	30
Lack of respect for authority	17	----	20	20
Left wing organisations	8.5	----	----	13.5
Civil liberty organisations	8.5	----	----	13.5
Softness of the Courts and lack of punishment	4	----	10	3.5
Change of Public Attitude	2	----	----	3.5
Lack of trust of the public	----	----	----	----
Young people lack discipline	----	----	----	----
Increased public expectations	8.5	----	----	13.5
Financial Constraints	13	14	10	13.5
Shortage of manpower	17	----	30	16.5
Attitudes of senior police officers	----	----	----	----
Rudeness of police officers	10.5	28.5	----	10
Lack of policemen on the beat and panda cars	15	----	10	19
Attitude of the Met in London	----	----	----	----
Not enough time to investigate	2	----	----	3.5
Problems of recruiting and training	6.5	14	----	3.5
New laws	6.5	----	10	3.5
Amount of paper work	8.5	----	----	13.5
Racial problems	----	----	----	----
Traffic laws	6.5	----	30	----
Breathalyzer test	----	----	----	----
Recording of interviews	2	----	----	3.5
Crown Prosecution Service	4	14	10	----

(Responses given by only one person)

We are too slow to respond

The present balance between the Haves and the Have-nots

Police officers no longer live in the area they police

Not enough support to Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Chichester

In your opinion, what have been the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

Number of police officers	(47)	(7)	(10)	(30)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
None	27.5	----	40	30
Don't know	----	----	----	----
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	40.5	28.5	30	46.5
PACE	27.5	43	30	23.5
Consultation	17	57	10	10
More policemen on the beat	10.5	----	20	10
Community policemen	15	14	10	17
School liaison officers	17	----	----	26.5
The Scarman report	8.5	28.5	----	6.5
Crown Prosecution Service	2	14	----	----
More open to the public	12	28.5	10	10
More open to the media	8.5	28.5	10	3.5
1986 public order Act	----	----	----	----
Training	4	----	10	3.5
Lay visitors	2	14	----	----
Police Complaint Authority	2	----	----	3.5
VDRS	8.5	----	20	6.5
Multi-agency approach	4	28.5	----	----
Crime Prevention policies	2	14	----	3.5
Better Community relation management	6.5	43	----	----

(Responses given by only one person)

Civilianization

Panda policing

Less paper work

Less obstruction from left wing politicians

Better Forensic Science

1978 bailed Act

Crawley

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of Police officers		(28)	(6)	(6)	(16)
		Total	Insp	Serg	PC
		%	%	%	%
Heard of the expression before.		86	100	66.5	87.5
Not heard of the expression before.		14	----	33.5	12.5
Is it specific to England	Yes	64.5	50	50	75
	no	21.5	33.5	16.5	19
	Dk	14	16.5	33.5	6

Number of police officers		(28)	(6)	(6)	(16)
What are the major elements		Total	Insp	serg	PC
(open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)		%	%	%	%
Don't know		14	----	16.5	19
Not armed		21.5	16.5	33.5	25
Tradition		11	16.5	33.5	----
Local identity		7	----	----	12.5
Police are citizens in uniform		14	33.5	16.5	6
We are not political		7	----	16.5	6
Trust, respect and confidence of the public		25	16.5	33.5	25
Support and cooperation of the public		21.5	16.5	16.5	25
We enforce the law voted democratically		7%	----	----	12.5
We do what people want us to do		----	----	----	----
We give the public a service		----	----	----	----
Most people accept us		----	----	----	----
We are not aggressive		----	----	----	----
We are not military		----	----	----	----
We treat every one equally and with care		----	----	----	----
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered		30	----	33.5	31
We portray a good image		----	----	----	----

(responses given by only one person)

The public pays us
 We are accountable to the public
 Multi-agency approach
 Jack of all trades
 Prevention
 Support of the judiciary
 We should not hide behind democracy
 The idea of the bobby on the beat.

Crawley

What are the major problems you experience on the ground

Number of police officers	(28)	(6)	(6)	(16)
	Total	Insp	Serg	PC
	%	%	%	%
None	7	16.5	----	6
Attitudes of young people	21.5	----	16.5	31
Problems related to drunkenness	18	16.5	----	25
The level of public expectation is too high	14	33.5	16.5	6
Lack of support from the public	21.5	----	----	56
Unfair representation in the media	11	----	16.5	12.5
The public is suspicious of the police	29	----	----	50
Communication problems among police officers	7.1	----	33.5	----
Shortage of manpower	21.5	16.5	50	12.5
Financial constraints	7	----	33.5	----
More violence against the police	11	----	----	19
Lack of time spent with the public	21.5	33.5	----	12.5
Heavy Handedness and rudeness of policemen	----	----	----	----
Domestic violence	14	----	----	25
Traffic offences	----	----	----	----
Lack of previous experience of new recruits.	3.5	----	----	6

Crawley

What has most impeded policing by consent?

Number of police officers	(28) Total %	(6) Insp %	(6) Serg %	(16) PC %
Don't know	3.5	----	----	6
Nothing	7	16.5	----	6
PACE	14	16.5	----	19
Media	18	----	16.5	19
The way the police was used in industrial disputes	21.5	----	----	37.5
People are more aware of their rights	14	----	16.5	19
Lack of respect for authority	21.5	----	16.5	31
Left wing organisations	----	----	----	----
Civil liberty organisations	----	----	----	----
Softness of the Courts and lack of punishment	11	16.5	33.5	
Change of Public Attitude	21.5	16.5	33.5	19
Lack of trust of the public	11	----	----	19
Young people lack discipline	25	16.5	16.5	31
Increased public expectations	----	----	----	----
Financial Constraints	3.5	16.5	----	----
Shortage of manpower	25	16.5	16.5	31
Attitudes of senior police officers	7	----	16.5	6
Rudeness of police officers	----	----	----	----
Lack of policemen on the beat and panda cars	14	33.5	16.5	6
Attitude of the Met in London	14	33.5	----	12.5
Not enough time to investigate	7	----	----	12.5
Problems of recruiting and training	----	----	----	----
New laws	----	----	----	----
Amount of paper work	----	----	----	----
Racial problems	----	----	----	----
Traffic laws	----	----	----	----
Breathalyzer test	----	----	----	----
Recording of interviews	----	----	----	----
Crown Prosecution Service	----	----	----	----

(Responses given by only one person)

The 1981 riots

Lack of status for community policemen

Crawley

In your opinion, what have been the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

Number of police officers	(28) Total %	(6) Insp %	(6) Serg %	(16) PC %
None	18	16.5	16.5	19
Don't know	11	----	----	19
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	11	33.5	----	6
PACE	43	50	50	37
Consultation	----	----	----	----
More policemen on the beat	11	16.5	----	12.5
Community policemen	----	----	----	----
School liaison officers	----	----	----	----
The Scarman report	3.5	16.5	----	----
Crown Prosecution Service	14	16.5	16.5	12.5
More open to the public	3.5	----	16.5	----
More open to the media	7	33.5	----	----
1986 public order Act	11	16.5	33.5	----
Training	3.5	----	----	6.25
Lay visitors	7	16.5	16.5	----
Police Complaint Authority	11	----	16.5	12.5
VDRS	----	----	----	----
Multi-agency approach	----	----	----	----
Crime Prevention policies	----	----	----	----
Better Community relation management	----	----	----	----

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of Senior Police officers	(18)
	Total
	%
Heard of the expression before.	100
Not heard of the expression before.	----
Is it specific to England	Yes
	83.5
	no
	17
	Dk

Number of police officers	(18)
What are the major elements	
(open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)	%
Don't know	----
Not armed	22
Tradition	22
Local identity	5.5
Police are citizens in uniform	5.5
We are not political	----
Trust, respect and confidence of the public	39
Support and cooperation of the public	28
We enforce the law voted democratically	5.5
We do what people want us to do	----
We give the public a service	----
Most people accept us	----
We are not aggressive	----
We are not military	----
We treat every one equally and with care	----
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered	11
We portray a good image	----
Need for reciprocal means of consultation	44.5

(responses given by only one person)

The public pays us	
We are accountable to the public	22
Multi-agency approach	
Jack of all trades	
Prevention	
Support of the judiciary	
We should not hide behind democracy	
The idea of the bobby on the Beat.	

What are the major problems you experience on the ground

Number of police officers	(18)
	Total %
None	5.5
Attitudes of young people	----
Problems related to drunkenness	39
The level of public expectation is too high	33.5
Lack of support from the public	----
Unfair representation in the media	22
The public is suspicious of the police	----
Communication problems among police officers	29
Shortage of manpower	22
Financial constraints	----
More violence against the police	----
Lack of time spent with the public	----
Heavy Handedness and rudeness of policemen	28
Domestic violence	5.5
Traffic offences	33.5
Lack of previous experience of new recruits.	11
Consultative groups are a waste of time because They are not representative enough.	28
Politicization	11

What has most impeded policing by consent?

Number of police officers	(18)
	Total
	%
Don't know	----
Nothing	22
PACE	28
Media	22
The way the police was used in industrial disputes	28
People are more aware of their rights	33.5
Lack of respect for authority	----
Left wing organisations	39
Civil liberty organisations	----
Softness of the Courts and lack of punishment	----
Change of Public Attitude	28
Lack of trust of the public	----
Young people lack discipline	5.5
Increased public expectations	11
Financial Constraints	----
Shortage of manpower	33.5
Attitudes of senior police officers	----
Rudeness of police officers	----
Lack of policemen on the beat and panda cars	5.5
Attitude of the Met in London	22
Not enough time to investigate	----
Problems of recruiting and training	11
New laws	5
Amount of paper work	----
Racial problems	----
Traffic laws	11
Breathalyzer test	----
Recording of interviews	----
Crown Prosecution Service	16.5

(Responses given by only one person)

Lay visitors

Scarman unfairly critical

We don't talk to members of the public

In your opinion, what have been the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

Number of senior police officers	(18)
	Total
	%
None	22
Don't know	---
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	33.5
PACE	28
Consultation	44.5
More policemen on the beat	5
Community policemen	11
School liaison officers	5.5
The Scarman report	33.5
Crown Prosecution Service	5.5
More open to the public	----
More open to the media	16.5
1986 public order Act	5.5
Training	5.5
Lay visitors	----
Police Complaint Authority	11
VDRS	----
Multi-agency approach	5.5
Crime Prevention policies	----
Better Community relation management	11
Home Office circular 114	16.5
More professionalism	16.5

*Officers with less than 10 years of service
 +Officers with more than 10 years of service

In your opinion what are the major elements in the idea of policing by consent?

Number of Police officers	*(30)	+(95)
	Total	Total
	%	%
Heard of the expression before.	80	76
Not heard of the expression before.	20	24
Is it specific to England Yes	57	51.5
no	13	26
Dk	30	12.5

Number of police officers
What are the major elements
 (open question, respondents may give more than one answer. Therefore total exceeds 100%)

Don't know	7	11.5
Not armed	13	18
Tradition	---	7.5
Local identity	---	5
Police are citizens in uniform	7	9.5
We are not political	3.5	7.5
Trust, respect and confidence of the public	24	11.5
Support and cooperation of the public	34	26.5
We enforce the law voted democratically	3.5	5
We do what people want us to do	3.5	9.5
We give the public a service	7	4
Most people accept us	10	1
We are not aggressive	7	1
We are not military	17	---
We treat every one equally and with care	13	2
No choice otherwise we would be outnumbered	---	4
We portray a good image	---	3

(responses given by only one person)

The idea of the bobby on the beat.

*Officers with less than 10 years of service
 +Officers with more than 10 years of service

What are the major problems you experience on the ground

Number of police officers	*(30) Total %	+(95) Total %
None	27	19
Attitudes of young people	40	11.5
Problems related to drunkenness	13	12.5
The level of public expectation is too high	17	8.5
Lack of support from the public	23	13.5
Unfair representation in the media	7	8.5
The public is suspicious of the police	47	2
Communication problems among police officers	10	16
Shortage of manpower	3.5	17
Financial constraints	---	4
More violence against the police	13	7.5
Lack of time spent with the public	13	10.5
Heavy Handedness and rudeness of policemen	13	8.5
Domestic violence	7	4
Traffic offences	7	5
Lack of previous experience of new recruits.	7	6.5

*Officers with less than 10 years of service
 +Officers with more than 10 years of service

What has most impeded policing by consent?

Number of police officers	*(30) Total %	+(95) Total %
Don't know	27	---
Nothing	10	3
PACE	10	31.5
Media	33	24
The way the police was used in industrial disputes	20	21
People are more aware of their rights	27	18
Lack of respect for authority	10	27
Left wing organisations	10	8.5
Civil liberty organisations	7	2
Softness of the Courts and lack of punishment	7	6
Change of Public Attitude	7	15
Lack of trust of the public	7	1
Young people lack discipline	23	7.5
Increased public expectations	7	2
Financial Constraints	---	8.5
Shortage of manpower	---	21
Attitudes of senior police officers	3.5	8.5
Rudeness of police officers	7	5
Lack of policemen on the beat and panda cars	7	17
Attitude of the Met in London	10	1
Not enough time to investigate	---	3
Problems of recruiting and training	---	9.5
New laws	---	4
Amount of paper work	3.5	3
Racial problems	---	3
Traffic laws	---	3
Breathalyzer test	---	3
Recording of interviews	---	3
Crown Prosecution Service	3.5	2

(Responses given by only one person)

The 1981 riots

*Officers with less than 10 years of service

+Officers with more than 10 years of service

In your opinion, what have been the major initiatives, legislative or otherwise, which have helped to improve the relations between the police and the public during the last ten years?

Number of police officers	*(30)	+(95)
	Total %	Total %
None	10	35
Don't know	7	1
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	30	25
PACE	50	23
Consultation	---	12.5
More policemen on the beat	17	8.5
Community policemen	17	5
School liaison officers	---	9.5
The Scarman report	17	3
Crown Prosecution Service	---	8.5
More open to the public	7	8.5
More open to the media	3.5	5
1986 public order Act	17	2
Training	---	4
Lay visitors	---	4
Police Complaint Authority	3.5	5
VDRS	3.5	4
Multi-agency approach	10	1
Crime Prevention policies	---	4
Better Community relation management	3.5	3

New recruits

What are your major reasons for joining the police?

Number of officer	(22)
	%
I don't know	4.5
It is an exciting job	45.5
Camaraderie	4.5
Good salary	45.5
Something I have always wanted to do	18
It is a secure job	45.5
My father was in the police	4.5
To fight crime	13.5
Fed up with my previous job	23
Work with the public	9

Has your decision of joining the police had any effect on your social life?

Number of police officers	(22)
	%
Yes	91
no	9
It changed my social circle (more careful of people I socialize with)	32
I lost friends	18
I don't say what I do	23
To be a policeman makes you become more mature	9
Better social life	4.5
I had to move	13.5
Shift work affected my social life	36
Much quieter life	4.5

What was the focus of your training

	%
Learning the law	77
Communication	4
Fitness	36
Social skills	27
Not enough emphasis on the real job	23

During the last ten years what have been the major reforms which have affected the relations between the police and the public?

number of officers	(22)		
	%		
None	4.5		
PACE	18	negative 9	positive 9
Shortage of manpower	9		
The presence of a law and order party in power	9		
Lack of public trust in the police	23		
CPS (negative)	4.5		
Lack of respect for the police	50		
The police has lost touch with today's problems	4.5		
The miners 'strike	4.5		
The media	13.5		
Rudeness of police officers	4.5		
Breatherlizers	4.5		
Inner city problems	9		
The change of public attitude, especially			
Among young people	36		

Why does policing by consent seem to be such an English concept?

Number of police officers	(22)		
	%		
Have you heard of the expression before?	Yes 36	No 64	
Do you know what it means?	Yes 18	No 82	
Is it specific to the English Police?	Yes 9	No 9	

It is specific to the English police because:

The police is separate from the army	4.5
Not armed	13.5
Local identity to british policing	4.5
Tradition	13.5

Analysis of First questionnaire.**What are your spare time activities**

number of police officers	% (125)
Music	5
Sport	54.5
Fishing Shooting	8
Gardening and DIY	53.5
Involved in a social organisation	8
Reading	15.5
Social drinking	6
Photography	5
Theatre	3
Caravanning	5

Do you belong to any social club?

number of police officers	%(125)
Inside and outside the police	4
Inside the police	10.5
Outside the police	33
None	53.5

Are any of your three best friend in the police?

number of police officers	% (125)
One best friend in the police	28
Two best friend in the police	10
Three best friend in the police	21
None in the police	40

What does your wife feel about your beeing in the police?

number of police officers	% (125-2 not married)
Dislikes it	25
Likes it	46
Mere acceptance	27

Have your children suffered any prejudice because of your profession?

number of police officers	% (125-37 with no child)
Yes	37
No	43
Don't know	20

Are any of your wife's friends married to policemen?

number of police officers	% (125-2)
Yes	34
No	66

Do you think becoming a policeman had an impact on your social life and if so how?

number of police officers	% (125)
Yes	83.5
No	16.5

If so how?

Restrictive (choice of friends and activities)	39
Difficult to socialize (shift work)	42
Prejudiced against you because of your job	5
Means of social promotion	7
More aware of sordid aspect of society	15.5
Hard to reveal ones job	35
Your family life can suffer	2

First questionnaire (according to whether any of their three best friends are in the police)**What are your spare time activities**

number of police officers	% (35)	% (13)	% (27)	% (50)
	1best friend	2best friend	3best friend	None
Music	11	---	4.5	2.5
Sport	63	60	33.5	59
Fishing Shooting	7.5	20	19	---
Gardening and DIY	55.5	40	67	48.5
Involved in a social organisation	15	---	4.5	7.5
Reading	15	10	9	18
Social drinking	7.5	10	4.5	5
Photography	---	20	4.5	5
Theatre	---	---	---	7.5
Caravanning	3.5	---	---	10

Do you belong to any social club?

number of police officers	% (35)	% (13)	% (27)	% (50)
	1best friend	2best friend	3best friend	none
Inside and outside the police	11	---	4.5	4.1
Inside the police	14.5	10	9	10.5
Outside the police	23.5	20	19	33
None	51.5	50	67	53.5

What does your wife feel about your being in the police?

number of police officers	% (33)	% (13)	% (27)	% (50)
	1best friend	2best friend	3best friend	none
Likes it	35	60	57	46
Does not like it	30.5	10	5	25
Mere acceptance	30.5	30	38	27
Don't know	4	---	---	2

Have your children suffered any prejudice because of your profession?

number of police officers	%(22)	%(9)	%(16)	%(35)
	1best friend	2best friend	3best friend	none
Yes	47	28.5	23	50
No	53	57	61.5	35.5
Don't know	---	14.2	15.5	14

Are any of your wife's friends married to policemen?

number of police officers	%(33)	%(13)	%(27)	%
(50)		1best friend	2best friend	3best
friend none				
Yes	27	40	62	23
No	73	60	38	77

Do you think becoming a policeman had an impact on your social life and if so how?

number of police officers	% (35)	% (13)	% (27)	(50)
	1best friend	2best friend	3best friend	none
Yes	89	100	76	79.5
No	11	---	24	19.5
If so how?				
Restrictive (choice of friends and activities)	37	40	42.5	28.5
Difficult to socialize (shift work)	55.5	80	23.5	33
Prejudiced against your job	11	---	---	5
Means of social promotion	7.5	---	---	10
More aware of sordid aspect of society	7.5	---	33.5	15.5
Hard to reveal ones job	48	20	9.5	43.5
Your family life can suffer	3.5	---	---	2.5

Analysis of First questionnaire (senior police officer)**What are your spare time activities**

nuber of police officers	% (18)	
Music	44.5	
Sport	44.5	(golf 50%)
Fishing Shooting	---	
Gardening and DIY	44.5	
Involved in a social organisation	22.5	
Reading	16.5	
Social drinking	5.5	
Photography	16.5	
Theatre	5.5	
Caravanning	16.5	
Walking	33	

Do you belong to any social club?

number of police officers	%(18)
Inside and outside the police	---
Inside the police	16.5
Outside the police	61
None	28

Are any of your three best friend in the police?

number of police officers	% (18)
One best friend in the police	22
Two best friends in the police	5.5
Three best friends in the police	11
None in the police	61

What does your wife feel about your beeing in the police?

number of police officers	% (16)
Likes it	62.5
Does not like it	12.5
Mere acceptance	25

Have your children suffered any prejudice because of your profession?

number of police officers	% (16)
Yes	56
No	37.5
Don't know	6.5

Are any of your wife's friends married to policemen?

number of police officers	% (16)
Yes	50
No	50

Do you think becoming a policeman had an impact on your social life and if so how?

number of police officers	% (18)
Yes	94.5
No	5.5

If so how?

Restrictive (choice of friends and activities)	11
Difficult to socialize (shift work)	16.5
Prejudiced against you because of your job	33
Means of social promotion	11
More aware of sordid aspect of society	5.5
A way of life	31

Analysis of First questionnaire (officers with less than 10 years of service (1), officers with more 10 years of service (2))

What are your spare time activities	(1)		(2)	
nuber of police officers	% (30)		%(95)	
Music	3.5		4.5	
Sport	66.5		40	
Fishing Shooting	3.5		10	
Gardening and DIY	33.5		57.5	
Involved in a social organisation	3.5		13	
Reading		17		14.5
Social drinking	14		3	
Photography	---		7.5	
Theatre		7		1.5
Caravanning	3.5		6	

Do you belong to any social club?

	(1)	(2)
number of police officers	%(30)	%(95)
Inside and outside the police	3.5	4.5
Inside the police	14	9
Outside the police	27.5	35
None	55	53

Are any of your three best friend in the police?

	(1)	(2)
number of police officers	% (40)	%(85)
One best friend in the police	27.5	29
Two best friend in the police	7	11.5
Three best friend in the police	20.5	22
None in the police	45	37.5

What does your wife feel about your beeing in the police?

	(1)	(2)
number of police officers	% (28)	%(76)
Likes it	68	38
Does not like it	25	26
Mere acceptance	7	36.5

Have your children suffered any prejudice because of your profession?	(1)	(2)
number of police officers	% (7)	%(68)
Yes	14	45
No	86	43
Don't know	---	12
 Are any of your wife's friends married to policemen?	 (1)	 (2)
number of police officers	% (28)	%(76)
Yes	57	13.5
No	43	86.5
 Do you think becoming a policeman had an impact on your social life and if so how?		
number of police officers	% (30)	%(95)
Yes	86	82.5
No	14	17.5
if so how?		
Restrictive (choice of friends and activities)	10.5	53
Difficult to socialize (shift work)	55	38
Prejudiced against you because of your job	14	1.5
Means of social promotion	3.5	9
More aware of sordid aspect of society	10.5	17.6
Hard to reveal ones job	34.5	3